

Oral Abstracts

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The Diversification of Medications in Thai Adolescents, Will We Ever Catch Up

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Abstract: Thai adolescents have been using legal medications for recreational purpose for the past few decades. In the 1990's, cough syrup containing codeine was reported to be abused widely by teenagers in Southern Thailand. Subsequently, the introduction of 'Lean' music, originated from the Rap/Hip Hop genre, was made popular by the rapper DJ Screw in 1990's. The word 'lean' described a drink concoction which contained the cough medicine promethazine with codeine (Phenergan with codeine®) and has the street name Lean Sizzurp or Purple Drank. The music, as well as the drug culture, had been transferred to Thai youths through the debut of songs and personal videos on YouTube involving the use of Lean by Thai rap artist Illsick in 2012, in which the opioid codeine was replaced by a more locally available drug tramadol and called 'Ya Pro' in Thai. The toxicity ranged from agitation and dysphoria, to seizures, especially when promethazine is combined with tramadol. Once the authorities had caught up with such practice, the use diversified to include other phenothiazines such as perphenazine and chlorpromazine, resulting in greater toxicity. Eventually, the use settled on trihexyphenidyl 5 mg, commonly called 'B5', which had been widespread among adolescents in Bangkok. The toxicity included peripheral and central anticholinergic toxidrome that lasted anywhere from hours to several days.