



# **Veterinary Poisons Information Service (VPIS)**

**Annual Report  
2012**



## The Veterinary Poisons Information Service (VPIS)

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The VPIS is a 24-hour telephone emergency service for veterinary professionals and those working for animal welfare organizations providing information on the management of actual and suspected acute poisoning in animals.

Advice for every consultation is tailored to the specific case in question and can include a risk assessment, information on anticipated clinical effects, a suggested treatment protocol and prognostic advice, with the aim of ensuring the animal receives appropriate and optimum treatment.

### Enquiry load

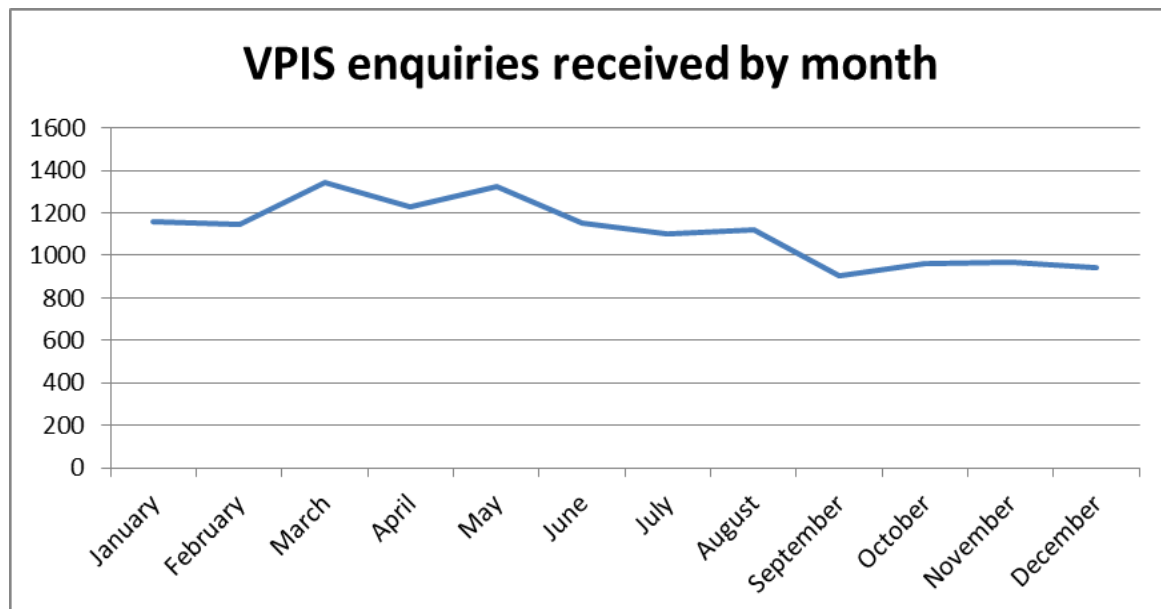
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In 2012 the VPIS received 13,396 enquiries, compared to 15,421 in 2011.

### Monthly enquiry load

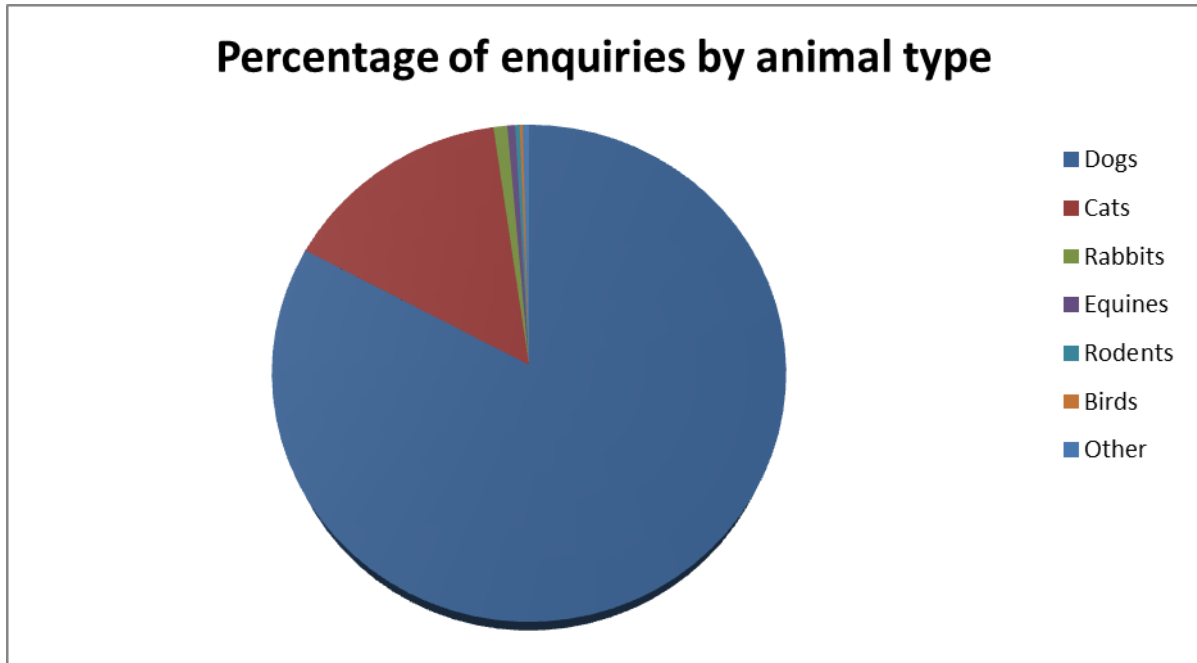
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The number of enquiries rose in March and May, levelled out over the summer months and declined in September before levelling off again over the last quarter.



## Enquiries by animal type

The VPIS will answer an enquiry about any animal. In 2012 the VPIS received enquiries about 19 different animal types, but dogs predominated (83%) followed by cats (15%).



Animal	Total	Percentage
Dogs	11102	83%
Cats	1961	15%
Rabbits	116	0.9%
Equines	64	0.5%
Rodents	36	0.3%
Birds	29	0.2%
Cattle	11	<0.1%
Goats	10	<0.1%
Ferrets	8	<0.1%
Reptiles	7	<0.1%
Sheep	6	<0.1%
Pigs	4	<0.1%
Human	4	<0.1%
Bat	1	<0.1%
Badger	1	<0.1%
Deer	1	<0.1%
Hedgehog	1	<0.1%
Fish	1	<0.1%
Tapir	1	<0.1%



## Enquiries by agent

The 13,396 cases involved 17,244 agents which comprised drugs 42.7%, pesticides 13.0%, food including food plants 11.2%, plants 9.9%, household product 9.1%, animals 1.5%, cosmetic and toiletries 1.1% and fungi 0.8%.

Agent group	Total	Percentage of total agents
<b>Drugs</b>	7363	42.7%
Ibuprofen	682	
Paracetamol	526	
Oral contraceptives	194	
Ethinloestradiol/ethinylestradiol/ ethinloestradiol	141	
Meloxicam	122	
Naproxen	120	
Codeine	103	
Carprofen	103	
Diclofenac	102	
<b>Pesticides</b>	2251	13.0%
Bromadiolone	444	
Difenacoum	433	
Permethrin	157	
Rodenticide nk	134	
Glyphosate	102	
<b>Food</b>	1925	11.2%
Chocolate	1049	
<i>Vitis vinifera</i> (grapes, sultanas, raisins, etc)	357	
Xylitol	99	
Onions	59	
<b>Plants (excluding food plants)</b>	1571	9.9%
<i>Lilium</i> species	161	
<i>Narcissus</i> species/daffodil	83	
<i>Tulipa</i> species/tulip	37	
<i>Spathiphyllum</i> species/peace lily	36	
Cannabis sativa/marijuana/hashish	34	
<b>Household products</b>	1634	9.1%
Fertilisers	154	
Batteries	90	
Bleach liquid	60	
Disinfectant	57	
<b>Animals</b>	253	1.5%
Adder	132	
<b>Cosmetics and toiletries</b>	185	1.1%
Hair colourant	22	
Nappy rash cream	19	
Soap bar	19	
Nappy	10	
<b>Fungi</b>	131	0.8%
Unidentified fungi	56	
Tremogenic mycotoxins	49	



## All animals - The top 10 enquiries

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Overall the most common agent the VPIS received enquiries about was the analgesic ibuprofen (5.1%), however if all the different chocolate types that appear in the top ten are combined they comprise 7.9% of all enquiries. The enquiry numbers for the anticoagulant rodenticides bromadiolone and difenacoum totalled 6.6% of all enquiries.

Agent name	Total	Percentage of total enquiries
1. Ibuprofen	682	5.1%
2. Milk chocolate	562	4.2%
3. Paracetamol	526	3.9%
4. Bromadiolone	444	3.3%
5. Difenacoum	433	3.1%
6. <i>Vitis vinifera</i> /grape, raisins, etc	357	2.7%
7. Unknown	300	2.2%
8. Dark chocolate	263	2.0%
9. Chocolate	227	1.4%
10. Oral contraceptives	194	1.4%

## Dogs - The top 10 enquiries

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In dogs ibuprofen was the top agent, but all the chocolate enquiries in the top ten comprised 9.2% of all canine enquiries and bromadiolone and difenacoum 7%.

Agent name	Total	Percentage of canine enquiries
1. Ibuprofen	649	5.8%
2. Milk chocolate	537	4.8%
3. Paracetamol	472	4.3%
4. Bromadiolone	399	3.6%
5. Difenacoum	382	3.4%
6. <i>Vitis vinifera</i> /grape, raisins, etc	339	3.1%
7. Dark chocolate	259	2.3%
8. Chocolate	220	2.0%
9. Unknown	210	1.9%
10. Oral contraceptives	185	1.7%



## Cats - The top 10 enquiries

*Lilium* species (lily) was the most common agent the VPIS was consulted about in cats (5.7%), closely followed by the insecticide permethrin (5.3%).

Agent name	Total	Percentage of feline enquiries
1. <i>Lilium</i> species	112	5.7%
2. Permethrin	103	5.2%
3. Unknown	84	4.3%
4. Benzalkonium chloride	53	2.7%
5. Paracetamol	50	2.5%
6. Ethylene glycol	46	2.3%
7. White spirit	42	2.1%
8. Praziquantel	37	1.9%
9. Fipronil	36	1.8%
10. Disinfectant	34	1.7%

## Rabbits - The top enquiries

In rabbits *Spathiphyllum* species (peace lily) was the most common enquiry.

Agent name	Total	Percentage of rabbit enquiries
1. <i>Spathiphyllum</i> species/peace lily	8	6.9%
1. Bromadiolone	8	6.9%
3. <i>Lilium</i> species	6	5.2%
4. Rodenticide unknown	4	3.4%
4. <i>Aloe vera</i>	4	3.4%
4. Difenacoum	4	3.4%
4. <i>Hedera helix</i> /ivy	4	3.4%
8. <i>Euphorbia pulcherrima</i> /poinsettia	3	2.6%
8. Milk chocolate	3	2.6%



## Follow up data of enquiries

The VPIS sends out postal questionnaires to collect data on the clinical course, treatments given and outcome of a proportion of cases. Follow up and outcome data were available for 2224 cases (17%) in 2012.

In almost half the cases where follow up information was received the animal made a full recovery. Almost a third of the animal remained asymptomatic. A fatal outcome was recorded in 7.2% of cases (4.5% euthanised and 2.7% died). Note that euthanasia may be an outcome due to financial constraints on the owner and not directly due to toxicity.

Outcome	Total	Total
Full recovery	1075	48%
Fine throughout	657	29.5%
Euthanised	100	4.5%
Not known	76	3.4%
Died	61	2.7%
Not applicable	43	2%
Unrelated to exposure	42	2%
Did not present	37	1.7%
Full recovery (query related)	30	1.3%
No follow up	19	0.9%
Euthanised (unrelated)	18	0.9%
Not known - referred	17	0.8%
Ongoing	12	0.5%
Improving but ongoing	12	0.5%
Euthanised - query related	11	0.5%
Died (query related)	5	0.2%
Query related	5	0.2%
Died (unrelated)	3	0.1%
Not specified	1	0.04%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2224</b>	



## Cases with fatal outcomes – dogs

In dogs there was a fatal outcome in 88 cases (which were thought to be due to poisoning). Of these 42 dogs died and 46 were euthanised. The most common agent associated with a fatal outcome was 'agent unknown', that is where poisoning was suspected as the cause of them clinical signs but the specific agent could not be identified. Metaldehyde was the second most common agent associated with a fatal outcome.

Agent	Died	Euthanised
Adder bite	1	
Anticoagulant rodenticide	1	1
<i>Arachis hypogaea</i> /peanuts		1
Baclofen	1	2
Blue green algae	1	
Calcipotriol	1	1
Cement		1
Diclofenac		1
Disinfectant		1
Ethanol		1
Ethylene glycol		2
Fat ball for birds		1
Fertiliser		1
Fungi - muscarine		1
Fungi unidentified	2	1
Fungicide	1	
Garlic (granules for horses)	1	
Glutaraldehyde		1
Glyphosate	1	
Grapes		1
Herbicide nk		1
<i>Humulus lupulus</i> /hops	2	
Ibuprofen	1	1
Insulin		1
Ivermectin		1
<i>Laburnum</i> species	1	





## Cases with fatal outcomes – dogs (continued)

Agent	Died	Euthanised
Mebeverine		1
Mesotrione/terbuthylazone	1	
Metaldehyde	1	4
Methiocarb	1	
Mixed drug ingestion	1	1
Molluscicide nk	2	1
Moxidectin	1	1
Naproxen		1
Paracetamol		1
Pentobarbital	1	
Phenoxyacetic acid herbicides		1
Plums	1	
Pot pourri	1	1
Raisins		1
Rodenticide nk	1	
Rodenticide plant material		1
Smoke	1	
Sunflower oil	1	
Tetanus		1
Tremorgenic mycotoxins	2	1
Unknown agent	12	8
Wasp sting		1
Xylitol	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>46</b>



## Cases with fatal outcomes – cats

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In cats there was a fatal outcome in 55 cases (which were thought to be due to poisoning). Of these 10 cats died and 45 were euthanised. The most common agent involved in these cases was ethylene glycol which accounted for 44% of fatalities.

<b>Agent</b>	<b>Died</b>	<b>Euthanised</b>
Unknown agent	2	5
Ethylene glycol	1	23
Propane	1	
Neem oil	1	1
Insecticide spot on nk	1	
Paracetamol	1	1
Paraquat	1	
Fipronil	1	
Dustbin freshener	1	
Permethrin		5
Pyrethroids		1
Midazolam		1
Tremorgenic mycotoxins		1
Molluscicide nk		1
Glyphosate/pyraflufen		1
Clopyralid/triclopyr		1
<i>Spathiphyllum</i> species		1
<i>Lilium</i> species		1
Fabric freshener		1
Disinfectant		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>45</b>



## Publications

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Bates N. 2012 Exposure to cut flowers and spring flowering plants in cats and dogs in the UK. *Veterinary Nurse* 3(1):36-41.

Bates NS, Sutton NM, Campbell A. 2012 Suspected metaldehyde slug bait poisoning in dogs: a retrospective analysis of cases reported to the Veterinary Poisons Information Service. *Veterinary Record* 171(13):324.

BSAVA/VPIS. 2012 *Guide to Common Canine and Feline Poisons*. British Small Animal Veterinary Association, Quedgeley, Gloucestershire.

## Education, outreach and collaborations

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VPIS ran several Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events over the year in Newcastle, London, Nottingham, Glasgow, Liverpool and Bristol and produced 2 issues of the VPIS newsletter, *Toxic Times* (available on the website).

VPIS attended the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Annual Congress in Birmingham in April 2012.

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