

Workshop #6: Pediatric Toxicology Part II: From Bassinet to Body bag – Postmortem Challenges and Considerations in the Investigative Process

Date: Monday, October 30

Time: 1:30 – 5:30 PM

Cost:

MEMBER RATES		
Early Bird Registration June 1 – Aug 31 \$150	Late Registration Begins Sept 1 \$175	On-site Registration Begins October 11 \$200
NON – MEMBER AND DAILY RATES		
Early Bird Registration June 1 – Aug 31 \$200	Late Registration Begins Sept 1 \$225	On-site Registration Begins October 11 \$250

Chairs

Jennifer L. Swatek, MS, D-ABFT-FT
Forensic Toxicologist
NMS Labs, Inc.
Jennifer.Swatek@nmslabs.com

Kari M. Midthun, PhD, F-ABFT
Forensic Toxicologist
NMS Labs, Inc.
Kari.Midthun@nmslabs.com

Emily Dennison, MD
Assistant Medical Examiner
Forensic Medical Management Services
ehdennison@forensicmed.com

Abstract

The death investigation process in a pediatric case can present a unique and complicated situation for all parties involved. Death investigations involving young children need to be all encompassing to assure no criminal or negligent activity occurred. While knowledge of common drugs encountered in death investigation cases is imperative, investigating parties should also be knowledgeable of drug exposures that may not necessarily cause immediate death but can harm and/or lead to hospitalization. With the increased legalization of cannabis and the rise in illicit drug abuse, scrutiny needs to be given to accessibility and opportunities for exposure in children of all ages. As exposure risks increase, so does the chance of these drugs crossing into the postmortem world. In many child death investigations, toxicology can help tell a story and provide answers (i.e., exposure and cause of death), but it may also present some limitations in determining the manner of death.

This workshop will build on the audience’s general knowledge of pediatric toxicology by exploring the investigative triad (toxicology, crime scene investigation, and pathology) and following the death investigation process to help certify cause and manner of death in pediatric casework. The session will start by examining the death scene and the observed indications used to determine where and how a

child may have been exposed to a drug. This will be followed by a special topic discussion on the transfer of cannabis to breast milk; breast milk serves as an infant's food source, a potential scene finding, and an important toxicological specimen. An affiliate with the Rocky Mountain Poison Control Center (RMPCC) will further shed light on cannabis exposure trends in youth, particularly with exposure to edibles and other consumables. A subsequent talk with the RMPCC affiliate will address the adolescent population by diving into the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on this age group as witnessed through calls to PCCs. Finally, pathologists will discuss the role of child death review boards, and case examples will be provided to spark a panel discussion on the death review process and certification in pediatric casework.

Learning Objectives

1. Familiarize the audience with the investigative process with pediatric casework and the challenges that ensue.
2. Provide in-depth discussion on cannabis exposure in children, including through breast milk and edibles.
3. Use case examples to discuss the challenges of certifying a death certificate and determining manner of death in young children with toxicological findings from the perspective of the medical examiner.

Faculty

James Caruso, MD
Division Director
Chief Medical Examiner/Coroner
Denver Office of the Medical Examiner

Emily Dennison, MD
Assistant Medical Examiner
Forensic Medical Management Services

Thomas Hale, PhD, RPh
Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics
Texas Tech University School of Medicine
InfantRisk Center

George Sam Wang, MD, FAAP, FAACT
Associate Professor of Pediatrics
Univ. of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
Children's Hospital of Colorado

Erin Worrell, D-ABMDI
Chief of Investigations
Denver Office of the Medical Examiner

Audience Knowledge Level

Intermediate - Involves more advanced concepts requiring some technical working knowledge or prior exposure to the subject matter

Workshop Agenda

Time	Topic	Speaker
1:30 – 1:35 pm	Welcome & Agenda	Jennifer Swatek
1:35 – 2:05 pm	Pediatric Crime Scene Investigation	Erin Worrell
2:05 – 2:50 pm	Transfer of Cannabis to Human Milk	Thomas Hale
2:50 – 3:15 pm	THC Edible Exposure in Young Children	Sam Wang
3:15 – 3:30 pm	Question & Answer Session	All
3:30 – 4:00 pm	Break	
4:00 – 4:20 pm	The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Adolescent Exposure Rates	Sam Wang
4:20 – 4:35 pm	Davidson County: Pediatric Death Review Board	Emily Dennison
4:35 – 5:15 pm	Case Studies & Panel Discussion: Challenges in Pediatric Death Certification	Emily Dennison & Jim Caruso
5:15 – 5:30 pm	Question & Answer Session	All