

ACMT Provides New insights into Sleeping Pills, Drugs of Abuse, and Social Media in Medicine in the June Issue of the Journal of Medical Toxicology

The Journal of Medical Toxicology, the official journal of the American College of Medical Toxicology, highlights the dangers of designer drugs, risks of drugs used to treat insomnia, and the power of social media in medicine in the June issue.

Phoenix, Arizona ([PRWEB](#)) May 29, 2013 -- In a report from Minnesota, a wave of bad outcomes associated with the 2C class of designer drugs is described in “2C or Not 2C: Phenethylamine Designer Drug Review.” Since many health providers are not familiar with 2C drugs and the drugs are not easily identified using standard hospital-based toxicology tests, diagnosis of [poisoning](#) can be challenging. According to lead author Be Vang Dean: “Understanding the pharmacology and toxicology of these agents is essential in order to provide the best medical care for these patients.”

Sameir Alhadi and co-authors from California contribute to the growing body of literature on the synthetic cannabinoids and their associated complications with the report “High Times, Low Sats: Diffuse Pulmonary Infiltrates Associated with Chronic Synthetic Cannabinoid Use.” The authors point out that synthetic cannabinoids have been reported to adversely affect the heart and brain, and caution physicians to be aware of their significant respiratory effects.

According to lead investigator Alex Manini in the study “Opioid Receptor Polymorphism A118G Associated with Clinical Severity in a Drug Overdose Population,” an inherited vulnerability might be one explanation for the recent increase in U.S. mortality from prescription opioids. Using an emergency department cohort population, they found that a particular genetic mutation is associated with increased vulnerability to [overdose](#) with these drugs.

Naren Gunja, a physician [toxicologist](#) from Australia details the adverse events associated with the popular “Z-drugs” prescribed for insomnia in his article “In the Zzz Zone: The Effects of Z-Drugs on Human Performance and Driving.” This class of medications includes agents such as zolpidem (Ambien™), zopiclone (Lunesta™), and zaleplon (Sonata™). In addition to a growing number of cases of amnesia, hallucinations, and suicidality in users of the “Z-drugs”, Gunja warns prescribers of these agents “the increased risk of falls and motor vehicle collisions is notably significant for elderly insomniacs.”

Michael Chary and co-authors from New York propose a new model for characterizing new drug use patterns in an article entitled “Leveraging Social Networks for Toxicovigilance.” The authors suggest popular social network platforms such as Facebook and Twitter can be powerful tools for clinicians. “Toxicovigilance via social networks will help prepare frontline clinicians to better recognize the appearance [of new drugs of abuse] and attend to the needs of their communities.” Chary recognizes the potential benefit of real-time updates in social media, as “insights from these methods ... may be of assistance in tailoring interventions and campaigns for prevention.”

These articles, and many others that advance the science and practice of medical toxicology, can be found in the June issue of the Journal of Medical [Toxicology](#) (JMT), the official journal of the American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT). ACMT is a professional, nonprofit association of physicians with recognized expertise in medical toxicology. The College is dedicated to advancing the science and practice of medical toxicology through a variety of activities.