

## Letters to the Editor

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### AN ANTI-INFLAMMATORY AS A RECREATIONAL DRUG IN BRAZIL

Benzydamine hydrochloride is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug, with medical indication for disorders of the oral and vaginal mucosa [1]. It is available in a number of countries and in different pharmaceutical preparations, such as pills, vaginal douche preparations, mouthwash, dermal cream and aerosol [2]. In Brazil, it can be purchased for less than US\$ 5 a unit.

One of the few case reports on the recreational use of this substance was a 22 year-old male who discovered information on the web about its hallucinogenic properties and decided to experiment. The subject described a state of hyperactivity, excitation, visual hallucinations and muscle weakness [3].

Last year our research group published an article describing the use of benzydamine for recreational purposes by 78 children and adolescents in street situation in a national survey in Brazil [4]. They described a dosage use ranged from 100 to 2000 mg of benzydamine; most reports were of use of an oral preparation acquired through a drugstore without a medical prescription. Some of them reported that they had associated this drug with another substance, commonly an alcoholic beverage, in an attempt to enhance its psychotropic effects.

Recently we also identified the benzydamine recreational use among 2.3% of a sample of 5208 students of Sao Paulo, the largest city of Brazil. The sample was composed of 12 to 18 year-old students from private schools, with the main characteristic of belonging to the wealthiest socioeconomic status of the country. Most of the cases were high school students, and no differences were found between gender. The students that reported misuse of benzydamine reported more lifetime use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and inhalants ( $P < 0.01$ ). However, there were fewer users of ecstasy and medications without prescriptions, like benzodiazepines and amphetamines.

By accessing a series of social web networks in Brazil, it is easy to perceive how widespread the knowledge is on recreational use of benzydamine. Information is shared on what quantity is necessary to achieve the desired hedonistic effect, the combined use with other drugs to potentiate its effect and even opinions that encourage or discourage its use [5].

This letter serves as an alert to other countries on drawing attention to a cheap substance, readily available

and with growing information about its misuse and the potential to be abused by children and adolescents.

#### Conflict of interest declaration

None.

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### FCTC BACKGROUND REPORT ON SMOKELESS TOBACCO IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH WHO SCIENTIFIC REPORTS

At the up-coming Fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, COP4, 15–20 November 2010, there is an agenda item dealing with smokeless tobacco products. This is a very pertinent area in the current discussions of tobacco control policies, since some of these products are almost as harmful as cigarettes, while others may have a potential role in harm reduction strategies [1–5]. Both