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Advances in Ricin Antitoxins: From Intoxication to Diagnosis and Treatment

Guest Editors:

Prof. Dr. Graeme C. Clark
Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Porton Down SP4 0JQ, UK

Dr. Damien Chong
Defence Science and Technology Group, Fishermans Bend, VIC 3207, Australia

Deadline for manuscript submissions:
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Message from the Guest Editors

Ricin is a potent (type 2) ribosome-inactivating protein toxin produced in the seeds of the caster bean plant *Ricinus communis*. Accidental and/or intentional exposure to the toxin can have serious consequences for the health and the survival of both humans and animals. This is a consequence of the potency of the toxin along with the prevalence of caster beans in the environment (i.e., increasing the likelihood of exposure). The identification of ricin intoxication in a clinical setting remains very challenging and is further complicated by a delayed onset of symptoms. Additionally, there is a current lack of licensed medical interventions, with supportive therapy representing the main clinical option. Nevertheless, a number of new small molecule inhibitors rationally developed using structural-functional analysis and that affect the intracellular trafficking of the toxin are alternative approaches to the more traditional antibody-based molecules which have also recently demonstrated promise as candidate countermeasures for the treatment of ricin exposure in animal models.

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Prof. Dr. Jay Fox
Department of Microbiology,
University of Virginia,
Charlottesville, VA, USA

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Contact Us

Toxins Editorial Office
MDPI, Grosspeteranlage 5
4052 Basel, Switzerland

Tel: +41 61 683 77 34
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