



## AUSTRALASIAN FUNGAL POISONING NETWORK

AUSTRALASIAN MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Australasian Fungal Poisoning Network

4/7/97

The Director  
State Poisons Centre

Dear Sir,

The Australasian Mycological Society consists of both professional and amateur scientists with research interests in the Australasian fungi. At its last annual general meeting in October 1996, a sub-group called 'The Australasian Fungal Poisoning Network' was formed with the intentions of improving our knowledge of the Australasian toxic macrofungi and ensuring that the gathered information reaches the appropriate poisons centres and medical staff. Currently, the proposed aims of the sub-group are to:

- provide a readily accessible, telephone information service so that at least one member of the network can be reached if there is a macrofungal poisoning emergency.
- collect information on and samples of the relevant fungus from any situation in which macrofungi are involved in poisoning with the aims of identifying and preserving the fungus and record.
- build an information database based on the above information together with any confirmed past material.
- collate macrofungal poisoning literature.
- disseminate this information to both State Poisons Centres and the relevant medical practitioner groups.
- provide lectures and/or workshops for teaching persons involved with macrofungal poisonings with the intent of improving knowledge of the toxins, treatment and identification of the macrofungi involved.
- develop a computerised interactive key to the Australasian toxic macrofungi which could be used by persons unskilled in the identification of these organisms. Such a key to include colour images of the fungi, descriptions, relevant toxins and appropriate treatments.
- develop an Australian toxic fungi site on the Internet.

You will appreciate that the above aims are complex and the sub-group does not expect that they will all be rapidly achieved, however some of them (e.g. the telephone information service) can be set in place quite rapidly.

The present members of the sub-group are specialists in the taxonomy of the higher fungi, some of whom have additional experience in the identification of the macrofungi involved in poisonings. Members may also be able to provide information relevant to symptoms and treatments for macrofungal poisonings based on both experience and access to appropriate resources, but it is emphasised that this service is purely informative and only intended as a support service for the medical practitioners involved in poisoning cases.

The personal details of the sub-group's current members are attached as an appendix to this letter and the appendix may be copied for use as a reference document for any relevant medical staff. The limited numbers of the present group means that each member has taken responsibility for setting up the network for several of the Australian States although it is very probable and desirable that this will alter in the near future, hopefully to the point where at least one representative mycologist is appointed to each State.

If you consider the aims of the Network are relevant to your organisation, would you please contact me by mail and if possible, indicate which of our aims would be of most interest or benefit to you.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Dr A. M. Young

*Encl.: member details of the Australasian Fungal Poisoning Network*

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Relevant publications:

Toxic Fungi—Toadstools and Mushrooms in J.Pearn. & J.Nixon (eds.), *Preventive First Aid*. St. John Ambulance: Australia, Brisbane, Qld (1989).

Poisonings by *Chlorophyllum molybdites* in Australia. *The Mycologist* 3, 11–12 (1989).

Muscarine-containing Mushrooms in D.G. Spierke & B.H. Rumack (eds.), *Handbook of Mushroom Poisoning Diagnosis and Treatment*. CRC Press, Boca Raton, USA (1994).

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Relevant publications:

Recent mushroom poisonings in New Zealand. *Australasian Mycological Newsletter* 14(4), 57–60 (1995).

Death cap mushroom poisoning. Letter to the editor. *New Zealand Medical Journal* 14 June 1995: 234 (1995).

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Relevant publications:

*Amanita phalloides* in Australia, *Medical Journal of Australia* 158, 849–850 (1993).

A puppy death and *Amanita phalloides*, *Australian Veterinary Journal* 70(7), 27–28 (1993).

Edible and poisonous fungi in southern Australia—cases of mistaken identity. *The Mycologist* 8(1), 35–36 (1994).