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The Dutch GHB monitor: Monitoring GHB dependence and detoxification

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Abstract

GHB (Gamma-hydroxybutyric acid) is an emerging drug of abuse in the Netherlands. Regular abuse of GHB in humans can lead to dependence and abrupt discontinuation can cause severe and sometimes life-threatening withdrawal symptoms. Every year more patients are admitted to addiction care centers for GHB detoxification. No standard protocols were available for the treatment of GHB withdrawal symptoms.

A nationwide multicentre GHB monitor was developed by the Nijmegen Institute for Scientist Practitioners in Addiction (NISPA), financed by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. Four practical detoxification guidelines were developed in collaboration with addiction care centers, general hospitals and police/judiciary in which detoxification is performed by means of titration with pharmaceutical GHB and tapering of the GHB. Scientific interest focuses on feasibility of the treatment and to gain deeper understanding of patients with GHB dependence.

During this presentation an overview of 229 patients will be given of their experienced withdrawal symptoms, treatment complications, GHB use, risks, and comorbid problems. We can conclude that GHB abusers are complex and vulnerable patients with high care consumption and special needs in comparison with other SUD populations.

Biography

Dr. Boukje AG Dijkstra, mental health scientist, is working as post-doc researcher at the Nijmegen Institute for Scientist-Practitioners in Addiction (NISPA) and at the addiction care centre Novadic-Kentron in the Netherlands. She is mainly involved in practice based research with regard to addiction treatment effectiveness, multi-centre research, detoxification and implementation. Additionally, she is responsible for the course 'Applied Research' of the postdoc education Clinical Psychology at the Radboud University Nijmegen.