

FACT SHEET THIRTY NINE

OTHER DRUGS

KHAT

(Qat, Qhat, Quaadka, Chat, Catha edulis)

Classification – Stimulant

Khat – has similar effects to amphetamine (see Fact Sheet 28) , it comes from a plant whose leaf can be chewed over several hours or used to make a paste, tea or an infusion drink.

The Effects As a stimulant Khat causes loss of appetite and also makes people feel alert, excited and chatty. Over longer periods of chewing, users report a blissful, relaxing experience.

The Side Effects During the come down people can become irritable, restless, depressed and anxious. Long-term use affects sleeping patterns and can also lead to heart problems, it exacerbates existing mental health problems, and can leave the user with depression, anxiety and with males, impotence. Cases of individuals with increased anger and sometimes-violent tendencies have been reported in Khat users and psychological dependence can occur.

PMA (Para-MethoxyAmphetamine)

(Chicken yellow, Chicken fever, Double stacked, Mitsubishi turbo, red Mitsubishi, Killer)

Classification – Stimulant

PMA - is similar but more potent in effects than Ecstasy, which it is often passed off as, it is sold as a white tablet costing between £3-8 and is taken orally. As with Ecstasy, PMA tablets are likely to be a mixture of other chemicals such as caffeine and other drugs such as amphetamines or Ecstasy.

The Effects Are similar to Ecstasy, as a stimulant it causes increased body temperature, blood pressure and heart rate, users feel wide awake and energetic. (See Fact Sheet 24)

The Side Effects PMA can cause nausea, vomiting and muscle spasms and heavy use can lead to paranoia and depression. Mixing PMA with alcohol (due to its dehydrating effects) and other drugs is particularly dangerous and the risk of overdose is increased by the delayed onset of PMA effects (people double dose).

As with Ecstasy, the biggest risks associated with taking PMA are 1) overheating and 2) causing an imbalance in the body's electrolytes by drinking too many fluids. Long-term PMA use is likely to result in the type of complications seen with long-term and heavy Ecstasy use.

4-MTA (4-MethylThioAmphetamine) (*p*-MTA, MTA, Flatliners)

Classification – Stimulant

4-MTA is a derivative of amphetamine and has similar effects to Ecstasy, which it is often passed off as. (See Fact Sheets 24 and 28 for more details)

YABA (*Ice, Crazy Medicine*)

Classification – Stimulant and Hallucinogen

Yaba - is a cheaper and more easily manufactured derivative of amphetamine, it is sold as coloured tablets - red, orange or green and is usually mixed with impurities such as household cleaning products.

The Effects Are similar to its relative amphetamine as a stimulant, it causes dilated pupils, rapid breathing and heart rate, loss of appetite, feeling wide awake for days, energetic, excited, chatty, confident and happy. It also gives users hallucinations.

The Side Effects As with amphetamine use they can be addictive and during the come down people can become irritable, restless, depressed and anxious. The hallucinations can be frightening and make users paranoid or panicky.

Due to the stimulant effect use can be particularly dangerous for people with high blood pressure or heart conditions. It is extremely dangerous, sometimes fatal, to mix Yaba with alcohol and other drugs that depress Central Nervous System function.

Long-term use affects the kidneys and lungs, as well as leaving the user with morbid depression and suicidal urges.

Yaba is not to common in the UK currently but it has been passed off as Ecstasy. For more information on amphetamines see Fact Sheet 28, for further reading on LSD see Fact Sheet 31.

DMT and DPT

(Dimethyltryptamine and N,N-Dipropyltryptamine)

Classification – Hallucinogens

DMT and DPT are very similar in chemical properties and effects, both are rare in the UK, both are sniffed, smoked, snorted or injected and both have effects similar to LSD (see Fact Sheet 31). Onset of hallucinogenic effects is about 20 minutes depending on route of administration and the effects last for about 2 hours, according to strength, purity and amount taken.

PCP (Phencyclidine)

(Angel Dust, Peace Pills, Hog)

Classification – Anaesthetic and Hallucinogenic

PCP was originally synthesised as an anaesthetic to be used in veterinary practise, in humans it has anaesthetic and hallucinogenic properties. Although rare in the UK these days PCP is still around and can be bought in liquid, crystal, pill or powder form and is swallowed, snorted, smoked or injected.

It causes similar hallucinatory effects to LSD (see Fact Sheet 31) in the way that it affects the senses and distorts time, feelings and environment. It can also cause panic attacks, anxiety, depression and even aggressive and violent behaviour and it can exacerbate pre-existing mental health problems. In some extreme cases, users have died from heart or lung failure.

ROHYPNOL

(Roofies, Rophies, Roach, Rope, R2, Mexican, Date Rape Drug, Flunitrazepam)

Classification - Tranquilliser

Rohypnol is a sedative from the benzodiazepine group of drugs, it was developed for use with sleep disorders but has more recently been abused as a date rape drug because of the following factors:

- Sedative and hypnotic effects
- Short-term memory loss
- Causes confusion in the user
- Easily slipped into a drink yet difficult to detect
- Quickly metabolised in the body
- Cheap and relatively easy to obtain
- Legal to possess with a prescription

As with other benzodiazepines there is a strong risk of physical and psychological dependence and withdrawal from these drugs should be medically supervised. Withdrawal symptoms are similar to those seen with alcohol dependency and include anxiety, tension, restlessness, confusion, irritability, headaches, muscle pain, numbness

and pins and needles in the hands and feet. More severe symptoms include hallucinations, Delirium Tremens, loss of identity, convulsions and seizures, shock and in some serious cases cardiovascular collapse. For more information on Tranquillisers see Fact Sheet 12.