

16 Oct 2019

Joint Advisory Committee on Medicines Scheduling and Advisory
Committee on Chemicals Scheduling
Therapeutic Goods Administration
136 Narrabundah Lane, Symonston ACT 2609

Re: Proposed amendments referred for scheduling advice to the Joint ACMS-ACCS #23

The NSW Poisons Information Centre (NSWPIC) provides a phone-based advice service on suspected poisonings to the public and health professionals calling from NSW, TAS and ACT on a near full-time basis and a shared after-hours service to the remainder of Australia. This results in approximately half of Australia's poisons-related calls being received by our Centre.

2.1. Caffeine

The NSW Poisons Information Centre supports the proposed rescheduling of caffeine. Caffeine can cause significant toxicity involving gastrointestinal, stimulant, metabolic and cardiac effects. Exposures of 15-30mg/kg can cause mild to moderate toxicity and need referral to hospital for monitoring. Caffeine in high concentration preparations poses a greater risk of toxicity and requirement of medical management. A pure caffeine powder could produce toxicity in very small quantities (< 1gm in an adult and as little as 150mg in a toddler).

There have been 724 calls to the NSW PIC regarding exposures to caffeine (not energy drinks) since Jan 2014 and only 1/3 of these calls involved an accidental exposure. This shows wide use/misuse in the community which has remained constant over the last 5 years (see table below).

Year	Calls to NSW PIC regarding intentional exposure to caffeine
2014	90
2015	88
2016	88
2017	93
2018	89
2019 to Oct 15th	86

There have been calls regarding 9 exposures to caffeine powder since 2014 evenly spread over the 5 years. All these patients were symptomatic requiring medical management. Of these exposures two were deliberate self-harm, two were therapeutic errors and the remaining 5 exposures were intentional exposures for weight-loss, body building or recreational purpose. The inclusion of caffeine powder in schedule 6 will ensure appropriate labelling and reduce the likelihood of exposures such as these therapeutic errors and intentional misuse.

Regards

