Toxicology Rounds: Test Your Toxicology IQ with Our Annual News Quiz

Gussow, Leon MD

It was another eventful year in toxicology. No sooner had 2014 gotten underway when the Elk River in Charleston, WV, was polluted by a massive industrial chemical spill, depriving 300,000 local residents of water they couldn't even use for showering. Then, last summer, the water supply to Toledo, OH, was cut off because of an explosive bloom of algae producing the hepatotoxin microcystin.

This pop quiz will test your knowledge of other tox-related news events over the past year. If you get five or fewer correct, you may want to spend more time surfing the web looking for weird postings. If you get 11 or more correct, the Department of Homeland Security might well to talk with you about your strange obsession with poisons.

1. Nuclear engineer Paul Curry was convicted last year of murdering his wife in 1994 by injecting her with a lethal dose of:
   A. Caffeine
   B. Strychnine
   C. Ricin
   D. Nicotine

2. The improved formula for Johnson & Johnson's No More Tears baby shampoo no longer contains which ingredient(s):
   A. Formaldehyde
   B. Dioxane
   C. Both
   D. Neither

3. The Coca-Cola company pulled an advertising campaign for Diet Coke featuring which tagline because commentators thought it was a reference to drug use:
   A. “High as a kite”
   B. “Natural speed”
   C. “You're on”
   D. “When you have to be up all night”

4. A driver crashed his Mercedes-Benz convertible into the lobby of the CNN Center in Atlanta laid the blame on:
   A. Having smoked marijuana.
   B. Brake failure.
   C. Having snorted cocaine.
   D. Inadvertently swallowing mouthwash.
5. The FDA approved the long-acting hydrocodone product Zohydro-ER despite the fact that its own expert advisory panel voted against approval:
   A. 7-6
   B. 9-4
   C. 11-2
   D. 13-0

6. The chef at a restaurant in China's Shaanxi Province was arrested for adding what to his noodles:
   A. Opium
   B. MSG
   C. Cocaine
   D. Powdered rhinoceros horn

7. *Science News* reported in April that the chemical warfare agent cyanogen chloride may be found in swimming pools as a result of:
   A. Contamination during chlorine manufacturing
   B. Swimmers throwing apple cores into the pool
   C. People urinating in the pool
   D. Industrial run-off leaching into the water

8. Chef Peng Fan died in China's Guangdong Province when he:
   A. Developed refractory bronchospasm after accidentally inhaling ground Sichuan pepper (*Zanthoxylum*)
   B. Was bitten by the decapitated head of a cobra
   C. Ingested the liver of fugu (pufferfish) that he thought was monkfish
   D. Developed wound botulism after amputating his left hand in a bizarre cleaver accident

9. Norwegian teenager Henrik Eide Dahl was hospitalized with multiorgan failure after consuming how many liters of energy drinks while playing a video game:
   A. 4
   B. 2
   C. 6
   D. 10

10. Pastor Jamie Coots, the star of a National Geographic reality show, died after refusing medical treatment during a religious service in which he was:
    A. Stung by a scorpion
    B. Bitten by a brown recluse spider
    C. Bitten by a rattlesnake
    D. Handling a poison arrow frog
11. Nurse Stephanie Greene was sentenced to 20 years in prison for the 2012 death of her 6-week-old daughter after giving her a fatal dose of morphine by:
   A. Negligently adding the drug to infant formula
   B. Breastfeeding her child
   C. Giving the child 5 drops of liquid morphine sulfate to help her sleep
   D. Letting the child use a vial of morphine sulfate tablets as a rattle

12. Georgia resident Gabrielle Huff spent a month in jail for having methamphetamine residue in her Extensive forensic analysis ultimately determined that the residue was actually:
   A. Talcum powder
   B. Dried sunblock
   C. Coffee creamer
   D. SpaghettiOs

13. Two toddlers died in Jerusalem after an exterminator sprayed their apartment with:
   A. Hydrogen sulfide
   B. Pyrethrin
   C. Chlorpyrifos
   D. Phosphine