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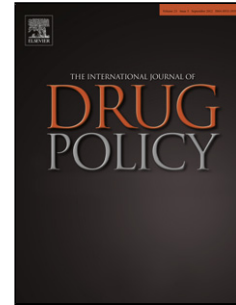
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“My body breaks. I take solution.” Inhalant use in Delhi as pleasure seeking at a cost

Roy Gigengack

ABSTRACT

Background: Inhalant use has existed in India since the 1970s and has increased significantly over the last decades, especially among street-oriented youths. The latter constitute a heterogeneous category: children from street families, children ‘of’ the street, rag pickers, and part-time street children. There are also inhalant-using schoolchildren and slum youths.

Methods: Fieldwork was conducted for one year. Team ethnography, multi-sited and comparative research, flexibility of methods and writing field notes were explicit parts of the research design. Most research was undertaken with six groups in four areas of Delhi, exemplifying six generic categories of inhalant-using street-oriented youths.

Results: Inhalants in India are branded: Eraz-Ex diluter and whitener, manufactured by Kores, are used throughout Delhi; Omni glue in one specific area. There is a general lack of awareness and societal indifference towards inhalant use, with the exception of the inhalant users themselves, who possess practical knowledge. They conceive of inhalants as *nasha*, encapsulating the materiality of the substances and the experiential aspects of intoxication and addiction. Fragments of group interviews

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