



Veterinary Poisons Information Service (VPIS)

**Annual Report
2013**



The Veterinary Poisons Information Service (VPIS)

The VPIS is a 24-hour telephone emergency service for veterinary professionals and those working for animal welfare organizations providing information on the management of actual and suspected acute poisoning in animals.

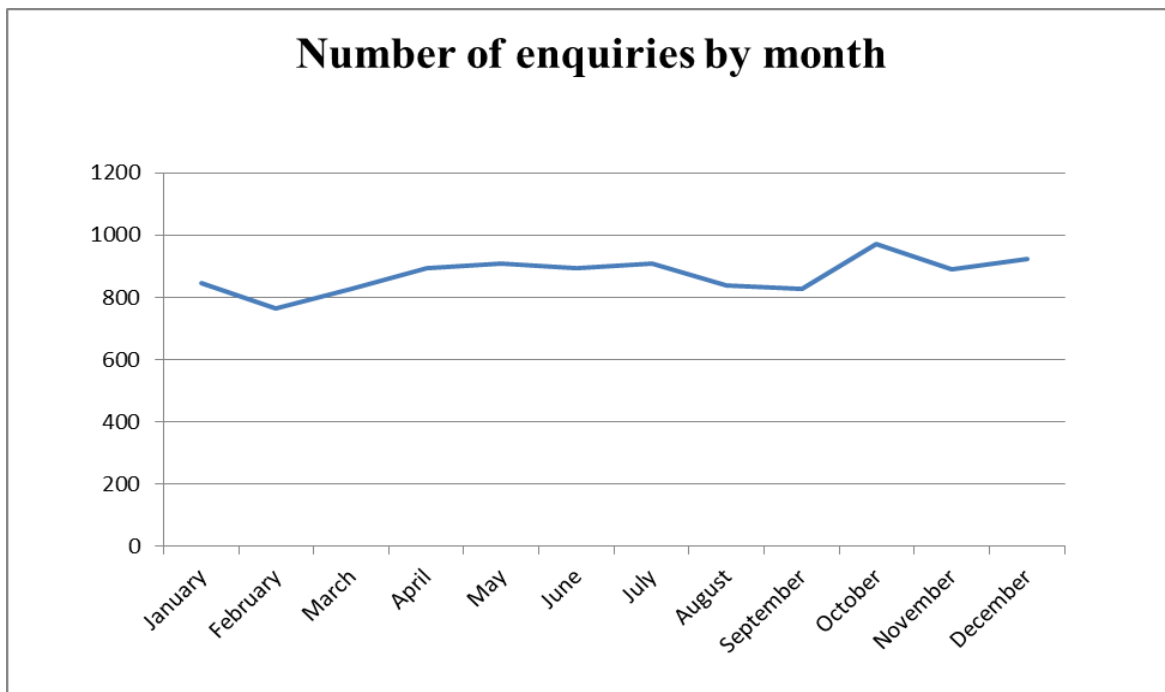
Advice for every consultation is tailored to the specific case in question and can include a risk assessment, information on anticipated clinical effects, a suggested treatment protocol and prognostic advice, with the aim of ensuring the animal receives appropriate and optimum treatment.

Enquiry load

In 2013 the VPIS received 10,491 telephone enquiries, compared to 13,396 in 2012.

Monthly enquiry load

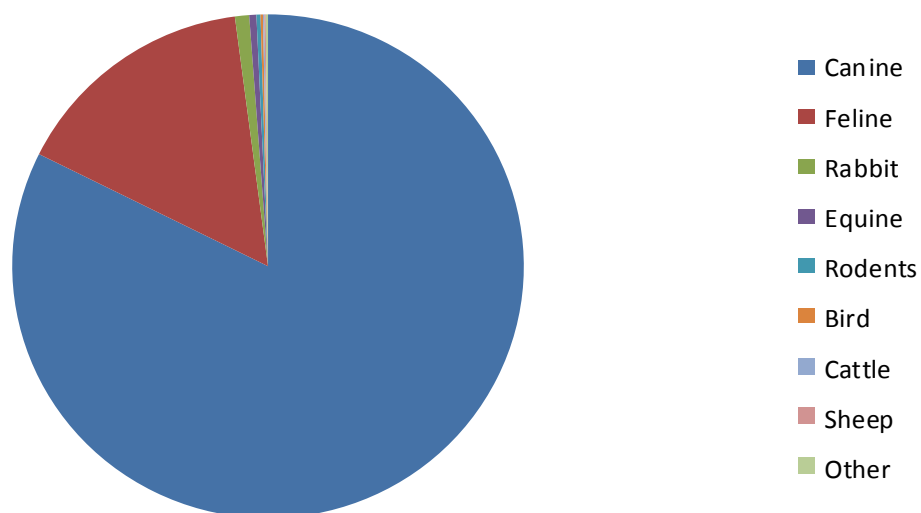
The number of enquiries was fairly constant throughout the year with a peak in October.



Enquiries by animal type

The VPIS will answer an enquiry about any animal. In 2013 the VPIS received enquiries about 17 different animal types, but dogs predominated (82%) followed by cats (16%).

Percentage of enquiries by animal type



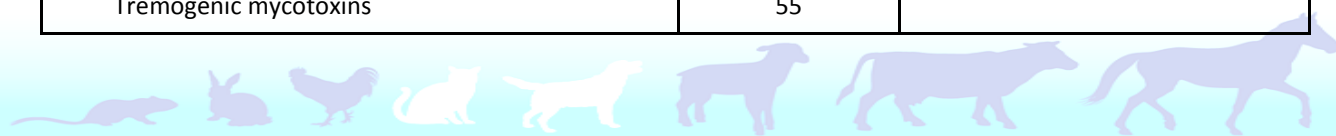
Animal	Total
Canine	8622 (82%)
Feline	1632 (15.6%)
Rabbit	94
Equine	47
Rodents	27
Bird	16
Cattle	9
Sheep	9
Goat	3
Ferret	2
Pig	2
Raccoon	2
Reptile	2
Reindeer	1
Fox	1
Human	1
Amphibian	1



Enquiries by agent

The 10,491 cases involved 13,803 agents.

Agent group	Total	Percentage of total enquiries
Drugs	5998	43.5%
Ibuprofen	411	
Paracetamol	360	
Naproxen	124	
Oral contraceptives	117	
Household products	1703	12.3%
Fertilisers	110	
Benzalkonium chloride	91	
Battery	70	
Ethylene glycol	60	
Disinfectant	58	
Detergent	48	
Pesticides	1660	12.0%
Difenacoum	340	
Bromadiolone	291	
Glyphosate	96	
Permethrin	86	
Food	1582	11.5%
Chocolate	667	
<i>Vitis vinifera</i> (grapes, sultanas, raisins, etc)	314	
Xylitol	93	
Onions	63	
Plants (excluding food plants)	1369	9.9%
<i>Lilium</i> species	122	
<i>Narcissus</i> species/daffodil	44	
<i>Tulipa</i> species/tulip	44	
Animals	196	1.4%
Adder	95	
Cosmetics and toiletries	151	1.1%
Hair colourant	21	
Nappy rash cream	20	
Soap bar	10	
Fungi	136	1.0%
Unidentified fungi	57	
Tremogenic mycotoxins	55	

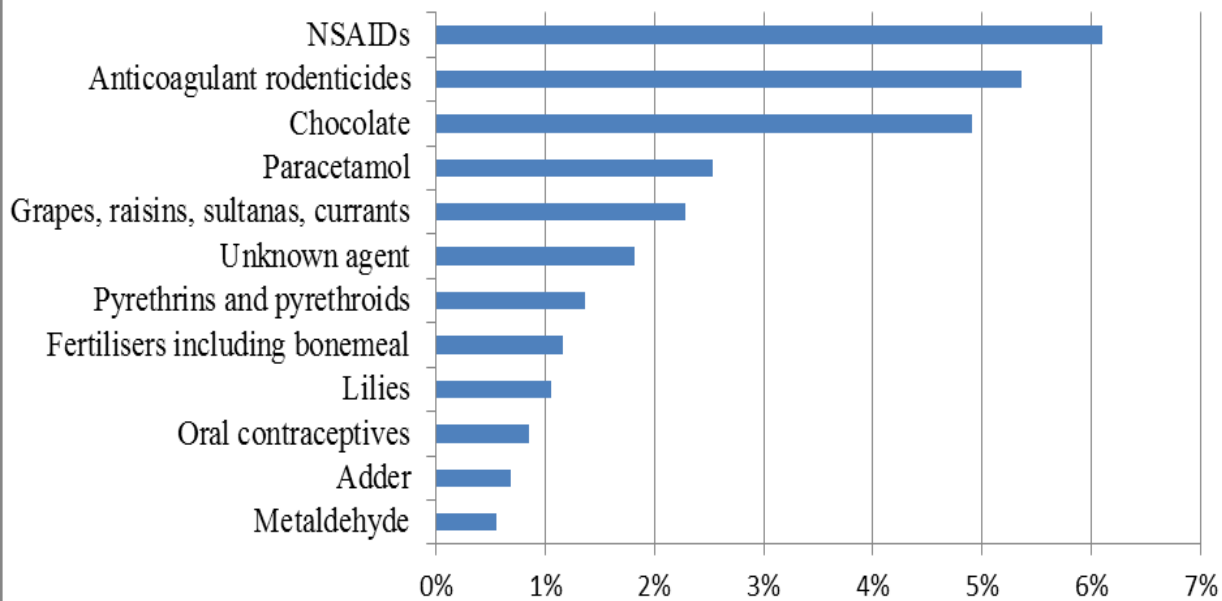


All animals - The top 10 enquiries

Overall the most common agent the VPIS received enquiries about was the analgesic ibuprofen (3.9%), however if all the different chocolate types that appear in the top ten are combined they comprise 6.4% of all enquiries. The enquiry numbers for the anticoagulant rodenticides bromadiolone and difenacoum totalled 6.0% of all enquiries.

Agent name	Total	Percentage of total enquiries
1. Ibuprofen	411	3.9%
2. Paracetamol	360	3.4%
3. Difenacoum	340	3.2%
4. Milk chocolate	322	3.1%
5. <i>Vitis vinifera</i> (grapes, sultanas, raisins, etc)	314	3.0%
6. Bromadiolone	291	2.8%
7. Unknown agent	253	2.4%
8. Chocolate	176	1.7%
9. Dark chocolate	169	1.6%
10. Naproxen	124	1.2%

Top agents - Percentage of annual total



Dogs - The top 10 enquiries

In dogs ibuprofen was the top agent, but if all the different chocolate types that appear in the top ten are combined they comprise 7.5% of all canine enquiries. The anticoagulant rodenticides, bromadiolone and difenacoum comprised 6.7% of all canine enquiries.

Agent name	Total	Percentage of canine enquiries
1. Ibuprofen	395	4.6%
2. Paracetamol	316	3.7%
3. Milk chocolate	313	3.6%
4. Difenacoum	313	3.6%
5. <i>Vitis vinifera</i> (grapes, sultanas, raisins, etc)	295	3.4%
6. Bromadiolone	261	3.0%
7. Dark chocolate	167	1.9%
8. Chocolate	165	1.9%
9. Unknown agent	156	1.8%
10. Naproxen	123	1.4%

Cats - The top 10 enquiries

The common enquiry in cats involved an unknown agent. *Lilium* species (lily) was the second most common agent the VPIS was consulted about in cats (5.1%).

Agent name	Total	Percentage of feline enquiries
1. Unknown agent	90	5.5%
2. <i>Lilium</i> species	83	5.1%
3. benzalkonium chloride	63	3.9%
4. permethrin	57	3.5%
5. paracetamol	43	2.6%
6. ethylene glycol	41	2.5%
7. imidacloprid	38	2.3%
8. praziquantel	37	2.3%
9. disinfectant	36	2.2%
10. glyphosate	25	1.5%



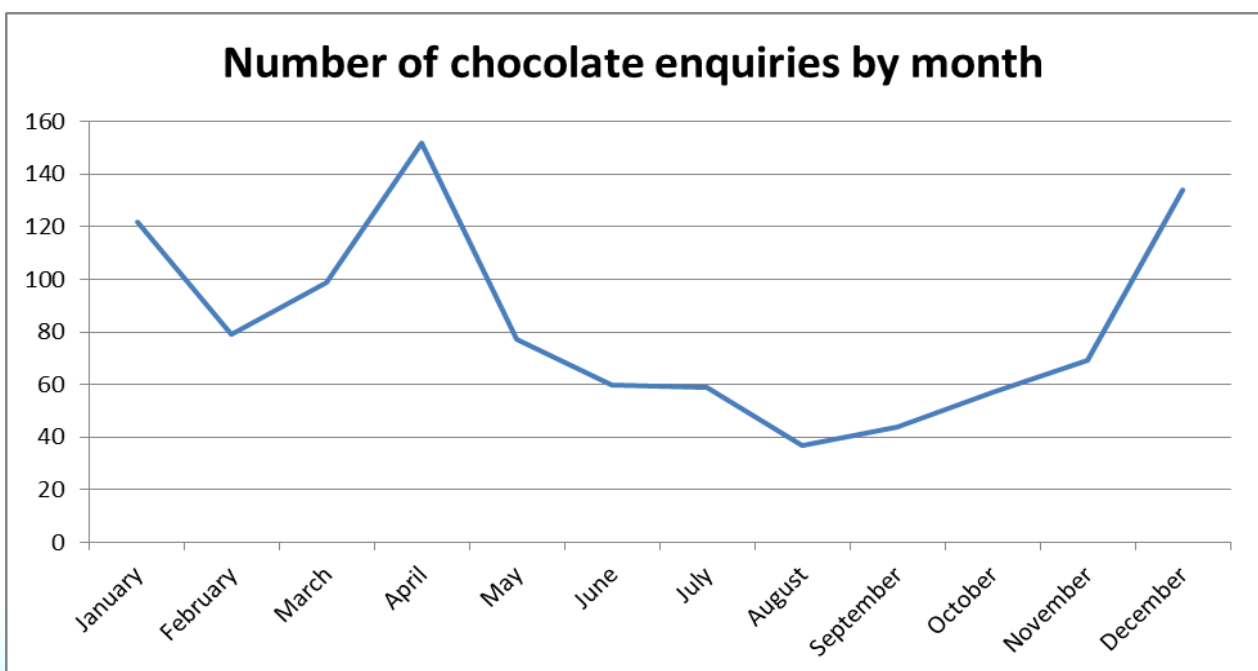
Rabbits - The top enquiries

Difenacoum was the most common enquiry in rabbits.

Agent name	Total	Percentage of rabbit enquiries
1. Difenacoum	10	10.6%
2. <i>Lilium</i> species	7	7.4%
3. Meloxicam	5	5.3%
4. Rodenticide nk	4	4.3%
4. Fenbendazole	4	4.3%
4. Bromadiolone	4	4.3%
7. <i>Spathiphyllum</i> species/peace lily	3	3.2%
7. Glyphosate	3	3.2%
9. Veterinary vaccine	2	2.1%
9. Xylitol	2	2.1%
9. <i>Zantedeschia aethiopica</i> /arum lily/calla lily	2	2.1%
9. Disinfectant	2	2.1%
9. Chocolate	2	2.1%
9. <i>Hedera helix</i> /ivy	2	2.1%

Seasonality of enquiries

There was a seasonal variability in some agents. This was most obvious with chocolate, with peaks in enquiry numbers occurring near Easter and Christmas. Of all chocolate enquiries over the year, 41% occurred in January, April and December.



Follow up data of enquiries

The VPIS sends out postal questionnaires to collect data on the clinical course, treatments given and outcome of a proportion of cases. In 2013 follow up questionnaires were sent for 2,837 cases (27% of the total cases) and returned for 1,425 (50% of follow ups sent).

In over half the cases where follow up information was received the animal made a full recovery. Over a third of the animals remained asymptomatic. A fatal outcome was recorded in 7% of cases (4% euthanised and 3% died). Financial concerns may be a factor in some cases where euthanasia was used.

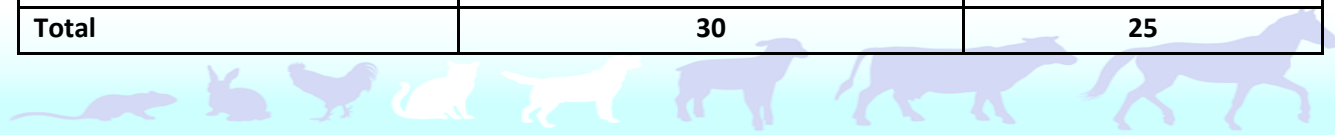
Outcome	Total	Total
Full recovery	771	54%
Fine throughout	412	29%
Euthanised	58	4%
Died	40	3%
Full recovery (query related)	27	
Unrelated to exposure	23	
Not applicable	15	
Euthanised (unrelated)	13	
Did not present	11	
Died (query related)	11	
Ongoing	9	
Improving but ongoing	9	
Euthanised (query related)	9	
No follow up	10	
Died (unrelated)	4	
Not specified	2	
Query related	1	
Not known	0	
Not known - referred	0	
Grand Total	1425	



Cases with fatal outcomes – dogs

In dogs there was a fatal outcome in 52 cases (which were thought to be due to poisoning). Of these 27 dogs died and 25 were euthanised. The most common agent associated with a fatal outcome was 'agent unknown', that is where poisoning was suspected as the cause of their clinical signs but the specific agent could not be identified.

Agent	Died	Euthanised
Unknown agent	6	4
Fluorouracil	1	2
Pyriprole	3 (3 dogs died in the same incident)	
Strychnine	3 (3 dogs died in 2 incidents)	
Baclofen	2	
Doramectin	2	
Ethylene glycol		2
Ivermectin		2
Sultanas		2
Raisins	1	1
Tremorgenic mycotoxins	1	1
Fungi unidentified	1	1
Metaldehyde	1	1
Chlorhexidine disinfectant	1	
Chlorophacinone	1	
Dinitrophenol	1	
Flurbiprofen	1	
Lamotrigine	1	
Milk chocolate	1	
Nitroxylnil	1	
Pot pourri and all purpose cleaner		1
Salt dough (homemade)	1	
<i>Allium cepa</i> (onion)		1
Anticoagulant rodenticide		1
Calcipotriol		1
Fabric cleaning liquid capsules		1
Grapes		1
Methylphenidate		1
<i>Narcissus</i> species (daffodil), <i>Convallaria majalis</i> (lily of the valley), <i>Crocus</i> species		1
Paracetamol		1
White spirit		1
Total	30	25



Cases with fatal outcomes – cats

In cats there was a fatal outcome in 36 cases (which were thought to be due to poisoning). Of these 7 cats died and 29 were euthanised. The most common agent involved in these cases was ethylene glycol which accounted for 44% of fatalities.

Agent	Died	Euthanised
Ethylene glycol	2	14
Unknown agent	3	4
Permethrin		4
<i>Lilium</i> species		2
Fabric washing liquid		1
Imidacloprid and moxidectin		1
Paracetamol		1
Cypermethrin		1
Plant unidentified		1
Venlafaxine	1	
Alkaline unknown	1	
Total	7	29

Cases with fatal outcomes – other animals

Animal	Agent	Died	Euthanised
Chicken	Fertiliser	1	
Donkey	Unknown agent	2 died in the same incident	
Equine nk	2,4-D		1
Ferret	Ibuprofen		1
Hamster	brodifacoum		1
Rabbit	<i>Taxus baccata</i> (yew) <i>Pinus</i> species	1	
Rat	Imidacloprid and moxidectin	1	
Sheep	<i>Hedera helix</i> (ivy)	1	
Sheep	<i>Ligustrum</i> species (privet)	45 died in the same incident	



Publications

Bates NS, Warrell DA. 2013 Treatment of adder bites in dogs. *Veterinary Record* 172:23-24.

Bates N, Chatterton J, Robbins C, Wells K, Hughes J, Stone M, Campbell A. 2013 Lipid infusion in the management of poisoning: a report of 6 canine cases. *Veterinary Record* 172(13):339.

Bates N, Edwards N. 2013 Glyphosate toxicity in animals [letter]. *Clinical Toxicology* 51(10):1243.

Ellison J. 2013 Hidden dangers of ethylene glycol. *Veterinary Practice Today* 1(1):15.

Education, outreach and collaborations

VPIS had a stand at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Annual Congress in Birmingham in April and produced 4 issues of the VPIS newsletter, *Toxic Times* (available on the website). The winter issue included a poster of Christmas hazards.

We also collaborated with mycologists at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew on a pilot identification programme in cases where animals have ingested fungi.

VPIS produced 10 online CPD modules that are available through Vetacademy and contributed three entries to Vetstream (apomorphine, lipid infusion, gut decontamination).

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