ONLINE AVAILABILITY OF NOVAL PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS IN INDIA.

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Objectives: The internet has become a vital tool in today's world, as a source of information and entertainment as well. But over the past few years, the internet has been increasingly used as a medium for easy accessibility of Novel psychoactive substances (NPS), which are marketed over the internet a safer and legal alternatives to drugs of abuse. The aim of this research is to study the availability of NPS over the internet, as well as information available on them in India.

Methods: Web analysis was carried out 2014- 2015 for websites presenting access to and information regarding NPS. For this purpose, various search engines were used, in the three languages stated above, which are used predominantly in North India. The focus of the search was to identify NPS retailers. The key words used were "recreational drugs", Drugs of abuse, psychotropic substances, party drugs, Rave agents. The websites/hits obtained were divided into actual seller, information sites and drugs relarted enws.

Results: Our study revealed 75 websites offering information on various NPS, 43 of which also acted as retailers for these substances. Interestingly, 24 of these websites presented the opportunity to the customer to buy these substances in bulk. Various categories of NPS were available, including stimulants, anaesthetics, opiates, hallucinogens, rave drugs, psychoactive substances, and sedatives. The commonest agents were ketamine, MDMA, ecstacy and LSD. Interestingly heroin and opium were not the common agents available online but are the most abused NPS in North India.

Conclusion: Easy availability of NPS over the internet represents a source of concern for the public health authorities in the face of an increasing drug epidemic in the country. New and tighter laws must be formulated to combat this threat to curtail the spread and use of these substances.