

OP - 7

## MEDICO-LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF ILLEGAL COMMERCIAL TOXIC DETERGENT "PRINSO": AN AUTOPSY STUDY

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### INTRODUCTION

Time to time there are unusual commercial products appear in the market and they become epidemics of suicide. "Prinso/ Pus kudu" is an illegal commercial detergent. This washing powder is marketed as two sachets; 12.5g of oxalic acid and 1.2g of potassium permanganate. During past two years, there was an epidemic of suicide deaths due to ingestion of "Prinso/ Pus kudu" in Sabaragamuwa province, Sri Lanka.

### METHODS

A descriptive cross sectional study. All deaths reported for autopsy following self-ingestion of "Prinso" to Ratnapura Provincial General Hospital from Jan 2015 – Dec 2016 were analyzed. Autopsy findings were collected using a data collection form.

### RESULTS

There were 16 deaths. Ages ranged from 19 to 68 years. Most were young adults. Different brands of "Prinso" were used and relatives identified them as "Pus Kudu". It is tasteless and odorless. Most (n=14) had taken 2 or 3 packets and most (n=11) died within 12 hours. According to autopsy, most (n=14) had congested kidneys and mucosal erosions in upper GIT. There were macroscopic and microscopic evidence of acute renal failure in five cases. Histopathology showed purple brown stain in renal tubular cells in all cases.

### CONCLUSIONS

Due to attractive colour, mild corrosiveness and no taste or odor, "Prinso/ Pus kudu" is an ideal agent to commit suicide by ingestion. Adult males are more vulnerable. Death was almost certain and rapid when more than one pack is ingested. Rapid deaths are due to the direct or indirect effects of oxalic acid. Late deaths are due to acute renal failure by calcium oxalate. Since JMO comes to know the morbidity and mortality of such toxic products early, he/she should initiate safety measurements to prevent public harm.