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Novel psychotropic misuse: Uncommon phenibut toxicity in an intensive care unit

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Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) agonists are used as exogenous neuromodulators for patients with chronic pain and refractory mental illness. Phenibut is a controlled GABA-B agonist with an extensive use in Russia for psychiatric and perioperative patients. In recent times, its anxiolytic and nootropic properties are commercially marketed with an increased risk for recreational abuse. We present a case of a complicated admission of phenibut overdose in a 44 year old Caucasian man and subsequent management in an intensive care unit (ICU). The drug was accessed over the Internet. The patient previously had multiple ICU admissions due to overdosing on this particular substance with a fluctuating conscious state and a threatened airway that required intubation, ventilation, haemodynamic monitoring and vasoactive supports. His ongoing agitation over a course of several days mandated sedatives and hypnotics and his admission was complicated by hypertensive crises and aspiration pneumonia. The clinical dilemma is yet to be addressed including the implications of this toxidrome and multi-organ dysfunction. The laboratory diagnosis (i.e., plasma phenibut level) are still investigational and needs more research. This report highlights the role of phenibut as an emerging psychotropic substance with a significant disease burden on the public health system. There is neither a consensus-based approach nor an antidote for this toxidrome and its diagnosis often relies on accurate history alone. Long-term neurological sequelae and outcomes remain uncertain and more clinical surveillance and governance is needed in this particular area of toxicology and the nexus between e-commerce and substance abuse.

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Priapism and clozapine use in a patient with hypochondriacal delusional syndrome

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Priapism is a urological emergency that results in a penile or clitoral engorgement, having several triggers by the use of medications, including psychiatric drugs, such as antipsychotics and antidepressants. The most common priapism presentation is the ischemic type that can result in the fibrosis of corpus cavernosus with a significant risk of persistent erectile dysfunction. It is believed that, in the case of antipsychotic use, priapism is mediated by an imbalance in alpha-1 adrenergic blocking with large variation affinity for alpha-1 adrenergic receptors among antipsychotics. This case report contributes to the study of this rare but severe side effect. Priapism can limit both treatment adherence and the reproductive future of our patients. We describe a case report of a patient with a delusional hypochondriac syndrome who had multiple priapism episodes using clozapine 50 mg/daily. In conclusion, we make brief comments on priapism management, a hard clinical dilemma. This case report has the purpose to discuss this rare adverse event but very severe, mainly between clinicians and psychiatrists who deal with antipsychotics drugs.

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