


## ABSTRACT

Methanol poisoning in a pandemic era – what can we learn from old and from new?



While outbreaks of methanol poisoning occur frequently on a global basis, the pandemic has put a new face to a deadly poisoning that seem to affect all continents: High concentrations of methanol are now found worldwide in hand-sanitizers. The highest caseloads are still seen in the low- and middle-income countries, but no regions are spared. The size of the incidents varies greatly, from single cases to hundreds – or even thousands – at a time (1).


Given an early diagnosis, effective treatment exists. However, this requires both know-how and available equipment to identify *who* to treat, and the latter is often confounded by methanol known to act as a “great imitator”. While the mechanisms of toxicology are well studied and uniform regardless of geography, there is a great variety of handling strategies: If strategies for handling is present at all, they vary with availability of diagnostics and treatment facilities, culture, religion, and priorities.

In recent years, focus has turned towards simplifying treatment protocols, developing novel diagnostic alternatives, improve the availability of the antidote fomepizole, and look into overarching strategies for handling of larger outbreaks. Information campaigns has been initiated by NGOs like Médecins sans Frontières (MSF/Doctors without Borders) and the World Health Organization (WHO), which are increasingly often collaborating with governmental organizations for a systematic approach of the problem.

The current presentation aims at pinpointing the important aspects of methanol poisoning and see how this can affect the way ahead.

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甲醇中毒在全球原就是重要議題，然而，在新冠肺炎疫情時代，甲醇中毒以另一種致命的方式出現：清潔殺菌溶液。個案數量通常集中於中、低收入國家，但也可能發生在任何地方，沒有一個國家能倖免於難。意外發生時中毒人數常有不同，可能數人至數百人不等。

及早確立診斷就可以給予有效治療。當然，這需要具備足夠的知識以及完善的檢驗設備以鑑別需要治療的個案；甲醇這個「偉大的模仿者」，在中毒時的檢驗中容易出現不具特異性的症狀，令臨床醫師難以確立診斷。在毒理學中，甲醇中毒的機轉已不分地域性地被討論及研究，事實上處理的方式可能依所處地域的設備、文化、醫療資源等而所不同。

近年來，甲醇治療的重點著重在簡化治療流程、發展新的診斷方式、增加解毒劑“fomepizole”取得便利性、以及在大量中毒個案狀態下的處理。最初此概念由非政府組織（例如：無國界醫師）以及世界衛生組織發起，並與政府單位合作得以系統性分析、處理甲醇中毒的問題。

今天帶來的演講將著重在甲醇中毒的重要角色以及未來的發展。