

Chemsex in France: a lookout for risks factors & forgotten populations

Sea, Sex and Chems study



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Abstract :

Introduction:

For the last decade, Chemsex has continued its democratization in MSM population with a potential acceleration in the last few years. Practices, publics, products, consumption modes haven't ceased to evolve.

Materials and methods:

Sea, Sex and Chems (SSC) is a medico-sexological study about addictive risk factors of drug uses in a sexual context (Chemsex). The study was based on an anonymous online-survey (seasexandchemsex.fr) accessible to everyone and diffused in early 2021 by diversified networks (associations, cultural actors, care settings, social networks, applications...). It aimed an enlarged recruitment decentered from care and using validated (or consensual) scores such as DAST10, hypersexual disorder criteria or NSSS (sexual satisfaction score).

Results:

2767 individuals had been recruited (1934 men, 723 women, 110 non-cisgender) including almost 1200 self-describing as practicing Chemsex (Chs). Among Chs, we had drawn sociodemographic, sexological and addictological profiles: 70,9% considered themselves as homosexual, 12,9% heterosexual, 10,4% bisexual and 5,7% pansexual. 43% of them practiced Chemsex at least monthly and 13% weekly. Most consumed products were: NPS(38%), GHB(20%), THC(17%) and cocaine(10%). Compared to non-practicing people (nChs), 84% of Chs had a DAST10 \geq 3 (vs. 32% in nChs; $p<0.001$) and a tripled hypersexuality disorder risk (12,5% vs. 4,1%; $p<0.001$). STIs also appeared more frequently with highest differences for HCV, syphilis and HIV (RR at 7,5, 4,37 and 4,22; all $p<0,001$). A low self-esteem seems associated with high risks of addictions (DAST10 \geq 6) for MSM (RR=1,71 ; $p<0,001$). In Chs female population, heterosexuality is also related with increased addiction risks (RR = 2,22 comparing to WSW, $p<0,001$).

Discussion:

SSC is one of the first french medico-sexological studies to investigate uses of drugs for sexuality among different populations, including for the first time women. Our findings show, Chemsex is diffusing in different communities, in different ways. It should imply new reinforcements and adaptations of public health policies.

Keywords (English):

Chemsex, drug, MSM, WSW, non-cisgender, sexology, risk factors, addiction, cathinone, NPS, hypersexual disorder, harm-reduction

Declaration of Conflicting Interests:

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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