
METHYLPHENIDATE ABUSE: RESULTS OF A FRENCH SURVEY

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Introduction: Methylphenidate (MPH) abuse is well established especially among young people in USA. In France, MPH is indicated in treatment for attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and narcolepsy in children and adults. Since its release onto the market, MPH abuse has been progressively increasing by individuals close to children treated with MPH and especially by patients to whom MPH is prescribed off-label or obtained in black market.

Objectives: We report the results of a national survey on abuse and off-label use of methylphenidate.

Methods: Assessment of data collected between 2000 and 2011 from the Nots, OPPIDUM and OPEMA databases (tools for monitoring psychoactive substance misuse).

Results: MPH abuse and misuse were identified in 245 patients (168 in NotS, 68 in Oppidum and 9 in Opema). In NotS database, subjects were predominantly males (65%), aged between 12 and 74 years. When specified (122 cases), the sustained release form was used in 83% of cases and maximum daily MPH intake reached 2520 mg. MPH was injected (20%) or snorted (4%). Polydrug use was noted in 77% of cases. Regarding Oppidum and Opema databases, patients were exclusively adults and supported for drug addiction. In these cases, MPH was obtained by medical prescription (61%) and/or in black market (36%).

Conclusion: The medical practice of off-label prescription of MPH to treat ADHD or drug addiction in adults is the main problem in France. Another new aspect is that MPH is also diverted by teenagers, with or without ADH, for its stimulant and concentration-enhancing properties.