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Accidents happen so quickly ...

A mom needs to pop out to the shops for a few minutes and leaves her 4-year old little girl at home in the care of her 13-year old brother. When the mum returns she finds her daughter hysterical and doubled over with abdominal pain. The mom is pregnant with her next baby and her gynaecologist had given her iron supplements and multivitamins to take during her pregnancy. She had left these on her bedside table. The little girl admits to eating the "packet of sweets" she found next to her mom's bed. Her mother immediately phones the emergency number for the Poisons Information Centre at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. Fortunately for this distraught mom the Centre has the details of both substances, as provided by the manufacturers, on their Poisons Information Database. Staff at the Centre calculate that she has ingested a toxic amount of iron and is told to go straight to hospital for emergency treatment for iron poisoning. By the time she reaches the hospital she has already developed bloody diarrhoea and her condition is critical. Luckily, she receives the antidote in good time to halt the progress of poisoning and is able to go home two days later.

(An actual patient case)

Others may not be so fortunate.

The world is sadly not child-proof but fortunately there is a lifeline
to help when accidents do happen.

A lifeline that has helped thousands of children

But now it needs your help ...

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THE POISONS INFORMATION CENTRE - A PRICELESS RESOURCE

Saving thousands of young lives

In developing countries, poisonings cause 5% of injury-related deaths in children. Children aged 1 – 2 years of age are at most risk of accidental poisoning as a result of their exploratory behaviour but are too young to understand the dangers. In South Africa children are most commonly exposed to medicines, however paraffin ingestion is a very common cause of poisoning in children from poorer communities.

The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital in Cape Town, South Africa, is the only institution in South Africa that gathers and collates poisons information at its Poisons Information Centre. The main role of the Poisons Information Centre is to collect, collate and distribute information on toxic substances, and also substances which may mistakenly be regarded as poisonous, in order that patients with known or suspected poisoning may receive appropriate treatment. This valuable resource can save thousands of lives.

There are only two 24 hour emergency poison lines available to the South African public and medical profession. They are based at the Tygerberg and Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospitals. Both use the database, at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, as their source of information.

The problem

The current information system is developed on old technology and greatly limits the capacity to maintain and distribute the essential information gathered, to a wider audience. The Poisons Information Centre is constantly updating its database as new medicines and products become available to the public. The database is sent on a CD via post, to medics and hospitals at least twice a year. Maintaining this national resource requires special skills, human resource capacity, and equipment.

An updated database system with internet access is desperately required as the Poisons Information Database is in danger of becoming outdated and obsolete if it cannot keep up with the technological requirements.

A simple solution

What is required is an upgraded, internet-based system, which can be accessed on and offline by medical professionals throughout the entire southern African region. A web-based system that will allow rapid and immediate access to medical institutions and healthcare professionals, as well as providing information on non toxic substances, to the general public. Please see attached for detailed information on the web-based system solution

Far-reaching benefits

This life-saving service is available to both adults and children in southern Africa. Access to fast and accurate information is required immediately after poisoning is suspected or confirmed to ensure that a patient is treated appropriately and effectively. Access to this information is vital for both the public and medical professionals treating such patients.

There are many benefits to the redevelopment and migration of the Poisons Information Centre's Poison Information Database to a web-based solution:

- It will offer a better and more accessible poisons advice service to medical professionals and the general public throughout southern Africa.
- Direct public access on non-toxic substances will reduce the load on the Health service and Poisons Emergency Line.
- The system will allow for offline and online access so that rural areas who may have intermittent access to the internet are not affected negatively;
- The Poisons Information Centre staff will no longer be burning CD's to update centres, thereby allowing them more time to focus on poisons information itself;
- The database information is specific to South Africa. In addition the Poisons Information Centre has access to global poison information, although this is seldom required due to the comprehensive nature of the information on the database;
- It will enable data collection on poisoning cases in South Africa, which is essential for prevention campaigns and the detection of new causes of poisoning.

REQUIRED FUNDING

The Children's Hospital Trust needs to raise approximately R3 million for the redevelopment of the Poisons Information Database, which includes the support of a qualified pharmacist conducting crucial content validation on the new system, for a period of two years.

Function	Costs (2 year period)
Business Analysis & Solution Architecture	42,300
Application Development	1,250,000
Mintox Website Development	284,000
Application Support (est 20%)	300,000
Application Enhancements	150,000
Deployment Support	50,000
Solution Hosting – Setup costs	10,000
Software Licenses	10,000
Pharmacist: content validator (2 year contract)	470,000
Annual hosting and setup costs	150, 000
Sub Total	2, 716, 300
14% VAT	380, 282
TOTAL	3, 096, 582

**We need your donation to help raise the funds needed
100% of all funds raised goes directly to the Project**

LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital is a public tertiary and secondary level State hospital, funded by the Department of Health of the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC). PGWC currently has an operational budget of approximately R400 million per annum for the maintenance and upkeep of the Hospital. The Poisons Information Centre is supported

by local government and we anticipate increased support from National Government as the success of the service will become more apparent.

BRANDING OPPORTUNITIES

To maximise exposure for your brand the Trust is able to offer branding on the home page of the Poison's Information web-based Database. In recognition for your generosity this page can be customised in line with your brand's logo and corporate colours.

BANK DETAILS

Local donations

The Children's Hospital Trust
Bank: Standard Bank
Branch: Rondebosch
Account: 07144 3126
Branch code: 025-009

International donations

The Children's Hospital Trust
Bank: Standard Bank
Branch: Rondebosch
Account: 071 433 090
Branch code: 025 009 11
Swift code: SBZAZAJJ
Bank telephone number: +27 21 680 4729

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Functionality

The poisons information system is distributed to 33 centres country-wide. It has grown from a system holding data on 200 named toxins to over 40 000 to date. The volume of knowledge about toxic substances and methods of treatment has grown exponentially. The number of toxic substances within commercial products that people are exposed to has also grown.

The database is continuously updated as new products become available and as new methods of treating poisoning are published in the medical literature. Currently this information is distributed twice a year to more than 30 centres throughout South Africa. The Poisons Information Database (PID) is one of only four poisons databases in English and is unique to Africa.

The Poisons Information Centre employs two part-time medical officers, one full-time pharmacist and one part-time pharmacist. The staff members are uniquely qualified for the unusual demands of sustaining a poisons information system.

The Poisons Information Centre requires personnel with highly specialised knowledge and skills and to date the service has been delivered with limited funds. The database supplies the ingredients, dosages, toxicity, symptoms and treatments of more than 40,000 entities including commercial products, fauna and flora and medicines. Much of this is not available in standard medical textbooks.

Humble beginnings

A Poisons Information Service was started in 1971, using a card index and text books, operating from the Medical Registrar's room in the Outpatient Department of the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. The Poisons Information Centre was established in 1984, using a database

designed to replace the original system, as a result of a research project and twenty five years on. It has grown through the commitment of dedicated researchers and the cooperation of product manufacturers, to become a unique and invaluable information source.

Additional challenges

Collecting the information for the programme sets unique challenges. Makers of commercial products in South Africa are not obliged by law to disclose the contents of their products as they are concerned about industrial security and competitor access to key product ingredients. As a result the Poisons Information Centre creates and maintains strong relationships of trust with the manufacturers to obtain this valuable information which is required to advise on poison cases. The Poisons Information Centre assures the manufacturers that only information pertaining to medical use and relevance is included and only toxic ingredients are disclosed.

Product trade names are different in many countries. It is necessary for international equivalents of local products, where possible, to be included. This is a time consuming tasks and a strain on an already limited resource. The Poisons Information Centre has access to various textbooks, databases and electronic sources of information on toxicology, some of which require payment for subscription or replacement as they become outdated.

The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital

The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital is the only dedicated specialist paediatric hospital serving the children of Southern Africa. It is a national asset and handles the worst cases of disease and chronic illness in children under the age of 12. The Hospital manages approximately 250,000 patient visits each year. The majority of the Hospital's patients are from the Western Cape, with cases from the rest of South Africa, Africa and rare instances, the rest of the world. The majority of the Hospital's patients are from poor and marginalized communities. One third of the patients treated are under a year old. The aim of the Hospital is to provide each and every patient with the best medical care, irrespective of parent's income, race, gender, religion or place of residence.

The Children's Hospital Trust

The Children's Hospital Trust was founded in 1994 as the independent Fundraising Arm of the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital when the Hospital was threatened with closure due to lack of funding. Since its inception the Trust has supported the Hospital through upgrading its buildings, purchasing vital equipment and funding critical training and research programmes.

The Trust is funded from an endowment, ensuring that 100% of all donations received are used towards the projects and programmes we fund. Not a cent is used for administration or operational expenses.

The Children's Hospital Trust's expanded its funding focus in 2011 to include funding paediatric healthcare projects in the Western Cape beyond the Hospital's doors which will have a direct or indirect impact on the services and patient load at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. Our new vision is thus: "to assist the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital by funding their identified priority capital, equipment research and training projects, while funding projects beyond the Hospital's doors, which impact paediatric healthcare in the Western Cape".