

11 October 2018
Advisory Committee on Medicines Scheduling
Therapeutic Goods Administration

Publication of interim decisions proposing to amend, or not amend, the current Poisons Standard, September 2018

- *1.3 Alkyl nitrites*

The NSW Poisons Information Centre (NSWPIC) supports the decision from ACMS for creating a Schedule 9 entry for alkyl nitrites. In addition, we wish to show evidence of increasing harms based on updated NSWPIC data for data from 1 January 2018 to 10 October 2018.

A detailed analysis shows 43 exposure calls to alkyl nitrites have been received in 2018 so far, which compares with 20 calls during the same period in 2017. Poisonings have more than doubled (115% increase) over one year. The national number of calls to Poisons Information Centres is estimated to be about double this, in addition there would be significant underreporting of actual exposures. The majority (72%) required hospitalisation. One case was of deliberate self-poisoning and the remainder accidental or intentional misuse/abuse. Demographic analysis reveals two-thirds were male, median age 23 years and range 17-49 years, and from across most Australian states and territories – indicating a wide range of the community suffering harms from these substances.

It is important to note that at least 8 of 13 exposures were inhalational (ie as intended) resulted in hospitalisation with signs of toxicity, including significant methaemoglobinaemia, hypoxia, cyanosis and severe respiratory distress.

Further discussion regarding this de-identified data is available on request by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Yours sincerely,

