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PSYCHOTIC SYMPTOMS IN COCAINE INJECTING DRUG USERS, REPORT OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN A MEDICALLY SUPERVISED INJECTION CLINIC (MSICS)

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Objectives: Describe the prevalence and characteristics of psychotic symptoms in the context of cocaine injection use in a harm reduction program.

To find associations between intravenous cocaine use and other drug use in cocaine dependent patients suffering from cocaine induced psychosis (CIP). Cannabis was found to be a risk factor for developing CIP in non-intravenous cocaine dependence.

Methods: During a period of 6 months professionals from our Outpatient Drug Clinic completed a confidential questionnaire to describe the adverse clinical effects following cocaine injection. It included age, gender, ethnic group, daily consumption rate and other drugs used in the last 30 days.

Results: Survey was achieved with a sample of 75 Caucasians patients, 69 men and 6 women with an average age of 32 years old. Seventeen percent (13/75) had psychotic symptoms, of which 84% (11/13) had hallucinations (visuals 4/11, auditive 7/11 and kinaesthetic 2/11), 15% (2/13) illusions.

Eighteen percent (14/75) had stereotypy movements and 3% (2/75) had aggressive behaviour. Drugs used by CIP patients, the previous 30 days were: 61% (8/13) cannabis, 31% (4/13) opiates and 15% (2/13) alcohol.

Conclusions: Intravenous cocaine use produced acute psychotic symptoms in 17% of our patients, of which 61% used cannabis. Despite the ethical and practical implications of this type of study, it is necessary to do more observational studies with bigger surveys to conclude these results with statistically significance.