



Guy's and St Thomas' NHS
NHS Foundation Trust



Centre Hospitalier Régional
Universitaire de Lille



ASHT!

Alerting System for Chemical Health Threats

Associate Partners:

European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicologists (EAPCCT).
Giz-Nord Poisons Centre, University Medical Centre Göttingen (UMG), Göttingen, Germany
Guy's and St Thomas's Medical Toxicology Unit (GSTFT), UK.
Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Lille (CHRU de Lille), France.
Health Emergency Situations Centre (HESC), Vilnius, Lithuania.
General Faculty Hospital, Prague, Czech Republic.

Subcontractors:

National Poisons Information Service, UK.

Collaborating Partners:

World Health Organization Switzerland.
World Health Organization Europe.
Health Emergency Situation Centre, Lithuania.
Ministry of Health, Czech Republic.
National Poisons Information Centre (Nordic countries), Norway.
Centro de Informacao Antivenenos, Portugal.
National Centre for Epidemiology, Surveillance and Health Promotion, Italy.
National Poisons Centre for Ireland.
BICHAT representative, Germany.
BICHAT representative, France.
National Institute of Health, Italy.
American Association of Poison Control Centres (AAPCC), USA.

Project Duration:

October 2008 - September 2011. The project is partly funded by the European Commission (Grant Agreement Number 2007210).



Left rear: Al Bronstein, Stacey Wyke, Hugo Kupferschmidt, Herbert Desel, Kevin Manley, Gabija Dragelyte, Nick Edwards
Left front: Rob Orford, Raquel Duarte-Davidson, Alison Good, Daniela Pelclova, Monique Mathieu-Nolf, Andreas Schaper



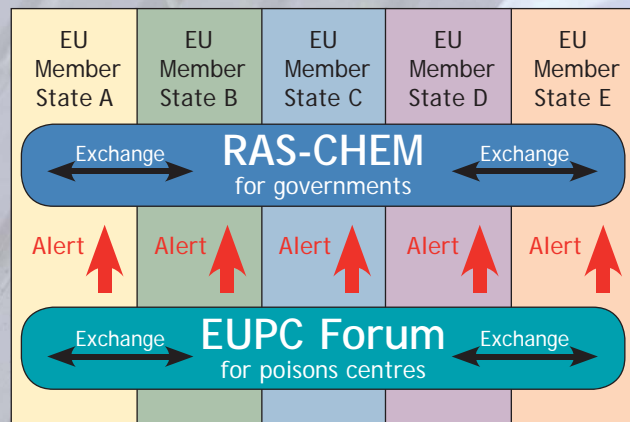
December 2009 Number 1

Newsletter

The aim of the Alerting System for Chemical Health Threats - Phase II (ASHTII) project is to improve the speed and effectiveness of public health response to toxic exposures following deliberate or accidental chemical incidents.

Currently, no standardised format or protocol for sharing information or issuing alerts about chemical incidents throughout EU Member States exists. Therefore, the European Union Public Health Programme funded the Alerting System and Health Surveillance System project (ASHTI), which demonstrated poison centres are a feasible resource to detect sentinel events and culminated in outlining the concepts required to establish a Rapid Alert System for CHEMical health threats (RAS-CHEM). The ASHTI project was successful in envisaging an improved communication structure required for a successful rapid Alerting System for chemical Health Threats. The second phase of the ASHTII project will improve upon the current data transfer systems and information sharing and will develop mechanisms (and strategies) for analysing and reporting information between health professionals, from poisons centres to national public health officials.

RAS-CHEM and EUPC forum reporting process



Project Progress

RAS-CHEM has been extended to include a tiered-access alerting system for chemical health threats; the lower tier of RAS-CHEM is comprised of the European Union poison centre (EUPC) Forum that enables poison centres to communicate with each other directly. RAS-CHEM is reserved for national public health authorities and health ministries to communicate events that may have potential public health impact (either nationally, or internationally). For both facets of the alerting system to operate successfully the incorporation of standardised terminology to describe clinical effects has been recommended. A standardised chemical agent classification system is also under review for inclusion in the system. Guidance has been developed for adding chemical agents to RAS-CHEM in the future.

Within the project we have engaged with national public health officials and health ministries. This has shown that a range of mechanisms exist for reporting chemical health threats in participating Member State countries.

Extensive high level discussions about ASHTII and feedback on the project is very positive. RAS-CHEM is viewed as a practical and valuable addition to the European Union and the Health Emergency Operation Facility (HEOF).

EU exercises are planned to evaluate RAS-CHEM and will provide opportunity to engage additional key stakeholders and Member State Authorities.

We are very pleased to announce that we have three new collaborating partners:

- National Institute of Health, Rome, Italy.
- American Association of Poison Control Centres (AAPCC), USA
- National Poisons Information Centre, Ireland.

If you would like further information about the project or would like to become a collaborating partner please contact asht@HPA.org.uk or visit www.hpa.org.uk/ASHTII.