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CHEMSEX AND THE CLUB DRUG CLINIC – ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT



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WHAT IS CHEMSEX?

Definition according to The New Statesman, May 2016:

‘chemsex refers to gay or bisexual men using drugs to facilitate sex with other men. It has become a catch-all term for sex involving drugs and "chemsex parties’

‘It's important to note that chemsex is distinct from drug use which later leads to sexual activity: chemsex is where men take a certain drug or drugs *because* they are about to have sex.’

Chemsex is a relatively recent phenomenon – rise of this pattern of drug use seen in urban centres over the past 10 years.

Specifically a set of drugs used to enhance sexual sensation and performance at parties with groups of MSM.

MSM, technology and drugs as ‘The Perfect Storm’



THE DRUGS USED IN CHEMSEX

Crystal methamphetamine – smoked, sniffed or IV (slamming)

Mephodrone – oral, rectal, IV or sniffed

GBL – oral, occasionally injected.

Other substances used

MDMA – oral or IV

Cocaine – sniffed or IV

Xanax/alcohol – oral

Cannabis – smoked

Ketamine – IV, oral or sniffed



CHEMSEX RISKS

Crystal methamphetamine: dehydration, insomnia, malnutrition, psychosis, cardiac problems.

GBL: addictive++; steep dose curve; acute OD danger alone and even more so if mixed with other sedatives; unpredictable, rapid onset withdrawal phenomena including risk of rhabdomyolysis.

IV drug use: sharing behaviour, injecting others and concomitant legal issues, increased rates of HIV, Hep B and Hep C.

Sexual health: decreased sober sex, increased risk of other STI's, bare-backing, physical injury, consent issues, disinhibition, increased risk of HIV meds non-compliance.

Social Functioning: loss of other relationships, jobs, tenancies, bullying, rejection, pressure to continue when no longer fun.

Mental Health: comedown, suicidality, psychosis, self harm, anxiety, trauma.

THE CLUB DRUG CLINIC



CNWL Mental Health Trust, situated in Earls Court.

Commissioned to see atypical drug users and drug use: a different demographic requiring a different model from mainstream drug treatment services.

Triborough catchment area: Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea.

Team comprises specialist nurses, a mindfulness practitioner, drug workers, psychologists, psycho-sexual counsellor, family therapist and couples counsellor, and consultant psychiatrist.

Service users fall into 3 broad categories: psychonauts; chemsexers and ATOM-isers.

CLUB DRUG CLINIC CONTINUED

How to refer:

Email: clubdrugclinic.cnwl@nhs.net

Or telephone: 0203 315 6111

Name, DOB, drugs used, postcode, best contact details,
your details as referrer



The team also takes self-referrals.

ASSESSMENT

Comprehensive assessment:

Drug taking/substance use history

Social history

Risk assessment

Psychiatric assessment

Physical health assessment

Treatment goals

Care planning

Consent



TREATMENT

Person centred talking therapy.

MI & CBT.

Psycho-sexual counselling.

Couples counselling.

Family therapy.

Preparation for and referral to inpatient detox.

Referral to and co-working with care management teams for rehab and aftercare.

Referral onto other specialisms: eg. Urology, CMHT, ETE.

Harm reduction.

Moderation/reduction/controlled use.

Hep B testing & vaccination.

Mental health treatment.

ADHD assessment and treatment initiation.

Mindfulness 1:1 and in groups.



THE CLUB DRUG CLINIC@CHELWEST SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES

Initially a pilot project.

Has been running for 3 years.

2 sites: John Hunter Clinic – Friday afternoons

10 Hammersmith Broadway – Monday evenings.

3 booked appointments for each clinic.

Specialist advice for colleagues.



STATISTICS FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2018:

94 clients seen for assessment.

95% of whom were male

79% of whom were MSM

62% of whom were HIV+ve

7% of whom had no history of other STI's.

34% HIV+ve & syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia

48% of those assessed were using Crystal meth and GBL in combination.

83% using G recreationally; 17% dependently.

60% of crystal meth use was IV.



Questions?



FURTHER READING/LINKS:

<https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ssh-chemsex-study-final-main-report.pdf>

[https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/health/2016/04/what-chemsex-and-how-worried-should-we-be.](https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/health/2016/04/what-chemsex-and-how-worried-should-we-be)

https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/9k533v/the-inside-story-of-londons-chemsex-scene

https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/neqx58/how-chemsex-helps-queer-men-find-their-place-in-harsh-cities

<http://neptune-clinical-guidance.co.uk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZLqFHVnaMs>