

Coroner's Column

We have been sent two decisions from August 2003 by the Coroner's Court. The first concerned a death from an overdose of colchicine. The message for GPs is that deaths have been reported from a total dose as low as 7mg (about 12 tablets) and that special care needs to be taken if a patient who has been prescribed colchicine has any hepatic or renal dysfunction. The second involved a psychiatric patient who died from respiratory depression sec-

ondary to the potentiation of alprazolam by erythromycin and an adverse interaction between alprazolam and clozapine in the presence of bronchopneumonia. This decision reminds us to be careful with respect to possible drug interactions, especially when patients are taking specialist-only medication with which we may not be as familiar as we are with the drugs that we usually prescribe.

Editor