

## An analysis of the poisons mentioned by Ibne Sina in the Canon of Medicine

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**Background and Aims:** Ibne Sina, the great Persian Physician wrote 450 books on a wide range of subjects. His most famous book, The Canon of Medicine, besides being the standard text on medicine in Europe for 600 years, also describes in detail poisons and their antidotes. In this study we analyzed poisons mentioned by Ibne Sina in the Canon of Medicine.

**Methods:** The corresponding sections of the Canon of Medicine (volume 4 in English and volume 5 in Persian version) were studied. Poisons were systematically analyzed and their details including name and source, symptoms and treatments for poisoning were noted. The poisons were then accordingly categorized.

**Results:** At least 60 poisons with signs and symptoms of poisoning and their treatments were mentioned in the Canon. These poisons were categorized in 3 groups: Inorganic and solid poisons, plant poisons with the warm and the cold temperament. The routes of administration were oral, by inhalation and by instillation in ear. Their symptoms were described as GI, CNS, cardiovascular, respiratory, kidney, dermal, ocular and inflammatory signs. Also in some instances, lethal dose was mentioned. Treatments included decrease of absorption, increase of excretion and use of antidotes. Many of these poisonous plants are nowadays known to contain toxic compounds.

**Conclusions:** The Canon of Medicine provides a comprehensive description of poisons with the signs and symptoms of poisoning and treatment most of which is valid according to modern research. Our analysis suggests that ancient antidotes may be safer than modern drugs in certain cases.

**Keywords:** Ibne Sina; The Canon of Medicine; Poisons; Antidotes