

“Flakka”: an emerging trend or a mass-media phenomenon? Presence of Alpha-PVP in samples submitted to a drug checking facility

M. Grifell^{1,2}, P. Quintana^{3,4}, Á. Palma^{1,2}, C. Gil³, I. Fornís³, L. Galindo², M. Torrens^{1,2,5}, M. Ventura^{2,3}, M. Farré^{2,6,7}

¹Institut de Neuropsiquiatria i Addiccions, Parc de Salut Mar, Barcelona, Spain. ²IMIM (Hospital del Mar Medical Research Institute), Barcelona, Spain. ³Energy Control, Associació Benestar i Desenvolupament, Barcelona, Spain. ⁴EAP Raval Sud, ICS, Barcelona, Spain. ⁵Departament de Psiquiatria, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain. ⁶Departament de Farmacologia clínica, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain. ⁷Hospital Germans Trias i Pujol, Servei de Farmacologia Clínica, Barcelona, Spain

Introduction

New psychoactive substances (NPS) are drugs that have recently become available, and are not world-wide regulated. They often intend to mimic the effect of controlled drugs (Papaseit, Farré, Schifano, & Torrens, 2014), becoming a public health concern. α -Pyrrolidinopentiophenone (Alpha-PVP) is a potent stimulant cathinones active at very low doses (3-5mg) that is thought to act inhibiting DA and NA reuptake. The evidence available suggest it is a reason for concern: it has been detected as an adulterant of other drugs, and has been associated with hallucinations, psychotic symptomatology, severe toxicity and death (Sykutera, Cychowska, & Bloch-boguslawska, 2015).

Legal high containing Alpha-PVP



Objective

1. To explore the presence of Alpha-PVP from the samples handled to, and analyzed by, Energy Control.
2. To determine whether it is a new trend in recreational settings.

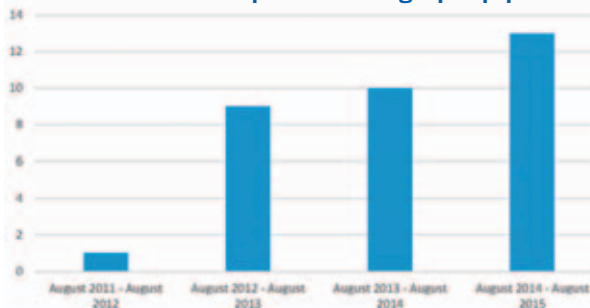
Methods

All samples analyzed from August 2011 to August 2015 in which Alpha-PVP was found were studied. Energy Control is a Spanish harm-reduction NGO that offers to users the possibility of analyzing the substances they intend to consume.

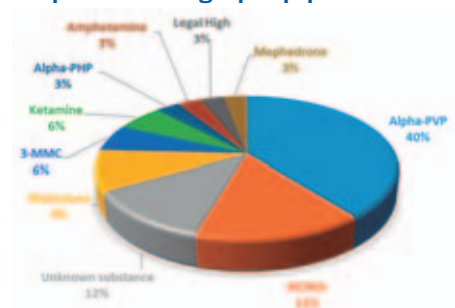
Results

From a total of 16704 samples, 33 contained Alpha-PVP (0.19%). Mean age of the submitters was 30.1 (range: 22-45), and all were men.

Number of samples containing alpha-pvp



Samples containing alpha-pvp were sold as



Conclusion

Results show a recent increase in samples containing Alpha-PVP. There is also an alarming proportion of Alpha-PVP sold as other drugs such as MDMA. However the total amount of Alpha-PVP analyzed remains small. Our results suggest presence of Alpha-PVP in the drug market may be increasing, especially as adulterant of other drugs. This fact is clinically relevant since several fatal outcomes have been reported related to its recreational use. Moreover, alpha-PVP dosage is one order of magnitude smaller than MDMA and unaware users tend to overdose.

Bibliography

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