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ADDICTOVIGILANCE

Medical complications of psychoactive substances with abuse risks: Detection and assessment by the network of French addictovigilance centres

*Complications liées à l'usage de substances psychoactives avec risques d'abus :
détection et évaluation par le réseau de centres d'addictovigilance français*

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Summary The use of psychoactive substances, whether occasional or regular, can induce a large number of clinical and/or biological complications. These complications may be related to the effects of the active substance itself and/or adulterants, but also to the modalities for use (administrations route, contexts of use). The detection and evaluation of these potentially severe complications are a public health issue. Beyond the assessment of the potential for abuse of and dependence on psychoactive substances, the collection and evaluation of complications related to the use of the substances are one of the roles of addictovigilance centres. In this article, the expertise of the French addictovigilance centres in the detection and assessment of medical complications related to psychoactive substances, adulterants or route of administration of substances is advanced through a few recent examples.

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MOTS CLÉS

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l'usage de substances

Résumé L'utilisation de substances psychoactives, qu'elle soit occasionnelle ou régulière, peut induire un grand nombre de complications cliniques et/ou biologiques. Ces complications peuvent être liées aux effets de la substance active elle-même et/ou aux adjuvants, mais aussi aux modalités d'utilisation (voie d'administration, contexte d'utilisation). La détection et l'évaluation de ces complications potentiellement graves sont un problème de santé publique. Au-delà de l'évaluation du potentiel d'abus et de dépendance liée aux substances psychoactives, le recueil et l'évaluation des complications liées à l'utilisation des substances est l'un des rôles des centres d'addictovigilance. Dans cet article, nous avons souhaité mettre en avant l'expertise des centres d'addictovigilance français dans la détection et l'évaluation des complications médicales liées à des substances psychoactives, à des adjuvants ou à la voie d'administration de ces substances.

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Abbreviations

ANSM	French health products safety agency
CAARUD	French drug user risk reduction centres
CSAPA	French addiction care and prevention centres
DRAMES	death related to drug and illegal substance abuse
EMCDDA	European monitoring centre for drugs and drug addiction
FAN	French addictovigilance network
HDB	high dose buprenorphine
IDU	intravenous drug users
IE	infective endocarditis
LLD	livedo-like dermatitis
LSD	lysergic acid diethylamide
MDMA	3,4-methylenedioxy-methamphetamine
NDMA	glutamate N-methyl-D-aspartate
NPS	new psychoactive substances
PCP	phencyclidine
PMSI	medicalization of information system program
SINTES	French national substances identification system

Introduction

Substance use disorders include a wide range of complications, the most known being addiction and psychiatric troubles (depression, anxiety disorders, acute delirium, cognitive disorders, psychosis...). Main medical complications related to substance use are deaths secondary to overdose, infectious complications by viral and/or bacterial transmission, and social complications associated with physical and mental decline. However, substance use can lead to complications that can impact every organ systems. Some of these complications are less known from physicians, making their diagnosis difficult.

These medical complications may be related to the pharmacological mechanism of the consumed substance and/or adulterants (mental disorders and dopamine, norepinephrine and cardiovascular accidents...), and/or the route and mode of administration (intravenous, nasal, parachuting, redosing...) [1,2].

In France, the national monitoring system for drug dependence falls under the responsibility of the French Health Products Safety Agency (*Agence nationale de sécurité des médicaments et produits de santé* [ANSM]). In order to perform this monitoring, the agency relies on a network of 13 regional addictovigilance centres, called French addictovigilance network (FAN) [3,4]. The missions of FAN are the monitoring and evaluation of cases of abuse and dependence of psychoactive substances (medications and illicit substances). Monitoring medical complications of substance abuse is one of the missions of FAN. Rapid reporting of clinical and/or biological complications to FAN allows evaluating the frequency, severity of cases and the emergence of a signal, allowing preventive or corrective actions.

In recent years, through reported cases, the FAN has noted an increased variety of medical complications, which sometimes increases the difficulty for clinicians to make the link between substance use and the observed complications. Over the last decade, new psychoactive substances (NPS) have emerged as recreational substances setting. These substances may be associated with new or unexpected complications, sometimes severe, requiring a risk assessment by the addictovigilance centres. Finally, some complications seem a priori unexpected in view of the patient's age and therefore not related to substance use [1,2,5].

This article focuses on recent medical complications linked to psychoactive substances, cutting agents or route of administration, including those analyzed by FAN.

Material and methods

Medical complications included in this summary are those:

- for which clinical signs and/or substances responsible have been expertised by the FAN;
- involving a new psychoactive substance, mainly synthetic cathinones and synthetic cannabinoids;
- involving new complications related to classical substances.

This synthesis is not intended to be an exhaustive review but to illustrate by some recent examples, the sometimes highly severe consequences of substance use.

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