

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

[ID-O#030] Clinical Outcomes and Management of Body Stuffing: A Retrospective Review

Abbey Tan^a, Bash Jagarlamudi^b, Dinuka Dadallage^c, Katherine Isoardi^c and Angela Chiew^b

^aPrince of Wales Clinical School, UNSW Medicine, Sydney, NSW, Australia; ^bDepartment of Clinical Toxicology, Prince of Wales Hospital, NSW, Australia; ^cClinical Toxicology Unit, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Introduction: Body stuffing involves hastily ingesting packets of substances for concealment, using poorly sealed packaging. Current management recommendations vary from no imaging to CT scans and observation periods of 6 to 24 hours or until passage of packets. This study aimed to describe the characteristics, management, and outcomes of body stuffers.

Method: A retrospective review was conducted on body stuffers reported to the NSW PIC and South- East Area Toxicology Service from January 2014 to June 2023. Included patients who had ingested a drug for concealment. Exclusion criteria included body packers, body pushers, and those without medical records. Clinical data were collected from databases and medical records.

Results: Of 192 patients identified, 126 were included. 107(85%) were male, with a median age of 30 years(IQR: 24–38). The median time from concealment to presentation was 3.2 hours(IQR: 1.7–6.6). The median number of packages was one(IQR: 1–3, range: 1-9). Balloons were the most common packaging(56%). The most common drugs concealed were opioids(39%) and amphetamines(29%). Thirty- two patients ingested more than one substance, and 26 denied or had unknown ingestion. On presentation, 61(48%) were symptomatic, including sedation(19) and agitation(13). Symptomatic patients commonly concealed sedatives(29) or stimulants(28). Those reporting tobacco or denying ingestion were mostly asymptomatic. Imaging was performed in 93(74%), with 63 having an abdominal X-ray and/or CT. Only 6/63 X-rays and 20/50 CTs were positive for packaging, with six indeterminate CTs. Sensitivity for abdominal X-ray and CT was 12.5% (95%CI: 0.07-0.22) and 52.0% (95%CI: 0.39-0.65),

respectively. No asymptomatic patients developed symptoms during their stay. Ten symptomatic patients worsened, and twelve represented with new symptoms, primarily after concealing buprenorphine or methamphetamine. Of these, three underwent further imaging, two had an endoscopy, of which one was negative.

Conclusions: This study demonstrated a variety of packages and drugs concealed by body stuffers. Those ingesting tobacco or denying ingestion were often asymptomatic, unlike those ingesting opioids or stimulants. Treatment protocols should consider the suspected drug, with shorter observation for low-risk ingestions and more extensive management for opioids and stimulants.