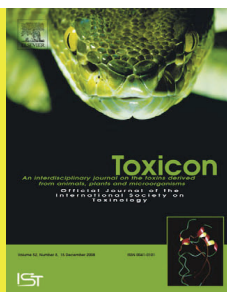


Lessepsian migration and tetrodotoxin poisoning due to *Lagocephalus sceleratus* in the eastern Mediterranean

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Background: The Suez Canal permits migration of fish from the Indo-Pacific Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. This phenomenon (Lessepsian migration) has enabled poisonous fish species to colonize the Mediterranean Sea. Objective: To report clinical tetrodotoxin poisoning after consumption of the Lessepsian immigrant fish *Lagocephalus sceleratus* caught on the Israeli coast of the eastern Mediterranean.

Case series: Thirteen patients aged 26–70 years were admitted after consuming *L. sceleratus*. Signs of toxicity appeared within 1 h. The main manifestations included vomiting, diarrhea, headache, paraesthesias, slurred speech, muscle weakness, dyspnea, hypertension, tachycardia, respiratory arrest, seizures and coma. Treatment was supportive, including mechanical ventilation (two patients). Patients recovered within 4 days. All fish were identified as *L. sceleratus*, a species known to contain tetrodotoxin.

Discussion: The diagnosis of tetrodotoxin poisoning was suggested by typical clinical manifestations together with temporal proximity to consumption of tetrodotoxin-containing fish. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first case series of tetrodotoxin poisoning reported from the eastern Mediterranean and due to *L. sceleratus*. Man made disruption of the ecological balance has resulted in the spread of tetrodotoxin-containing fish from the Indo-Pacific region to the Mediterranean Sea. Increased awareness is required to identify tetrodotoxin poisoning in an atypical fauna

Aluminum phosphide fatalities, new local experience

Med Sci Law. 2000 Apr;40(2):164-8

Faculty of Medicine, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan. Aluminum phosphide (AIP) pesticide is a highly toxic, low cost, and easily accessible rodenticidal agent. Its toxicity results from the liberation of phosphine gas upon exposure to moisture, which leads to multisystem involvement, resulting in serious consequences. The highly toxic parathion insecticide was a common cause of mortality in pesticide fatalities, prior to its banning. Its toxicity was familiar to the public as well as to physicians. Recently, ten fatalities due to AIP were encountered within a three-month period during spring, when it was used as a rodenticide in the vicinity of grain stores. The victims' ages ranged from 1–34 years. The circumstances of death were accidental in six cases, suicidal in two and possibly homicidal in two cases. Retrospectively, the clinical manifestations, scene investigation, autopsy, histological and toxicological findings supported the diagnosis of AIP intoxication. Immediate recognition was difficult due to unfamiliarity of the agent to the physicians. The occurrence of these fatalities might suggest changes of pattern in pesticide poisoning. This should raise the attention of the physician to the problem of AIP poisoning and also necessitates the awareness of the public to the hazards of this poison. Education, proper handling, strict observation and abiding by the regulations controlling this material are good protective measures against AIP poisoning.



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