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8/06

MEMO

To: Emergency Physicians, PAs, Nurses, Intensivists, and Hospitalists
From: Steven A. Seifert, MD, Medical Director, Nebraska Regional Poison Center
Re: Toxicology Update

1) I would like to introduce Claudia Barthold, MD, who is joining the Nebraska Regional Poison Center as Assistant Medical Director and will share call with Jennifer Audi, MD, and me for phone consultations. She is residency trained and Board Certified in emergency medicine and has just completed a medical toxicology fellowship at Emory University/CDC-ATSDR/Georgia Poison Center in Atlanta. She will have bedside consulting privileges at The Nebraska Medical Center, Creighton University Medical Center, and Children's Hospitals in Omaha, and also have an outpatient clinic to which toxicology patients may be referred.

2) We continue to see flumazenil (Romazicon®) being used in the adult, unknown or poly-drug overdose (OD). Flumazenil is only indicated for the reversal of procedural sedation in a patient with a known medication and medical history. **We consider flumazenil to be contraindicated in acute or chronic overdoses** because of the risk of inducing withdrawal seizures, unmasking seizures from co-ingestants, or making seizures of any cause more difficult to control.

3) We occasionally see N-acetylcysteine (NAC) therapy being discontinued too soon in acetaminophen overdoses. Although it is true that the main benefit to the liver is during the time of acetaminophen metabolism and NAPQI generation, there are other beneficial effects of the drug, and patients with hepatic injury treated with NAC do better than those who are not. The end points for NAC therapy in a patient for whom it is initially indicated (above the treatment line on the nomogram or inability to apply the nomogram in an exposure) are: 1) reaching 36 hours with a negative acetaminophen level and normal liver tests; 2) Clear improvement as evidenced by declining AST/ALT (ideally < 1,000), PT/INR, ammonia, and improving mental status; 3) Liver transplant; or 4) Death.

Please share this memo with care providers and other appropriate personnel.