Is Methylone a new public health threat in Spain?

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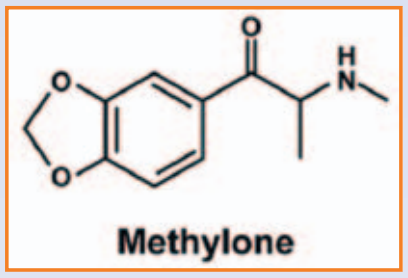
Introduction

Due to the continuous search for new, legal, less expensive, and more powerful highs by drug users, the synthesis of novel cathinone derivatives has become a fruitful industry, leading to a fast emergence of new alternative substances every year. Methylone (3,4-methylenedioxy-N-methylcathinone) is one of the substances that rapidly emerged as the main ingredient of 'bath salts', becoming readily accessible on the Internet. This fact has arised concerns about its potential harmfulness.



Objectives

The aim of the present study is to analyze the presence of Methylone in samples delivered to a harm reduction facility from 2014 to 2015 in Spain.

Material and methods

A total of 8,324 samples were assessed from June 2014 to May 2015. Only those samples acquired as methylone were studied. They were analyzed by Energy Control, a Spanish harm reduction non-governmental organization that offers the possibility of analyzing the substances that users report. Analysis was done by Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry.

Results

Ten users reported to have acquired methylone (0,12%). The most used source for acquiring it was the Internet (60%). Other sources included a friend or relative (10%), home-delivered (10%) or undetermined (20%) (**Figure 1**). There was no peak of consume as 50% were acquired in 2014 and 50% in 2015 (**Figure 2**).

Figure 1 - Sources from where methylone was acquired

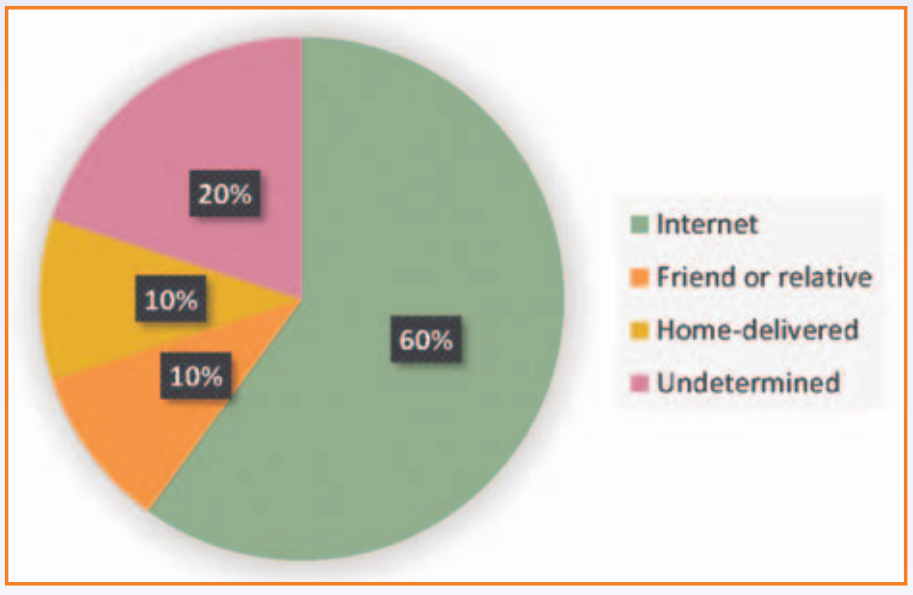
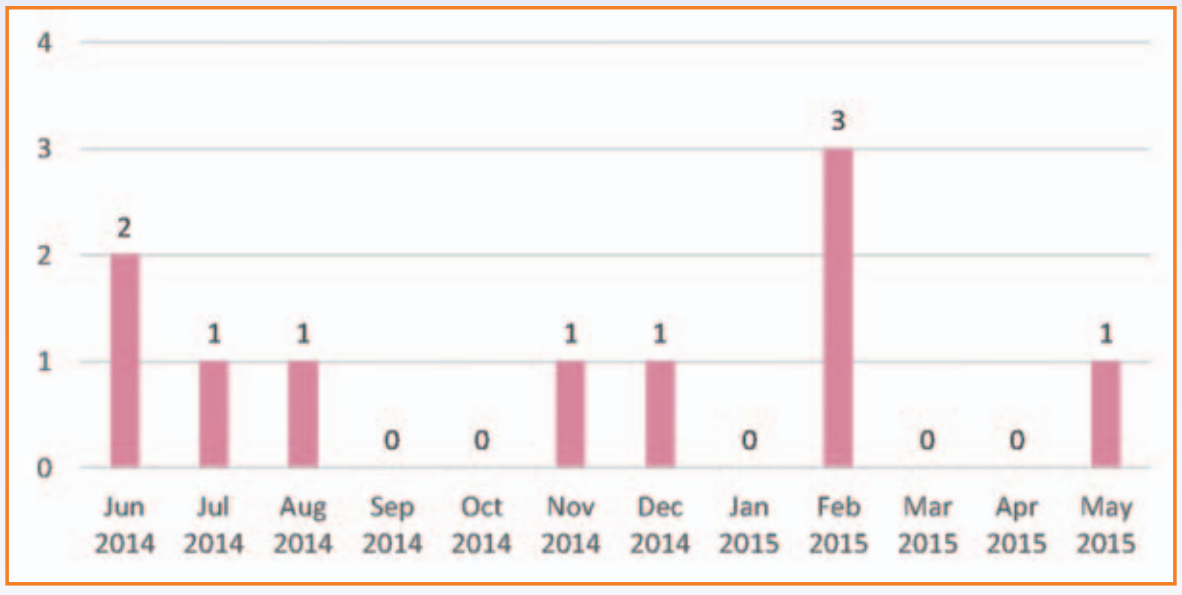


Figure 2 - Number of samples sold as methylone per month from june 2014 to may 2015



Conclusion

According to the results, the presence of methylone in our samples has been very low in Spain until 2015.

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