some paediatric intensive care (PICU) patients at extubation. The aim of this audit is to establish the prescribing practice and protocols used with respect to corticosteroids for paediatric patients at time of extubation or during episodes of severe sepsis in paediatric intensive care units from the UK and Ireland.

Methods: Telephone audit of UK and Irish PICUs undertaken from Mar-Sept 2009 (n=20).

Results: In severe (inotrope resistant) septic shock, 90% (n=18) of units use steroids, all 18 use hydrocortisone, but only 33% (n=6) have a protocol. Dose ranges varied from 1mg/kg 8 hourly to 4mg/kg 6 hourly. Assessment of cortisol (either cortisol level or short synacthen test) is attempted by 67% (n=12) units prior to steroids. Onset and duration of therapy is determined by pragmatic clinical criteria in most units. For extubation, 100% (n=20) use steroids in some circumstances (Dexamethasone 90% [n=18], Dex and Prednisolone & Dex or Prednisolone both 5% [n=1]), with protocols in 30% (n=6) units. First dose varied from 24h pre-extubation to post extubation, dose range (dexamethsone) was 0.1mg/kg 8 hourly to 0.6mg/kg 6 hourly.

Conclusion: Corticosteroids are used in PICUs in the UK and Ireland for steroid resistant septic shock and extubation. Daily dose can vary by 800% (sepsis) and 533% (extubation), and numerous differing indications for commencing and discontinuing therapy. This data will aid in the design of studies to determine the optimal use of steroids in these conditions.

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POISONINGS IN CHILDREN: A TWO YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN A DISTRICT HOSPITAL'S PEDIATRIC CLINIC

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Introduction: Poisonings in childhood are a usual cause of children's admission to a pediatric ward. The most usual toxic exposures and ingestions occur at home and involve drugs, cigarettes and nondrug products such as chemical substances, plants and hydrocarbons.

Aim of the study is to make an epidemiological recording of the poisoning incidents in a district hospital's pediatric clinic during the period 2008-2009.

Material-Methods: 96 children were admitted in a two years' period and were studied according to age, sex, nationality and the ingested substance.

Results: 96/1228 (7,8%) children with a mean age 3,3y admitted because of a drug-substance poisoning. 80/96(83,3%) were greek, 13/96(13,5%) were roma and only 3/96(3,2%) were foreigners. The male children were significantly more (58/96(60,4%)) than the females (38/96(39,6%)). The majority of the incidents happened during fall (37/96(38,5%)) and spring (34/96(35,4%)). Fewer happened during summer (14,6%) and winter (11,4%). 67/96 (69,8%) were infants (1,0-3,0) y, 22/96(22,9%) were 3,1-6,0 y and 7(7,3%) were > 6 y.

19/96(19,8%) with a mean age 1,5 years old, ingested cigarettes and 48/96(50%) ingested drugs (3 of them attempted to suicide). The rest 29 cases involved non drug products (alcohol:5, hydrocarbons:8, cleaning substances: 9, plants:4, cosmetics:3)

None of these cases had adverse reactions.

Conclusion: Unintentional poisonings are common in children younger than 6 years of age, happen mostly at home and involve mostly cigarette and drug ingestion. Pediatricians must be aware and have to educate the parents in order the children to live in a safer environment.

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EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF RECENT PEDIATRIC NURSE PRACTITIONER GRADUATES IN THE USA: A WORKFORCE FOR THE HEALTH CARE OF CHILDREN

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Aims: Describe the characteristics of employment, children cared for, frequency of role functions by practice setting (primary care, specialty practice), and interest in doctoral education of recent PNP graduates.

Method: A 92-item multiple choice and short answer survey tool was sent to graduates from a convenience sample of universities.