

Primary poisoning prevention and awareness: the Estonian experience

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The Poisoning Information Centre's objective is to provide adequate advice quickly so as to reduce the incidence of illness, damage to health and death as a result of severe cases of poisoning. Our centres are staffed with internationally trained and highly experienced nurses working in the fields of emergency medicine, anaesthesia and intensive care.

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Introduction

With background of continuously decreasing resources is important to consider what role toxicologists and poisoning centers actually play in the prevention of poisonings. While poisoning centers have demonstrated their high level of expertise on the treatment of poisonings (secondary and tertiary prevention), it is equally important to act in primary prevention^{1, 2}, preventing the occurrence of poisonings, raising awareness of poisoning centers³.

Objective

In this paper are described the national multilevel effective prevention interventions in fulfilling the objectives of the poisoning center in decreasing the number of poisoned patients, raising awareness about poisoning center in Estonia, to ensure the message reaches all target groups of the population (1,3mln).

Results

In Estonian Poisoning Information Centre were poisoning prevention activities beside of secondary prevention (hotline 16662) were delivered thru primary prevention. Centre was engaged onto broader primary poisoning prevention through interventions, simultaneously at the national-, county- and local community level (see fig.2). Poisoning information specialists had the possibility to intervene in the shaping of legislation, poisoning prevention strategies, participated in discussion in the county's supervisory boards of injury preventions to carry out projects of health education. 2009-2014 medical staff in hospitals, ambulances was routinely educated (178 hours); trainings of the effective prevention strategies were provided to the general public (115 hours). Beside of website 16662.ee was poisoning prevention provided by articles, pamphlets, continuous warnings about poisons in newspapers, TV, radio (225 times). Were participated in developing prevention-related educational toolkit, the floor game AgaMina/ButMe, cartoon with color-book, play cards for kids. 2009-2015 awareness about Poisoning Information Centre's hotline 16662 was increasing (calls: 331 to 2461), a nationwide survey Estonians awareness about hotline increased from 16% (2011) to 18% (2014) on the background of dropped numbers of accidental deaths from poisonings 309 (2009) to 235 (2014), dropped 8% standardized poisonings death rate (per 100 000 population) in annual average rate of change (2009-2011 and 2013-2015) and number of emergency calls due to poisonings via ambulance service 112 decreased from 2538 calls (2009) to 1597 calls (2014), see fig.1. Since 2015 Estonian ambulance system works with electronic e-ambulance form, which has different parameters for identifying poisoning victims, therefore the data after 2014 does not fit with previous statistics.

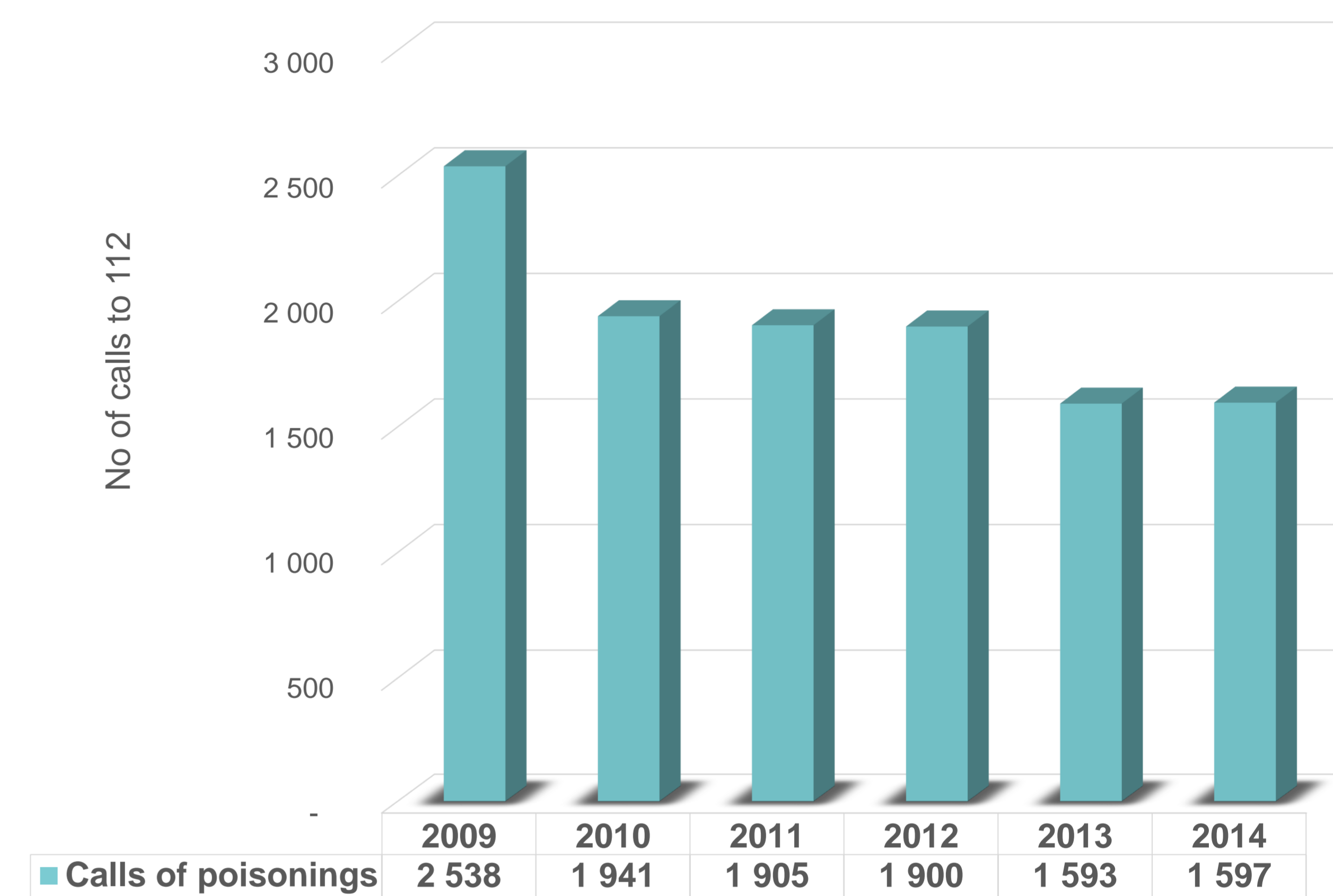


Fig.1 Number of poisoning calls to the 112 (ambulance service) 2009-2014, all calls to 112 increased continuously: 254 778 (2009) to 265 910 (2014)



Fig.2 A strategy of primary poisoning prevention in Estonia

Conclusion

Integration of primary prevention activities of National PC into a coherent model of public health services, can be used as effective toolkit for growing awareness of poisoning prevention, decreasing number of poisonings and has therefore an impact reducing healthcare cost through decreasing number of poisoned patients, having a defensive role in ensuring the safety of the population.

References

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