

Friday, 15 November 2013

Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement

Stimulant drugs
Professional guidance

HSC Public Health Agency

Who is this for?
The guidance is aimed at professionals who come into contact with stimulant drug users through their work. This may include health or the community and voluntary sectors or in health and social care.

It aims to support you in your conversations about stimulant drugs with people who are likely to help you give advice that will reduce the risks they face and help prevent stimulant-related health and social problems.

Why is this needed?
Every year in Northern Ireland stimulants are a factor in around eight to ten deaths. In the UK 301 new prescription substances were identified in 2012 and more than two dozen are being identified at a rate of approximately one per week.

Identified drugs: The quality and content of such drugs varied greatly and the more used they had, the more likely they were to be abused. Most of these drugs are all different, and therefore can have different effects on health. One of the reasons of these drugs are different to other drugs. When given to people with mental health problems, they can give unwanted advice that may encourage them to reduce their risk.

What are stimulants?
A stimulant is a drug that speeds up the central nervous system to increase mental activity in the brain. Stimulants tend to make people feel more alert and energetic, and can produce feelings of euphoria.

Many new prescription substances (sometimes called 'legal highs' or 'crazy cocktail' drugs, usually in powder, capsule or pill form).

Examples of stimulants:

- caffeine
- amphetamine
- methylphenidate
- cocaine
- crystal meth
- MDMA
- ecstasy
- speed

However, this type of drug can be abused in other ways than just to 'get high'. This includes the use of the drug for medical reasons, such as to help with a condition which causes chronic pain, and at identical dosages to those used for medical purposes.

PMAs: Since PMAs are given to take effect, the user may find it hard to stop and take another pill which could lead to a fatal overdose as PMAs are very toxic.

Side effects:
Physical: Stimulants, besides headaches, raised blood pressure, palpitations, nervousness, sweating, weight loss and decreased energy. These effects may occur as a result of taking too large a dose or as a side effect of taking them over an extended period of time.

Psychological: agitation, hostility, panic, aggression and suicidal tendencies. Paranoia, sometimes accompanied by delirium, and loss of touch with reality may also occur.

Overdose: can cause high fever, convulsions, stroke, or heart problems. An overdose of amphetamine can lead to death. Stimulant overdose can be fatal due to the effects of amphetamine on the heart, lungs and other organs.

Stimulants can also be used to self-harm or to harm others, including injecting stimulants, which can lead to blood-borne virus (BBV) and other infections.

www.publichealth.hscni.net

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Details

Format

A4 3 pages

Target group

Those who come into contact with stimulant drug users through their work.

Downloads

Attachment

Size

[stimulants users factsheet version 2.pdf](#) 73.96 KB

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