

Death Attributed to the Toxic Interaction of Triazolam Amitriptyline and Other Psychotropic Drugs.

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### **Abstract**

A 71-year-old man was found dead in a car into which exhaust fumes had been introduced. His wife who was in the same car recovered consciousness following hospitalization. She claimed that they had both attempted suicide by taking a large number of sleeping pills. Autopsy revealed no significant external injuries or medical disorders that would have led to the husband's death. The concentrations of alcohol and carbon-monoxide hemoglobin in his whole blood were 0.26 mg/ml and <10%, respectively. Therefore, poisoning by carbon monoxide from the exhaust fumes was ruled out, and further toxicological examinations were undertaken. Triazolam, pentobarbital, amitriptyline and bromazepam were all detected in the tissues of the victim; whole blood concentrations were 45.60, 386.4, 521.2 and 166.7 ng/g, respectively. Triazolam (7.350 ng/g) and pentobarbital (288.2 ng/g) were also detected in the whole blood of the wife, collected 17 h after admission to hospital. When evaluating these results in the light of existing literature, we concluded that the victim and his wife had indeed attempted suicide by taking triazolam and pentobarbital. However, only the man had died of triazolam poisoning due to its apparently lethal combination with amitriptyline and other psychotropic drugs which had been prescribed to treat his depression. © 1997 Elsevier Science Ireland Ltd.

*Keywords:* Triazolam; Amitriptyline; Fatal poisoning