

Stimulant use, abuse and dependence in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

It was clear that in Thailand, many types of stimulants were available. These substances were actively used by many people for many purposes and results. The stimulants were accessible to the users in the forms of beverages, medicinal drugs and also illicit drugs. Indiscriminate uses of the stimulants specifically caffeine in the camouflage of tonic beverages were legally and socially accepted. The abuse and dependence to stimulants were quite evident. However, some pattern of uses such as those of the truck drivers and many other specific population groups were closely tied up with the professional activities in the dark side of modern society in developing country. To the individual user, the substances and their use became almost a part of the life style but to others in the society their stimulant uses were hazardous to the society at large as well. There were perhaps definite controversial elements on the legitimacy of stimulant use. The conflict of interest among the various members and organizations in the society was probably one of the important element.

The consequences of stimulant use had not been referred to very much. However the outcome at the individual user's level and the impact on the family and the society were qualitatively quite well known. The quantitative aspects of the consequences at the social level were sadly lacking but would not be beyond systematic estimation based on known fact.

The extent of the illicit stimulant availability in combination with the pattern of uses already known suggested of considerable diffuse and infiltrative social problems not having to mention the drastic outcome to individual users. The magnitude of the problem related to stimulants use may not equal those from the opiates, but the comparison was most likely not the issue. The actual fact was the symbiotic co-existence of opiates and stimulants uses. Drug dependence problem of a country rarely constituted of problems related to one substance. To examine the problem related to individual substance is a systematic approach. However, the final concern should always be on the composite whole. To overlook any part of the whole drug dependence problem may every well be one of the

most contentious problem in our attempt to curb the immeasurably high cost of drug abuse and dependence.

Key words: Stimulant, Drug abuse, drug dependent

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