

***Cassia occidentalis* Poisoning Causes Fatal Coma in Children in Western Uttar Pradesh**

Please refer to article “*Cassia occidentalis* poisoning causes fatal.....” published in July 2007(1). I also came across two more patients from Faridpur village of Chandausi (Moradabad) western UP in the month of October 2007. Three children while playing together consumed good amount of “*Usaya ki Fali*” (local popular name of *Cassia occidentalis*). One was five years old male child with symptoms and signs of acute encephalopathy with history of consumption of toxic beans 4 days before. Markedly low levels of blood glucose and raised liver enzyme SGPT were the only positive finding. The child collapsed within six hours with hematemesis and sudden cardiorespiratory arrest.

Second female child of four years of the same group was admitted one day before with symptoms of moderate fever and irritability and signs of mild

encephalopathy as she was able to sit and take food by mouth but not responding to vocal commands and unable to recognize her parents. SGPT was raised and blood glucose was low. Child recovered on 7th day except persistent irregular fever and discharged on paracetamol. Attendant of the patient also informed that third child of the group died on 4th day after ingestion of beans during treatment elsewhere.

While treating children from rural areas with acute encephalopathy, one should also take the history of ingestion of toxic beans.

Atulya Kumar Gupta,
Pediatrician,

*Mother & Child Health Care Center,
Braham Bazar, Chandausi,
Moradabad 202 412, UP, India.*

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Neonatal Health in India

The President's page on improving Neonatal Health Status in India(1) has covered only medical aspects of the problem. Another dimension to tackle the problem is to educate the masses, educated generation will have more mature way of thinking and desire for better quality of life. It is well known that, “Infant mortality drops down if the mother is educated”(2). Our aim should be to create a generation of educated mothers and for that since early childhood, good quality of education and nutrition should be provided to the young ones by our Government under

the supervision of NGOs and other social organizations.

Vinayak Deshmukh,
*Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College,
Sawangi (Meghe),
Wardha 442 001,
Maharashtra, India.*

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1. Thacker N. Improving status of neonatal health in India. *Indian Pediatr* 2007; 44: 891-892.
2. Charles V, Charlex SX, Strong influence of tradition on child rearing practices in India. *Trop Geogr Med* 1979; 31: 459-463.