

# POISONS INFORMATION CENTRE

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## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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Healthcare Professional Line: 01 837 9964 / 809 2566 (24hr)

Public Poisons Line: 01 809 2166 (8am - 10pm)

E-mail: [npicdublin@beaumont.ie](mailto:npicdublin@beaumont.ie)

Website: [www.poisons.ie](http://www.poisons.ie)



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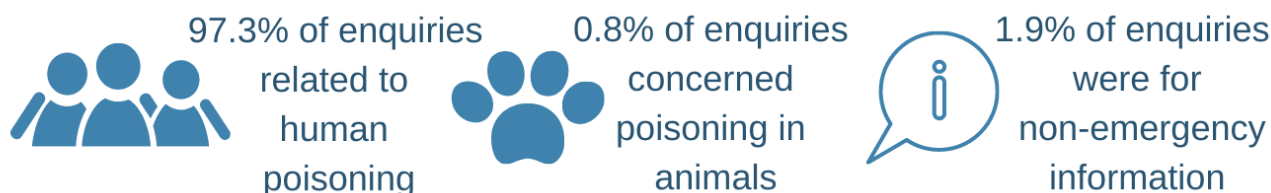
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## A snapshot of NPIC activity

In 2021, NPIC received a total of 11,145 enquiries.



The busiest times of the day were from 4pm to 9pm



The busiest month in 2021 was September

### Source of enquiries to the NPIC



51.1% of enquiries were from members of the public



47% of enquiries were from healthcare professionals



1.7% of enquiries came from other sources

### Poisoning circumstances

**64%** of enquiries related to accidental poisonings

**18%** of enquiries were due to medication errors

**13%** of enquiries were for intentional poisonings

**5%** of enquiries related to other circumstances

### Social Media



- 800+ followers
- 906 Tweets
- 505K Tweet Impressions
- 22,000 profile visits



- 5,400+ followers
- 588 Instagram Posts
- Overall Instagram reach of 14,033



- 31,000 + Likes
- Overall facebook reach of 1,113,594

## Foreword

Welcome to the 2021 Annual Report for the National Poisons Information Centre (NPIC) in Ireland.

The NPIC was established in 1966 and this is the centres 55<sup>th</sup> year in operation. The NPIC operates 365 days a year and provides a 24-hour service to healthcare professionals. The NPIC staff answers queries from 8am to 10pm every day and the UK National Poisons Information Service (NPIS) is contracted to answer our calls from 10pm to 8am every night. The NPIC also operates a Public Poisons Line and provides poison information to members of the public from 8am to 10pm seven days per week.



The Annual Report is based on data collected on enquiries to the NPIC from members of the public, healthcare professionals and others. Overall, there were 11,145 enquiries to the NPIC in 2021, a small decrease compared to 2020.

The NPIC continued to operate in accordance with hospital and public health guidelines in respect of Covid-19. There was no interruption to service and the staff were committed to their roles providing timely poisons information and advice, and aimed to prevent unnecessary hospital and General Practitioner visits where possible.

Staff continued to meet virtually for staff meetings, research meetings, conferences, educational webinars and NPIS/NPIC Continuous Professional Development events. We engaged in virtual activities to keep spirits up and ensure that there were opportunities for social interactions and engaging in wellness activities. We participated in the National Workplace Wellbeing Day and National Walking Days and held a festive Staff Christmas Quiz. I am grateful to all the staff for their commitment to the service.

Thank you to everyone who uses our service and supports the work of the NPIC.

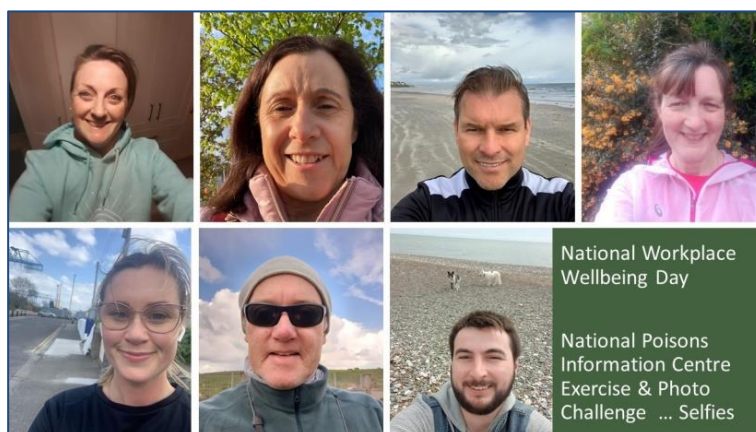
Dr Edel Duggan

Clinical Director

National Poisons Information Centre

## The NPIC team

The NPIC staff comprises of a Clinical Director, six Specialists in Poisons Information (SPIs) and a Administrative Officer. The NPIC's phone lines are answered by the SPIs who are scientists with additional training and postgraduate qualifications in medical toxicology.



The NPIC staff consults with NPIC Clinical Director for advice and medical information on the management of severe and difficult poisoning cases as required.

### Clinical Director

Dr Edel Duggan MB, BCh, BAO, MD, FFARCSI, Dip Med Tox

### Manager

Patricia Casey BSc, Dip Med Tox

### Specialists in Poisons Information

Nicola Cassidy BSc, M Med Sc, Dip Med Tox

Niamh English MSc, Dip Med Tox

John Herbert BSc, Dip Med Tox

Conor Hurley BSc, MSc,

Feargal O'Connor BSc, Cert Med Tox

### Administrative Officer

Sinead Doyle

## The role of the NPIC

The National Poisons Information Centre (NPIC) was established in 1966 to provide telephone advice to healthcare professionals treating poisoned patients. Today the NPIC operates 365 days a year and provides a specialist telephone information service to assist healthcare professionals in the treatment of acute poisoning.

The NPIC Healthcare Professional Line is available 24-hours every day of the year for medical staff and other healthcare professionals.

The NPIC telephone numbers are;

- 01 809 2566 / 01 809 2568
- 01 837 9964 / 01 837 9966

The Public Poisons Information Line was launched in 2011 and provides a dedicated number for members of the public to contact the NPIC between 8am and 10pm every day. The telephone number for the Public Poisons Information Line is 01 809 2166 and NPIC staff provide advice to members of the public on whether they need to seek medical attention following an accidental poisoning incident or if they can be safely monitored at home. It is our policy to refer all cases of intentional poisoning for medical assessment.

The secondary role of the NPIC is to collect and interpret epidemiological data on acute poisoning. This information is used to monitor poisoning trends and establish and update appropriate treatment protocols as required.

NPIC staff members answer enquiries between 8am and 10pm every day. The UK National Poisons Information Service is contracted to answer enquiries to the NPIC outside of these core hours. Telephone calls are automatically diverted to the UK Poisons Service between 10pm and 8am every day and the extra call charges are paid by Beaumont Hospital.

## **Quality and training**

All enquiry records are peer-reviewed and stored as hardcopy and electronically on a Poisons Information Database named UKPID. All incoming and outgoing telephone enquiries to the NPIC are audio recorded for clinical governance and to assist with staff training. The Clinical Director conducts periodic audits to ensure the quality of the service and advice provided.

The NPIC maintains close links with the UK National Poisons Information Service and regularly contributes to and organises Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities with our colleagues. NPIC staff members regularly submit research studies to the annual congress of the European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicologists (EAPCCT).



## Key statistics for 2021

### Time and date of enquiry

The National Poisons Information Centre received a total of 11,145 enquiries in 2021. 9,659 enquires were answered between 8am and 10pm while 1,486 enquiries (13.3%) were received between 10pm and 8am and were answered by the UK National Poisons Information Service. The busiest hours of the day were from 4pm to 9pm (Figure 1). September was the busiest month. The average number of enquiries per month was 929 (Figure 2).

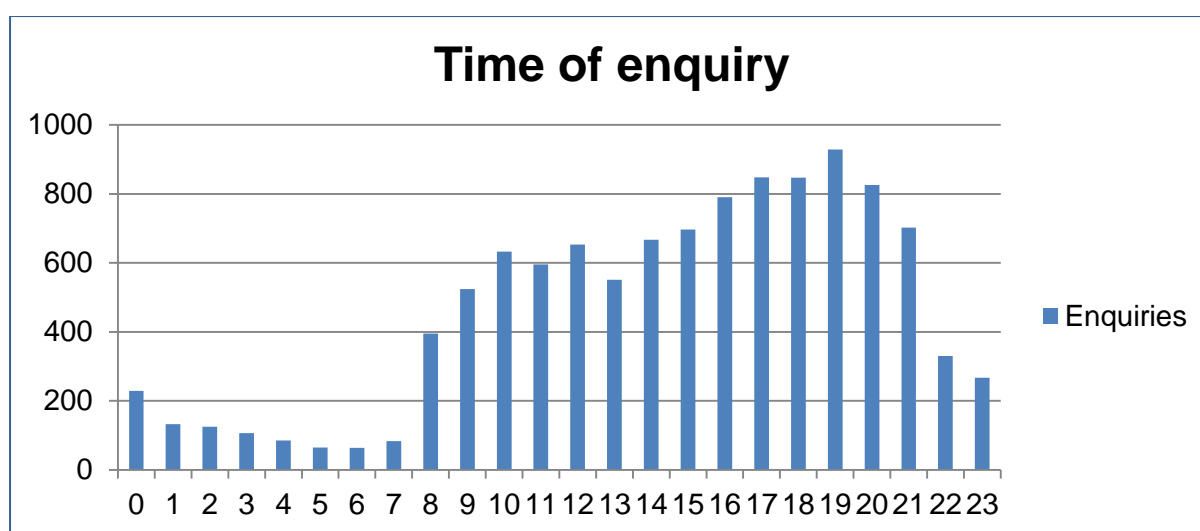


Figure 1: Time of enquiry to NPIC

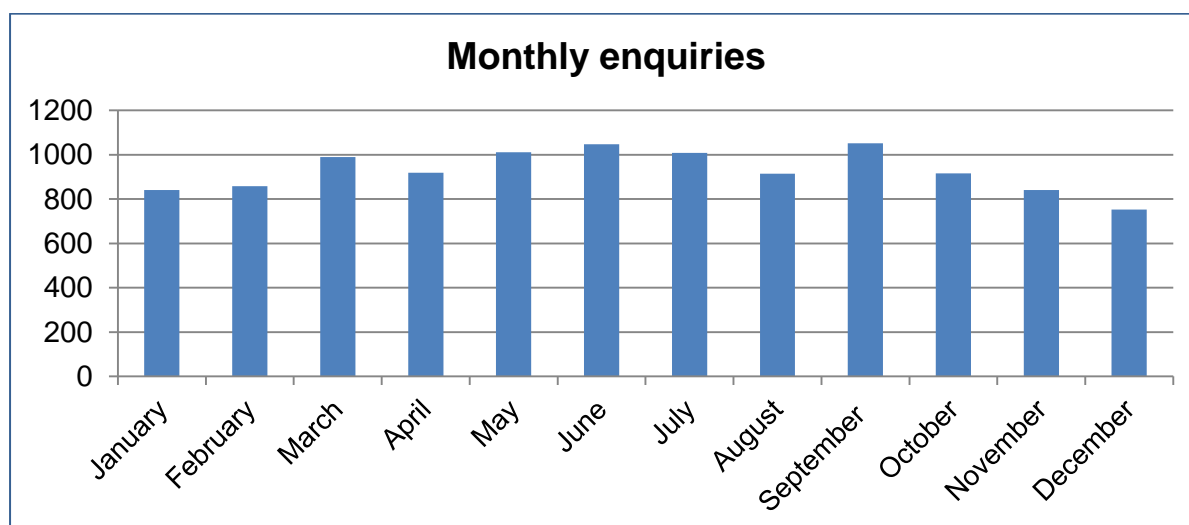


Figure 2: Monthly enquiries to NPIC

## Type of caller

The NPIC is contacted by different types of healthcare professionals, as well as members of the public and support services. The Public Poisons Line, a dedicated phone line for members of the public, was introduced in 2011. In 2021, calls from members of the public accounted for the majority of enquiries (51.1%) to the NPIC.



Enquirer	N	%
Member of the public	5696	51.11%
GP/Primary care	2532	22.72%
Hospital	2306	20.69%
Community pharmacy	168	1.51%
Nursing home	150	1.34%
Ambulance service	93	0.83%
School/childcare	34	0.31%
Support services	35	0.31%
Veterinary practice	39	0.35%
Other	92	0.83%

**Table 1: Type of Caller**

## Enquiries from healthcare professionals

Approximately 43.4% of enquiries were received from healthcare professionals working in hospitals (n=2,306) or general practice (n=2,532). GP out-of-hours services that operate between 6pm-8am (weekdays) and 24hr (weekends) accounted for 1,810 enquiries.

CareDoc	674	DDoc	122	KDoc	41
SouthDoc	323	ShannonDoc	177	DubDoc	2
WestDoc	139	NowDoc	129	DLDoc	2
MidDoc	114	NEDoc	85	Other	2

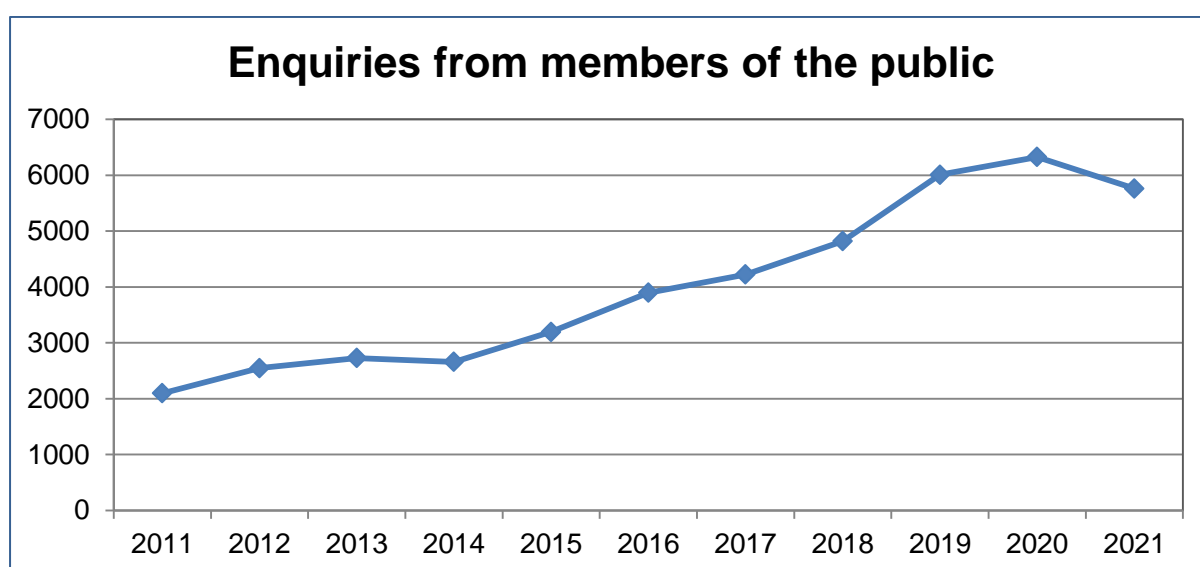
**Table 2: Enquiries from GP out-of-hours services**

## Enquiries from members of the public

The NPIC was established in 1966 to provide a telephone service for healthcare professionals treating poisoned patients. If members of the public contacted the service, appropriate and tailored triage advice was provided.

To meet an increasing demand for a public poisons information service, a dedicated Public Poisons Line was introduced in 2011 as a pilot scheme. The service operated from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday initially. In 2011, 2,095 enquiries were received from members of the public, representing 22% of total enquiries. In 2012, the operating hours of the Public Poisons Line were extended and the service was operational from 8am to 10pm daily.

The number of enquiries from members of the public has increased annually from 2012 until 2020 (Figure 3). In 2021, the NPIC received 5,762 enquiries from members of the public, representing a slight decrease on the previous year.

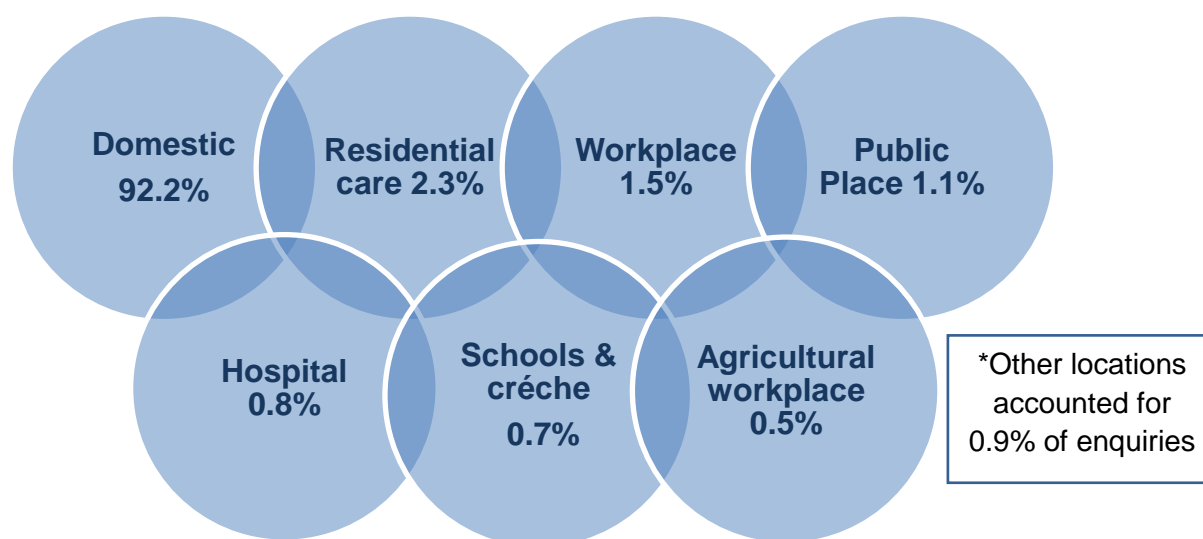


**Figure 3: Enquiries from members of the public (2011-2021)**

The NPIC has no dedicated funding to advertise the Public Poisons Line to members of the public and relies on word of mouth, referrals from healthcare professionals, search engine results and the NPIC social media accounts to help raise awareness of the service.

## Incident location

Most human poisonings occurred in the home or domestic setting (92.1%, n=9,985). A smaller number of poisonings occurred in nursing home/care home/residential care facilities (n=239), an occupational setting (n=159), a public place (n=116), hospital (n=82), schools/crèche (n=73), agricultural workplace (n=53), and other locations (n=139).



## Geographic location of poisoning cases

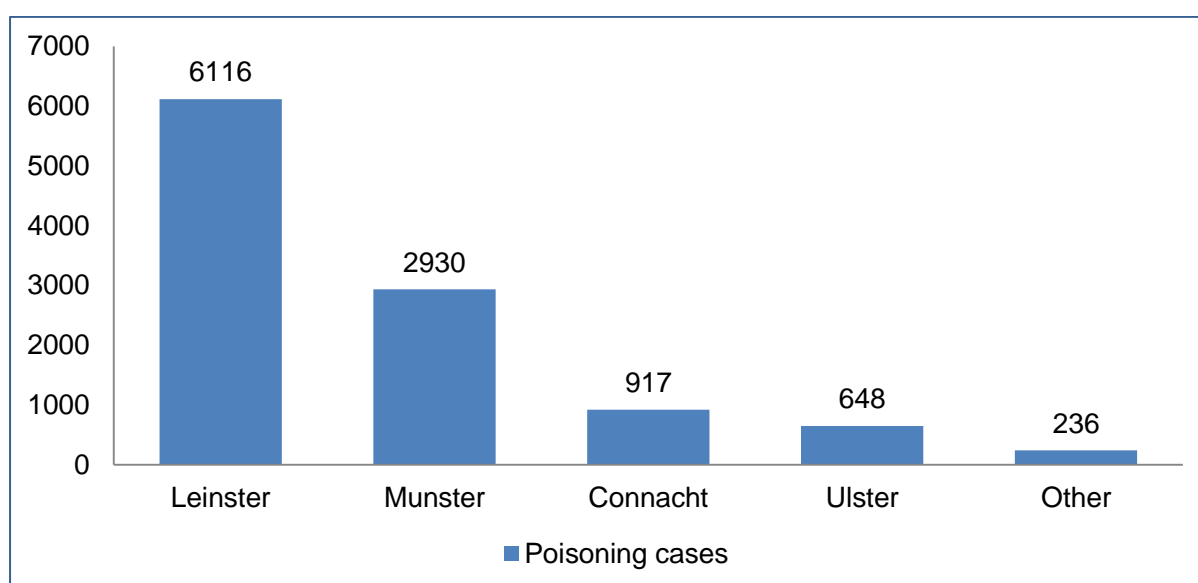
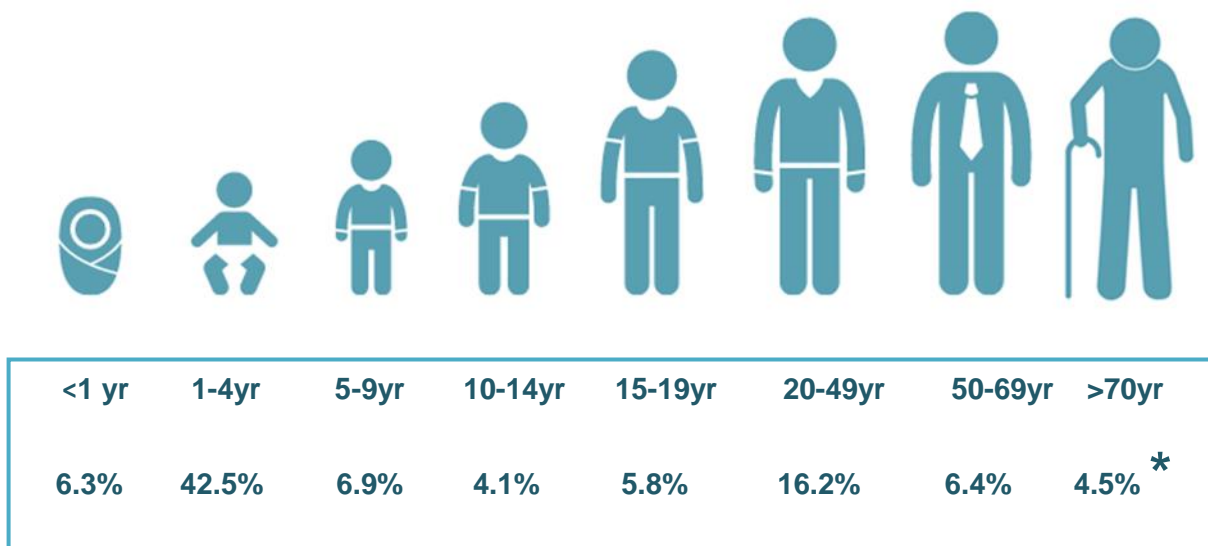


Figure 4: Geographic location of poisoning cases

## Demographics

10,847 enquiries related to human poisoning cases. The majority of poisoning enquiries related to children aged 14 years and younger 59.8% (n=6,490). The peak age was 1-4 years old (42.5%). 3,561 poisoning enquiries involved individuals aged 15 years or older. The specific age was not recorded for 7.3% or 796 cases.



\*7.3% age was not recorded

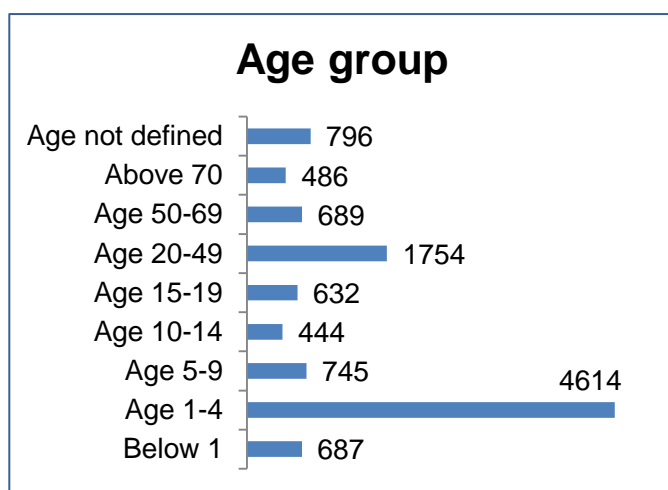


Figure 6: Age Group

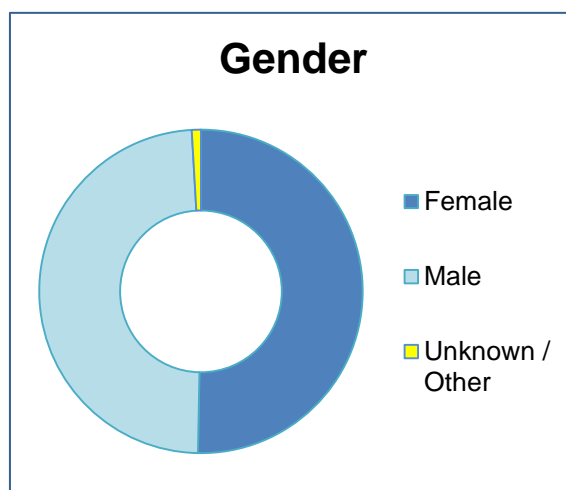


Figure 5 : Gender Distribution

## Poisoning circumstances

The NPIC received 10,847 enquiries related to poisoning in humans. The majority of enquiries involved accidental/unintentional poisonings (n=6,954). 1,923 enquiries related to therapeutic errors with medications, 1,414 enquiries were intentional overdoses and 171 enquiries related to recreational abuse. The remaining cases were adverse reactions or cases of unknown circumstances or intent.

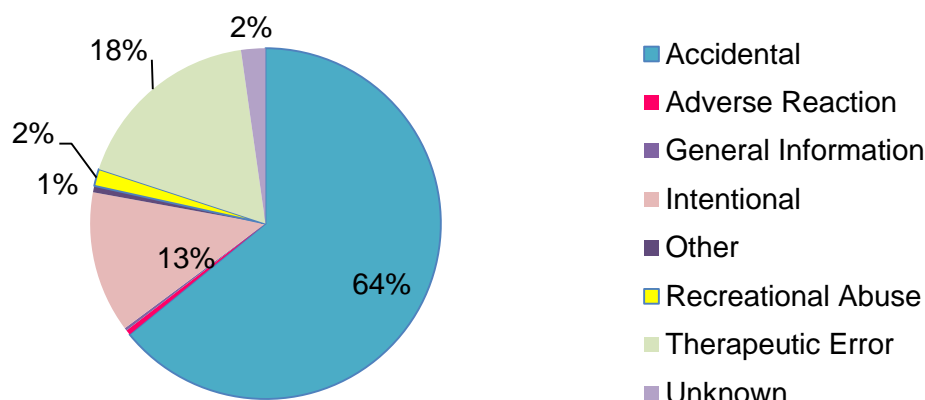


Figure 7: Poisoning circumstances

## Agents involved in human poisoning

Over 17,613 agents were involved in cases of human poisoning. 50% of all agents were drugs (including medications and drugs of abuse), 20% were household products such as fabric detergent products and multipurpose cleaners, and 15% were chemicals including alcohols, corrosive substances, essential oils and hydrocarbons. 4% of agents were unclassified.

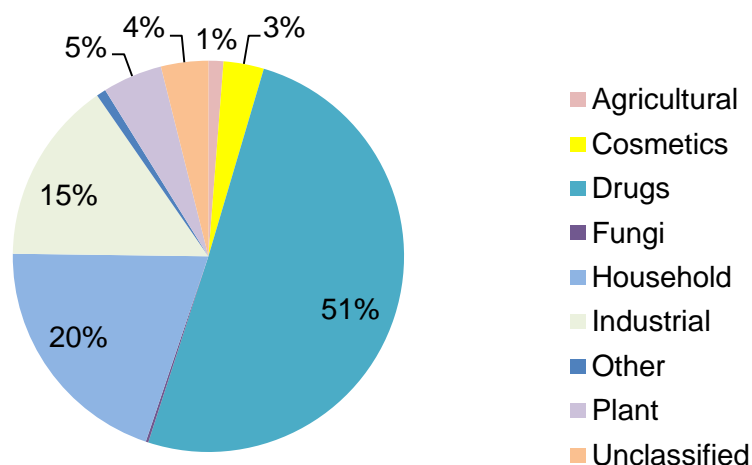


Figure 8: Agents involved in human poisoning

## Top 10 agents

In 2021, paracetamol, ibuprofen and ethanol were the top three agents implicated in poisoning enquiries, similar to the previous 3 years. The top 10 agents involved in poisoning cases are listed in Table 3. Although codeine and caffeine appear in the top agents, they are not included in the table as they are present as ingredients in a number of analgesic products and the doses involved are usually small.



Agents involved in poisoning	Category
Paracetamol	Medication
Ibuprofen	Medication
Ethanol	Industrial
Fabric Cleaning Liquid Sachet /Capsules	Household
Hand Cleanser	Household
Multivitamins	Medication
Surfactant / Detergent Other	Household
Sodium Hypochlorite	Household
Sertraline	Medication
Disinfectant / antiseptic / sanitiser	Household

**Table 3: The top 10 agents involved in poisoning**

## Top 10 Medications

9,323 poisoning enquiries involved over 560 different medications. The top 10 medications are listed in Table 4. Paracetamol was the most common medication consumed and hypnotics, multivitamins/multivitamins with mineral supplements were also commonly taken. Codeine and caffeine appear in the top medications because these ingredients are present in a number of analgesic products. However; the doses involved are usually small. These ingredients are excluded from the table.



Top 10 medications involved in poisoning	
1	Paracetamol
2	Ibuprofen
3	Multivitamins
4	Sertraline
5	Quetiapine
6	Aspirin
7	Alprazolam
8	Diazepam
9	Pregabalin
10	Zopiclone

**Table 4: Top 10 medications involved in poisoning**



## Household products

3,525 enquiries to the NPIC in 2021 involved household products. The most common products were fabric cleaning liquid detergent capsules, hand sanitiser, disinfectants / antiseptics / sanitisers, reed diffusers and dishwasher tablets.

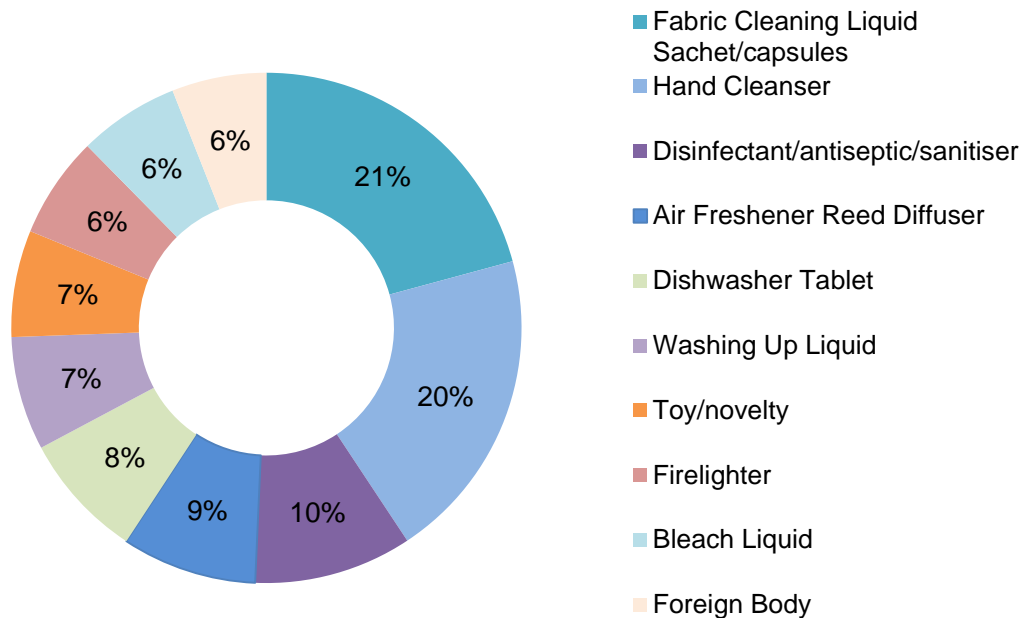


Figure 9: The top household products involved in poisoning

## Agricultural products

Agricultural agents accounted for 218 (2%) poisoning enquiries. Queries about exposure to glyphosate-containing weed killers predominated (17% of enquiries about agricultural products). Other categories of agricultural products were involved in a small number of cases and are shown in Figure 10.

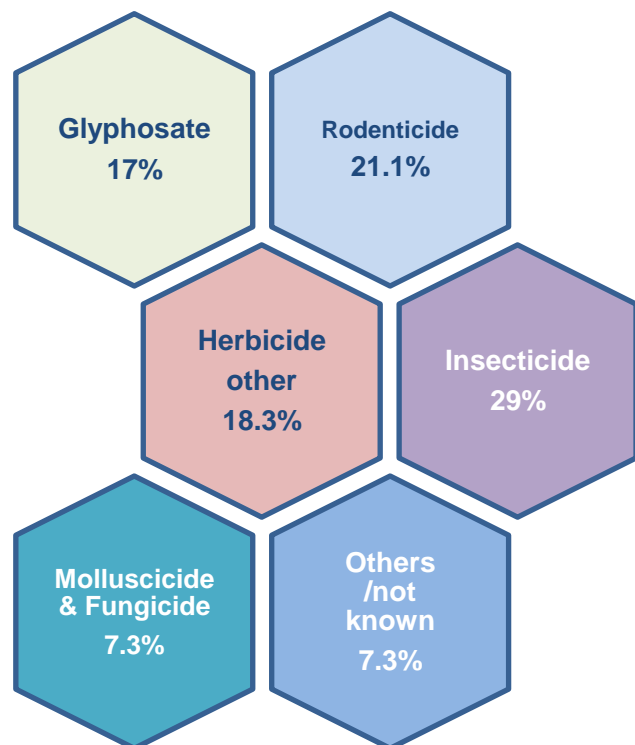


Figure 10: Agricultural products.

## Drugs of abuse

There were 203 enquiries relating to 10 categories of drugs of abuse.

The main drugs of abuse included cocaine, heroin, cannabis / cannabinoids and amphetamines. In many cases, more than one drug of abuse was involved.

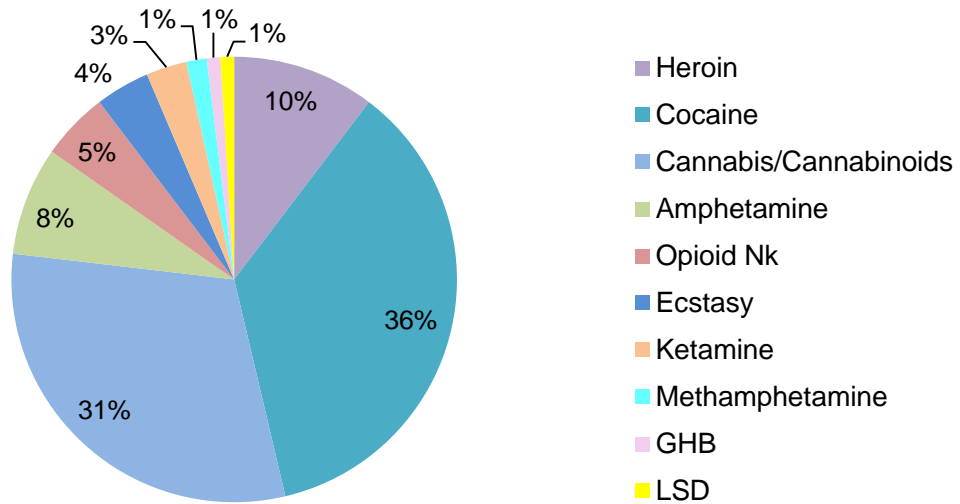


Figure 11: Drugs of Abuse

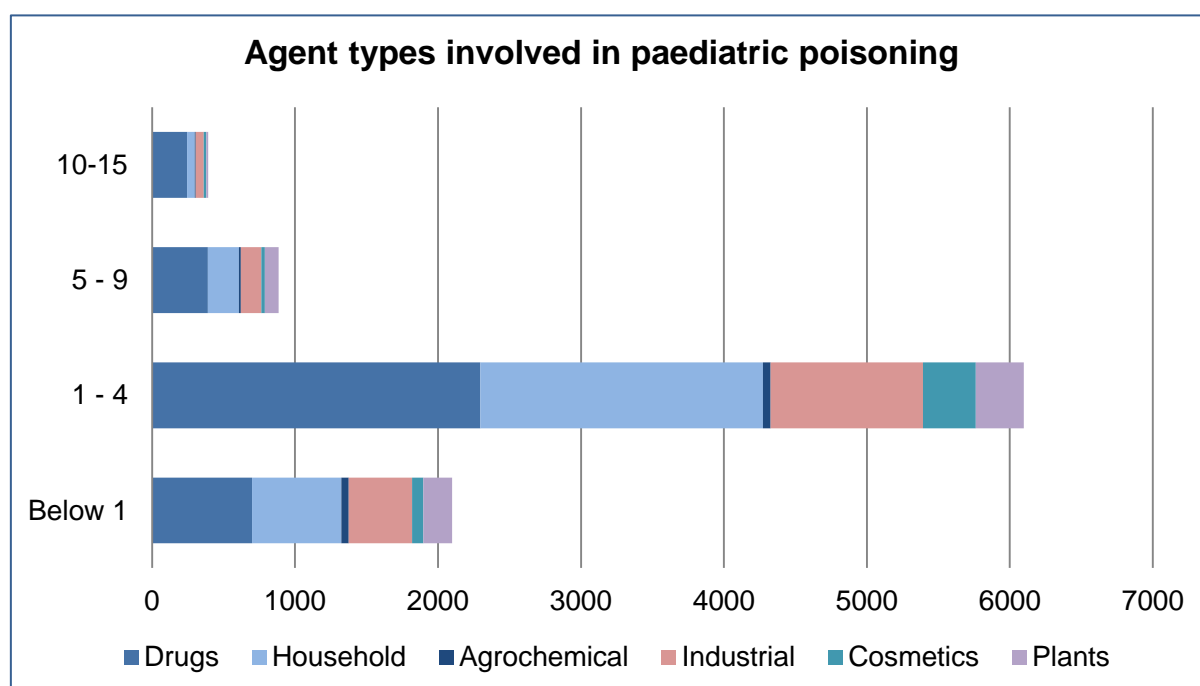
## Poisoning in children

In 2021, 6,490 enquiries involved children aged 14 years or under. The majority of enquiries related to children under 4 years of age (5,301, 81.7%).

79% of children were asymptomatic when the NPIC was contacted. 19.5% had minor or moderate symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, drowsiness or a mild local skin reaction. The symptoms were unknown or not applicable in 1.4% of cases. 9 patients had severe symptoms and there were no fatalities.



Medications were the most common type of agent involved in paediatric cases. The top medication enquiries concerned paracetamol, ibuprofen and multivitamin products, as in previous years.



**Figure 12: The types of agents involved in paediatric poisoning in 2021**

## Signs and symptoms at the time of enquiry to NPIC

A Poison Severity Score (where signs and symptoms are classified as minor, moderate, severe, none, not applicable, or unknown) is assigned to each human case based on the clinical features at the time the NPIC was contacted (n=10,847). It is possible that some patients could have become symptomatic or their condition deteriorated after the initial contact with the NPIC.

- 65.8% (n=7,136) of patients were asymptomatic when the NPIC was contacted.
- 26.3% (n=2,853) of patients had minor signs and symptoms, for example mild gastrointestinal upset, drowsiness, and mild local irritation of skin, eyes or mucous membranes.
- 4.1% (n=444) of patients had moderate signs and symptoms including repeated vomiting, CNS depression, and some cardiac features.
- 1.2% (n=127) of patients had severe signs and symptoms including coma, liver function abnormalities, severe hypotension, and metabolic changes.
- The signs and symptoms were unknown for 222 cases (2.0%) and were not applicable i.e. unrelated to poisoning for 65 cases (0.6%)

## Clinical outcome of serious/unusual poisoning cases

179 cases were followed-up due to the severity, potential severity or unusual nature of their symptoms when the NPIC was contacted. NPIC staff subsequently telephoned the hospital and spoke with members of the clinical team to determine the health outcome for the patient.

- 105 patients who were followed up recovered completely
- 28 patients developed short-term sequelae
- 7 patient had permanent sequelae
- 11 patients died
- 4 outcomes were classified as 'not applicable' (for example, poisoning was eventually excluded as a cause for the patient's clinical condition)
- The outcome could not be determined for 24 patients

We are grateful to nursing and medical staff for their help providing follow-up information to NPIC staff especially during a very challenging year.

## Surveillance and research

The NPIC is in a unique position to conduct real time surveillance by monitoring trends in poisoning. For the 2021 Annual Report, we decided to highlight poisoning events with essential oils and reed diffusers which are common household items that may cause toxicity if ingested or with skin or eye exposures.



Figure 13: Essential Oils



Figure 14: Reed Diffusers

## Collaboration with the Health and Safety Authority

In 2021, the NPIC liaised with the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) to inform them of our concerns relating to the lack of information about the ingredients present in many reed diffusers. Often when the NPIC is contacted about accidental ingestion of reed diffusers, the ingredients are unknown and there is no information on the container.

In response to the concerns of the NPIC, the HSA conducted a targeted enforcement campaign with notable results. The article below is taken from the June 2022 HSA Newsletter, and reproduced with their permission.

### HSA Newsletter June 2022 | 29 June

Findings of the inspection campaign of hazardous reed diffusers for sale on the Irish market

The Authority conducted a targeted enforcement campaign inspecting fragranced reed diffuser products and refills sold to the general public in the retail sector, to check compliance with chemicals legislation. The campaign was undertaken based on information received from the National Poison Information Centre (NPIC) regarding an increase in cases of accidental exposures to fragranced reed diffusers. The inspections were undertaken between November 2021 and March 2022. A total of 20 companies and 71 products were inspected to determine the level of compliance with chemical legislation.

A total non-compliance rate of 87% was found with the requirements of the REACH and CLP Regulations, which was addressed through enforcement by the Authority. For 46% of the non-compliant products, inspectors instructed their removal from the market due to incorrect or missing hazard labelling.

A substance called Lilial which is toxic to reproduction is restricted from sale to the general public at a concentration of greater than 0.3%. Two inspected reed diffusers were found to contain Lilial above the permitted concentration and were removed from the market.

Non-compliances identified included

- 44% of products either had no hazard label or incorrect hazard labels resulting in consumers unable to identify the hazards of the products they are buying.
- 48% of products did not display a hazard label on all layers of packaging as required. When the hazard information is displayed only on the outer packaging, which may be discarded, the consumer will not be aware of the hazards in the event of an accidental exposure.

The Authority will continue to monitor the compliance of reed diffusers with the requirements of chemical legislation based on experience gathered during this targeted enforcement campaign.

(The original HSA newsletter is available at [link](#) below)

<https://hsa.newsweaver.co.uk/newsletter/1diflbzgnm2-umbr0d2y35?email=true&lang=en&a=2&p=61827076&t=24949965>

## Nutrivigilance Pilot Study in collaboration with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Nutrivigilance is a system for detecting adverse events associated with the consumption of food, or food supplements such as vitamins and minerals.

European legislation deals with the processing, authorising, advertising and labelling of food

supplements without any obligation on the companies to report adverse effects.

There is currently no nutrivigilance system in Ireland. A nutrivigilance system would help protect consumers and provide early signals of emerging chemical risks where foods or food supplements were reported to be causing harm in the community.



The National Poisons Information Centre (NPIC) provides management advice to clinicians and members of the public who suspect poisoning has occurred. In consultation with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre, a pilot project was set up to assess the practicalities of setting up a nutrivigilance service, based on the nutrivigilance system operating in France. Advice was sought from ANSES the organisation responsible for the nutrivigilance system in France.

A prospective nutrivigilance pilot project was conducted over 3-months by the NPIC from the end of 2020 to early 2021. The project was registered with the Clinical Governance and Audit Department in Beaumont Hospital and a Data Protection Impact Assessment was submitted. All enquiries reported to the NPIC describing symptoms following ingestion of over-the-counter multivitamins were included in the study. A causality score using established methodology was calculated for each symptom reported and subsequently validated by a newly convened nutrivigilance expert group.

On completion of the study, Dr Edel Duggan presented the findings to the nutrivigilance expert group and the Food Safety Authority. An abstract on the



methodology and results was submitted to the 2022 European Association of Poison Centres and Clinical Toxicologists Congress.

## TOXBASE® enquiries

TOXBASE® is the on-line clinical toxicology database of the UK National Poisons Information Service. It is the primary toxicology database used by the NPIC to provide information on the clinical features and management of acute poisoning.

TOXBASE® is used by Emergency Departments and Intensive Care Units in Ireland. In 2021, there were 16,838 TOXBASE user sessions by 43 registered users in Ireland.

## NPIC website

The website [www.poisons.ie](http://www.poisons.ie) has details on

- how to contact the NPIC for members of the public and healthcare professionals
- practical poison prevention advice
- educational resources
- information on seasonal hazards
- information for healthcare professionals
- and regulatory information for industry



The website highlights the telephone number for the Public Poisons Line so that members of the public can find it easily in an emergency.

The Industry page is frequently accessed and provides advice for companies that have to register products under EU Chemical, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulations.

In 2021, the NPIC website had

- 58,698 page views
- 41,219 unique visits comprising 36,512 first time visits and 4,707 return visits.

## NPIC on social media

The National Poisons Information Centre maintains an active social media presence to increase awareness about our service and to promote poison prevention and safety in the home. The NPIC social media platforms should not be used in case of emergency for poisoning advice as the pages are not continuously monitored.



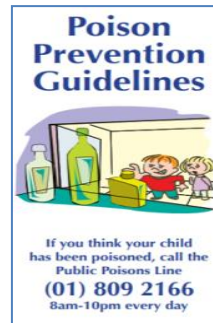
Our Facebook and Instagram (@npicireland) pages are primarily aimed at members of the public and healthcare professionals to deliver information and poisoning prevention messages.

The NPIC Facebook page had over 31,000 followers at the end of 2021 and an overall reach of 1,113,594. The NPIC Instagram page had over 5,000 followers and an overall reach of 14,033. The best performing post of 2021 on Facebook and Instagram was information on the False Widow Spider which generated 594 reactions on Facebook, 1.8K shares and achieved a reach of over 400K.

The NPIC Twitter account (@IrelandNpic) is primarily aimed at healthcare professionals to promote the NPIC service. We highlight information on poisoning trends and poison prevention messages, and share advice on the management of poisoning, and important articles from the medical literature. At the end of 2021, the NPIC had over 800 followers and had tweeted 906 times, achieved over half a million Tweet impressions, and over 22,000 profile visits for the year.

## Poison prevention materials

The NPIC Poison Prevention materials are available free of charge and can be ordered online by healthcare professionals and members of the public from the website [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)



The resources available to order are;

- Poison prevention leaflets
- ABC of Poisoning posters
- Key fobs

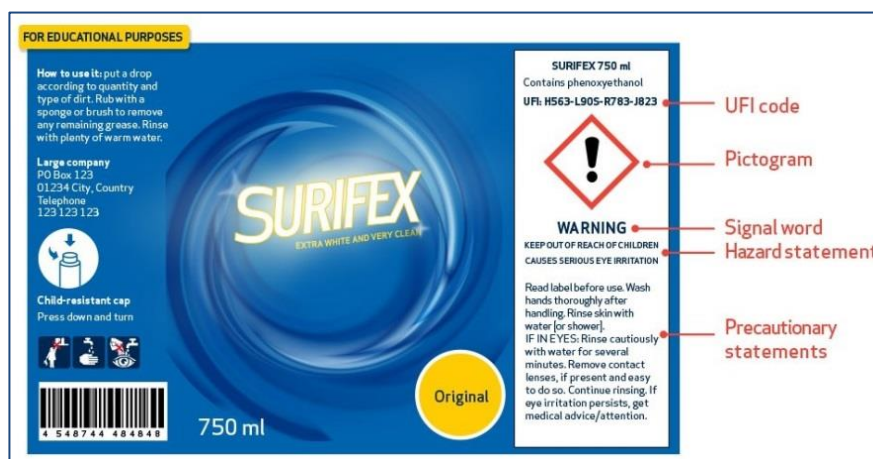


## #UFI social media campaign

The NPIC supported the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) social media campaign, #UFI mattersEU, during November 2021. The main aim of the campaign was to raise awareness among EU citizens, especially parents with small children, and teach them why the Unique Formula Identifier (UFI) code exists and where to find it.

The UFI is a 16-character code found on certain products that links information about the product, its ingredients and toxicity. The UFI code enables poison centres to give appropriate toxicity and treatment advice.

The campaign also emphasised the importance of taking safety measures at home to avoid accidental poisonings. We shared messages and images from ECHA (see images below, reprinted with permission from ECHA) on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram during the campaign and used the hashtag #UFI mattersEU



## Regulatory activities

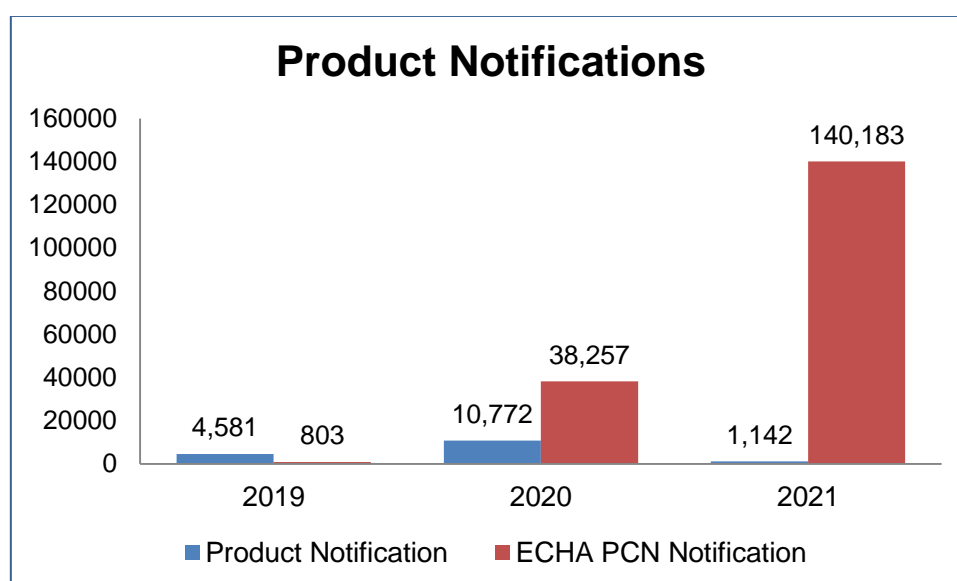
### Working in partnership with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)

The Poison Centres workload associated with the hospital’s role as the appointed body under Article 45 of the CLP Regulation remained high. The NPIC started 2021 with a significant backlog of more than 6,000 product submissions to upload on to the Document Management System (DMS). We received many of these submissions during December 2020, just before Annex VIII to the CLP Regulation entered into force. To ensure that this product information was available to NPIC staff when answering emergency enquiries, all Specialists in Poisons Information as well as the Administrative Officer spent some time uploading submissions to the DMS during the first half of 2021. This enabled us to clear the backlog by June 2021.



By the end of 2021, there were over 295,000 notifications for hazardous chemical mixtures placed on the market in Ireland made through the ECHA PCN portal.

The NPIC also received 1,142 new product registrations directly in 2021 and uploaded these to the DMS. The Poison Centre handled 1,045 queries from industry about the registration procedure and checked the quality of approximately 1,000 product registrations.



**Figure 15: Total number of product notifications received by NPIC**

## **Academic activities**

### **Lectures and presentations**

Patricia Casey gave a presentation entitled “Notifying hazardous mixtures to the National Poisons Information Centre: How, what and why?” at a webinar organised by the Health and Safety Authority on Notifying Hazardous Chemical Mixtures under CLP, on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

Patricia Casey gave a presentation entitled “The ECHA PCN Portal and the UFI” at a webinar organised by the Irish Cosmetic and Detergent Association, on 1st October 2021.

Niamh English contributed as guest lecturer for ‘Clinical Toxicology in Practice’ for the M.Sc. course in Regulatory Affairs and Toxicology at University College Dublin. The lecture was delivered online in December 2021.

### **Peer reviewers for medical journals**

Nicola Cassidy is a peer reviewer for Clinical Toxicology.

Dr Edel Duggan and Nicola Cassidy are peer reviewers for the European Journal of Clinical Pharmacology.

### **Education and training**

John Herbert attended meetings of the Early Warning Early Trends group in March 2021, attended the Emerging Drug Trends and Health Responses in Nightlife Settings, and attended the launch of the Report of the Emerging Drug Trends and Drug Checking Working Group 2021.

John Herbert represented the NPIC at the TOXBASE editing meetings.

Niamh English completed an online Diploma in Public Sector Marketing (PSM) program in 2021.

## **Continuing professional development (CPD) webinars**

Due to the ongoing public health restrictions in place during to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021, staff attended all meetings, webinars and workshops virtually. Many of the online events were attended by several staff members.

## **National Poisons Information Service (NPIS) Continuing Professional Development Meetings**

- NPIS CPD 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021 Virtual Session – “Poisonous Plants”
- NPIS CPD 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 Virtual Session – “Tricyclic Antidepressant Poisoning”, and “Covid-19 in Pregnancy: Effects, Treatments and Vaccinations”
- NPIS CPD 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2021 Virtual Session – Mini-EAPCCT . Nicola Cassidy gave an oral presentation entitled “Intentional poisoning cases reported to the National Poisons Information Centre during the initial lockdown phase of COVID-19 public health restrictions”
- NPIS CPD 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021 Virtual Session – “National Antidote Guidelines Update”, “A review of bites and stings reported to the UK National Poisons Information sustained whilst travelling overseas 2009-2019”
- NPIS CPD 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2021 Virtual Session – 2 day event
- NPIS CPD 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021 Virtual Session – “Toxic Alcohols” and “Poisoning by UK Fungi”
- NPIS virtual CPD session on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 – “Dialysis for Poisonings”

## **European Chemicals Agency Meetings and Webinars**

- Presentation of the dossier view for Appointed Bodies/Poison Centres in March 2021
- PCN Stakeholders' Group Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2021
- PCN Stakeholders' Group Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2021
- “Poison centre notifications: explaining the new changes and functionality” webinar held on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2021

## **European Association of Poison Centres & Clinical Toxicologists Webinars**

- “Methanol poisoning” webinar held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021
- EAPCCT Fellows webinar entitled “The QT ... much ado about nothing ... or not?” held virtually on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2021
- EAPCCT Fellows webinar entitled “Preventing deaths from organophosphate insecticide poisoning held virtually on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2021
- Patricia Casey attended the virtual EAPCCT Poisons Centres working group meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2021

## **American College of Medical Toxicology and American Academy of Medical Toxicology Webinars**

- “Toxicity of disinfectants” on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2021
- “Long Covid” on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021
- “The Emergence of SARS-CoV-2 Variants2” on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2021
- “Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) Covid-19 Vaccine Update” on 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2021
- “Hand Sanitizers in the COVID-19 Pandemic” on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2021
- “The Toxicologist’s Approach to the QT Interval” on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2021
- “Disinfecting Devices and Best Practices” on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2021
- “Launch of WHO Guideline for Clinical Management of Exposure to Lead” on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2021
- “Navigating the Landscape of Covid-19 Transmission and Exposure Reduction” on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2021
- “Forensic Toxicology” on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2021



## Educational Activities

- Dr Edel Duggan gave a presentation at the Royal College of Surgeons In Ireland Medical Toxicology Course on 8th October 2021. This course involves short lectures, simulation scenarios and interactive sessions on toxicological emergencies.
- Dr Edel Duggan gave a presentation to emergency medicine NCHD trainees at Beaumont Hospital in December 2021.
- Dr Edel Duggan gave a virtual lecture to final year medical students at University College Dublin on 6th December 2021.
- Dr Edel Duggan provided toxicology advice to the "Fair City" television series on RTE1 in 2021.

## Other virtual meetings

- 12th BfR User Conference Product Notifications on 15th November 2021
- Food Safety Authority of Ireland webinar: "The legal position of cannabis-based food products like CBD oils in the EU and Ireland" took place in June 2021
- "Priorities for mental health promotion and suicide prevention before, during and after Covid-19" organised by the National Suicide Research Foundation of Ireland on 10th September, World Suicide Prevention Day
- Irish Medication Safety Network Conference Autumn 2021 (virtual) on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2021 was attended by Nicola Cassidy
- European Society for Emergency Medicine webinar: Antidotes in an emergency setting took place online on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021
- Conor Hurley attended the Total Tox Course run by the American College of Medical Toxicology virtually on 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021
- Conor Hurley attended TOXTALKS 2021 run by NPIS Edinburgh online on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2021
- Patricia Casey, Nicola Cassidy, Sinead Doyle and John Herbert completed Word Press training for the NPIC website with FloWeb in October 2021

## **European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicologists Congress 2021**

The 41<sup>st</sup> International Congress of the European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicologists (EAPCCT) took place virtually from 26-28th May 2021. The congress themes were;

- Coronovirus-19 and toxicology
- Alcohol as a co-ingestant
- Investigation and management of caustic ingestions
- New tools for data collection, surveillance and education in poisoning
- Drug Formulation and its importance in the poisoned patient

The congress offered 63 platform presentations, 279 e-posters, and learning and networking opportunities with 338 poisoning and toxicology professionals from 42 countries attending virtually.

NPIC staff had 7 abstracts accepted for the conference; 5 abstracts were presented as e-posters with accompanying audio recordings. 2 platform presentations were also delivered virtually. Three of the abstracts presented in 2021 had been previously accepted for the 2020 EAPCCT Congress (that was postponed until 2021).

Three abstracts involved collaborative projects with Dr Lois O'Connor, Dr Myles Monaghan, and Dr Conor Malone working in Public Health, Anaesthesiology and Opthamology fields respectively.

Dr Edel Duggan (Clinical Director of the NPIC, Consultant Anaesthetist, Beaumont Hospital) gave an oral presentation entitled; "Intentional poisoning cases reported to the National Poisons Information Centre during the initial lockdown phase of COVID-19 public health restrictions".

Dr Myles Monaghan (Airways Fellow, Beaumont Hospital) delivered an oral presentation entitled "Enquiries to the National Poisons Information Centre concerning patients who required ventilation."

Patricia Casey presented 2 e-posters entitled “Poisoning in adolescents” and “Unintended consequences of public health measures: exposures to alcohol-based hand sanitisers during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020.”

Nicola Cassidy’s e-poster was entitled “Enquiries to the National Poisons Information Centre from ambulance control, emergency medical dispatchers, and paramedics attending poisoning incidents from 2010-2018.”

Dr Conor Malone (Connolly Hospital in collaboration with the NPIC) was short-listed for the best poster presentation entitled “A 10-year review of ocular exposures reported to the National Poisons Information Centre.”

Dr Edel Duggan presented an e-poster entitled “Risk assessment and lessons learned: collaboration between Public Health and the National Poisons Information Centre.”

Nicola Cassidy was invited to join the EAPCCT Social Media Group to help raise awareness of the congress and the congress themes and presentations via Twitter. The NPIC Twitter page was one of the top influencers during the EAPCCT 2021 congress.

## Publications

Cassidy N, English N, Herbert J, Curley G, Duggan E. Intentional poisoning cases reported to the National Poisons Information Centre during the initial lockdown phase of COVID-19 public health restrictions. *Clinical Toxicology*, 2021:59:6, 537-602, DOI: 10.1080/15563650.2021.1906080

Monaghan M, Cassidy N, Duggan E. Enquiries to the National Poisons Information Centre concerning patients who required ventilation. *Clinical Toxicology*, 2021:59:6, 537-602, DOI: 10.1080/15563650.2021.1906080

Malone C, Duggan E. A 10-year review of ocular exposures reported to the National Poisons Information Centre. *Clinical Toxicology*, 2021:59:6, 537-602, DOI: 10.1080/15563650.2021.1906080

Casey P, Duggan E. Unintended consequences of public health measures: exposures to alcohol-based hand sanitisers during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020. *Clinical Toxicology*, 2020:58:6, 505-652, DOI: 10.1080/15563650.2020.1741981

Casey P, Duggan E. Poisoning in adolescents. *Clinical Toxicology*, 2020:58:6, 505-652, DOI: 10.1080/15563650.2020.1741981

Cassidy N, Duggan E. Enquiries to the National Poisons Information Centre from ambulance control, emergency medical dispatchers, and paramedics attending poisoning incidents from 2010-2018. *Clinical Toxicology*, 2020:58:6, 505-652, DOI: 10.1080/15563650.2020.1741981

O'Connor L, Cassidy N, Herbert J, Kelly I, Duggan E. Risk assessment and lessons learned: a collaboration between Public Health and a National Poisons Information Centre. *Clinical Toxicology*, 2020:58:6, 505-652, DOI: 10.1080/15563650.2020.1741981

## Committee membership

- Dr Edel Duggan is a member of the Clinical Standards Group with Directors from the UK National Poisons Information Service.
- Dr Edel Duggan joined the meetings of the Commissioning and Clinical Standards Group of the NPIS.
- Dr Edel Duggan and John Herbert are members of the Early Warning Early Trends Sub-Committee of the National Advisory Committee on Drugs.
- Dr Edel Duggan is a member of the Chemical Safety subcommittee of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.
- Patricia Casey is a member of the EAPCCT working group on poisons centre activities.
- Dr Edel Duggan and Nicola Cassidy are members of the Medication Safety Information Committee at Beaumont Hospital.
- John Herbert is a member of the UK TOXBASE editing group.
- Dr Edel Duggan co-chaired the Nutrivigilance Steering Group Committee of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.
- Nicola Cassidy is a member of the EAPCCT Social Media Group.

## NPIC staff meetings and journal club

The NPIC held weekly online meetings as well as monthly staff meetings and regular journal club meetings during the year. Some of the interesting presentations and articles presented by NPIC staff at the NPIC Journal Club meetings included;

- Toxicologic Confounders of Brain Death Determination: A Narrative Review. *Neurocrit Care* 2020 Sep 30: 1–18 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12028-020-01114-y>
- Single versus continued dosing of fomepizole during haemodialysis in ethylene glycol toxicity. *Clinical Toxicology* 2021, 59:2, 106–110
- Nicotine intoxication by e-cigarette liquids: a study of case reports and pathophysiology. *Clinical Toxicology*, 2021, 58:1, 1-8
- Paediatric cannabis poisonings in France: more and more frequent and severe. *Clinical Toxicology*, 2020, 59:4, 326-333
- Angiotensin axis antagonists increase the incidence of haemodynamic instability in dihydropyridine calcium channel blocker poisoning. *Clinical Toxicology* 2021;59:6, 464-471
- Demystifying serotonin syndrome (or serotonin toxicity). *Can Fam Physician*. 2018, 64:10, 720–727

## Public relations and media opportunities

Patricia Casey was interviewed for an article entitled “The hidden dangers of farm chemicals” that was published online by the Farmers Journal on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021. ([www.farmersjournal.ie](http://www.farmersjournal.ie))

Dr Edel Duggan was interviewed live on Drive time on 16th December 2021 following the publication of the NPIC’s 2020 Annual Report.

An article describing the key findings of the NPIC 2020 Annual Report was published online by The Journal.ie in December 2021.

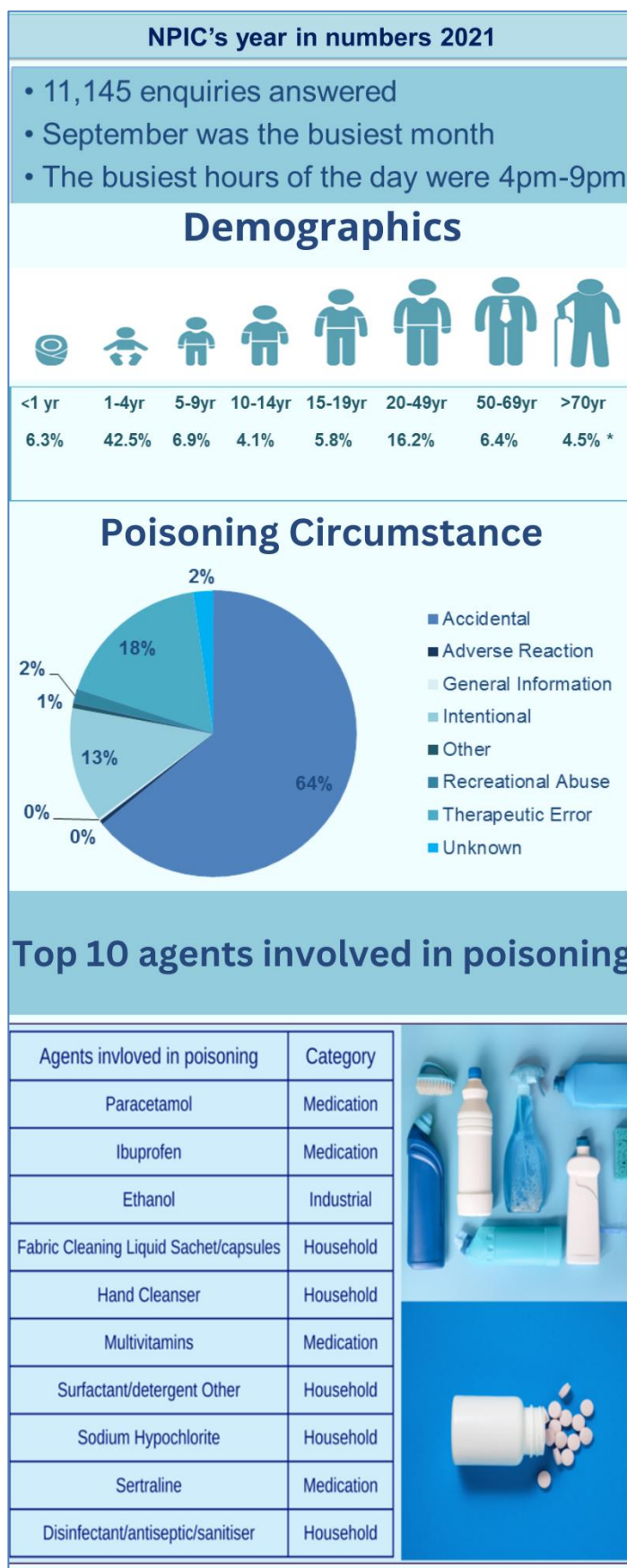
## Staff Wellbeing Initiatives

Staff participated in weekly on-line catch-up meetings to keep in touch.


To mark National Workplace Wellbeing Day on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021, staff undertook a 30-minute walk, and were tasked with taking photos of flowers, trees, clouds and a selfie! In addition, staff participated in a quiz on some of our favourite things including favourite flowers, animated movies, cartoon characters and music. Staff participated in a virtual exercise challenge on National Walking Day on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2021, and held a virtual festive Christmas quiz on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2021.



## NPIC's year in numbers 2021





<b>Contact details for the NPIC</b>	
<b>Healthcare Professional Lines</b>	<b>01 837 9964 / 01 809 2566 available 24hr</b>
<b>Public Poisons Line</b>	<b>01 809 2166 available daily from 8am - 10pm</b>
<b>Administration</b>	<b>01 797 4211</b>
<b>Website</b>	<b><a href="http://www.poisons.ie">www.poisons.ie</a></b>
<b>E-mail</b>	<b><a href="mailto:npicdublin@beaumont.ie">npicdublin@beaumont.ie</a></b>
	<b>@NPICireland</b>
	<b>@Npicireland</b>
	<b>@IrelandNpic</b>