

Establishment of the Estonian Poison Information Centre

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Objective: To describe the development of leading to opening of service of the Estonian Poison Information Centre (EPIC). Initiating an EPIC has been discussed for the last 10 years. In 2006 in Estonia 392 persons died in poisonings (28/100 000 inhabitants) and 57 500 persons required medical attention (4 104/100 000 inhabitants) for an estimated total cost of 753 000EUR. Method: Due to ongoing health reforms it would have been impossible to start the PIC as a part of a medical institution, so it was decided that the PIC should be established within Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA) as a part of CNC. In hindsight, the establishment under the Ministry was crucial for data and information exchange to key decision makers. By 2005 necessary knowledge to build a concrete plan to set up the operations had been acquired in collaboration with the Finnish and other Nordic PICs. Two emergency medicine specialists were recruited in summer 2006 with a mission to initiate the center and develop appropriate documentation. They participated in the 4-week training of the Finnish PIC. These specialists put together the EPIC vision statement and developed a 5-year plan, including budgets. Brainstorming and discussion of concepts was started with leaders in intensive care, MSA and hospitals. A consensus was reached that the EPIC needs to be open 24/7, and answer calls both from medical personnel and the public. The EPIC was donated a copy of the poison information monographs of the Finnish PIC. In 2007 the monographs were translated into Estonian, and updated with local information about natural poisons, chemicals, drugs etc. Quality assurance processes and documentation were developed. The EPIC is now ready to announce a governmental call for expressions of interest to choose the best hospital that could host the new center. Up till now the total costs have been 127 742EUR, and the next 5 year's total budget has been set at 806 400EUR. Conclusion: the EPIC starts working in the summer of 2008.