

Symptomatic Relief?

BACKGROUND

The plethora of **Over The Counter (OTC)** remedies for symptomatic relief of common viral upper respiratory illness in infants, children and young people is vast. **The question is: are they all safe?**



CASE PRESENTATION

A 6/12 old ♀ presented to the Children's Emergency Department (CED) with **accidental parental overdose of Cipla NoCold nasal drops** for coryzal symptoms. This particular remedy contained 5mg Phenylephrine Hydrochloride and 2mg Chlorphenamine Maleate per 1ml.

The infant's parents had given 1 ml instead of 0.1ml and also had administered it orally.

MANAGEMENT & OUTCOME

The child examined as systemically well with no focal chest signs. They had a **mild fever** at 38.0°C and a **tachycardia** of 180 bpm whilst happy and settled. Their blood pressure was 108/78.

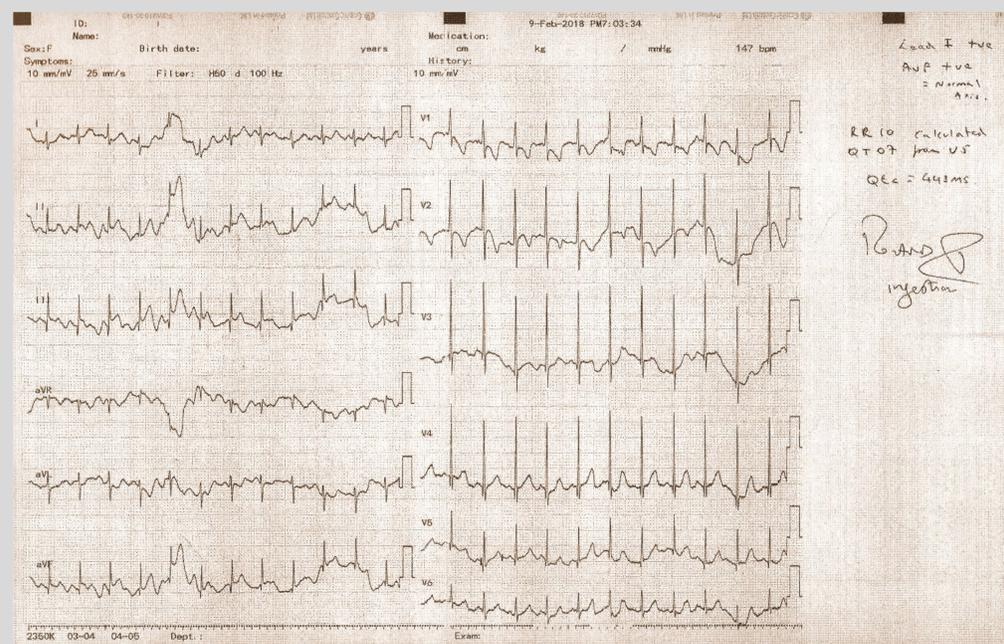
TOXBASE® was consulted which advised that both the active ingredients are considered **cardiotoxic in high doses**. Phenylephrine >1 mg/kg and chlorphenamine maleate >0.85 mg/kg.

The infant had 0.81mg/kg and 0.32mg/kg of each drug respectively. With both active ingredients, common features can include...

MANAGEMENT & OUTCOME

... sinus tachycardia and hypertension. Chlorphenamine maleate can also cause hyperthermia. **TOXBASE®** recommended management was a 6-hour period of observation, with rationale being that therapeutic plasma concentration levels are reached between 2.5→6.0 hours. As both agents can be cardiotoxic a 12-lead ECG was performed.

The ECG findings were grossly normal with some incidental findings which included an ectopic beat and a mildly prolonged QTc of 443ms.



The infant was observed for 6 hours and discharged home without complication

DISCUSSION

NoCold Drops are **commonly available as an OTC medication** for symptomatic relief of common colds and upper respiratory infections in other countries – particularly India and the Indian Subcontinent (although not in the UK).

The active ingredient concentration is high per millilitre and **could potentially lead to complications** if overdose is clinically significant.

It is important that staff are aware of medications families may have access to when seeking to provide symptomatic relief to their children for common illness.