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REVIEW PAPER

Intoxication with new drugs – an ongoing challenge for public health and education

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Abstract

Use of chemicals classified collectively as the so-called new drugs that include narcotic replacement drugs and new psychoactive substances constitutes a phenomenon adversely affecting human health. These drugs may contain new, often undescribed chemical compounds, whose health and social effects are difficult to predict fully. Analyses of the chemical composition of new drugs have confirmed that they contain compounds with psychoactive effects; however, their content and proportions of the particular components vary. Use of addictive substances has become widespread due to the currently prevailing fashion as well as their entertaining nature. They affect the physical and psychosocial health of individuals, causing serious consequences for them, their families and the society at both social and economic levels. Therefore, prevention of the use of new drugs aims at promoting a healthy lifestyle with reference to mental and physical health. As new psychoactive substances appear on the market, recommendations are being made on an ongoing basis covering new substances, for example ones identified in Poland, that have the potential to affect human health or life. It is difficult to list the most dangerous and addictive substances. Selected substances are discussed in this paper. Prevention of the problems associated with use of the new drugs consists mainly in sharing knowledge about effects of these substances on the human body, dispelling myths about their supposed harmlessness as well as appealing to the value system of the recipients, also in the context of building a healthy and mature personality.

Keywords: narcotic replacement drugs, new psychoactive substances, human health, public health, education

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