

Emerging Drug Trends, NJ focus

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Benzodiazepines

- Approved for anxiety disorders and panic attacks
- Used for treatment of acute alcohol withdrawal
- Abused in combination with illegal drugs
- Prescribed by primary care MDs in abundance
- High abuse and dependence potential
- Acute withdrawal can be lethal just like alcohol
- 10% of patient who go into acute withdrawal will die

Benzodiazepines

- Valium- Diazepam
- Ativan- Lorazepam
- Xanax- Alprazolam
- Klonopin- Clonazepam

Benzodiazepines long term side effects

- Same effects on brain as long term alcohol dependence
- Do not cause liver cirrhosis
- Dementia and cognitive deficits
- Long term Hallucinosiis
- Long term psychosis
- Patients end up in long term care/nursing homes

Alcohol dependence and deaths

- According to the CDC 1/10 deaths between the ages of 20-64 are alcohol related
- 70% of alcohol related deaths are men
- 36% of car fatalities are alcohol related
- NJ lowest alcohol related deaths in the US

Causes of alcohol related deaths

- Accidents, falling, drowning (swimming and boating while intoxicated).
- Suicide, accidental death, violence.
- Medical illness: liver disease, heart disease, acute pancreatitis, Esophageal bleeding, dementia, long term alcoholic hallucinosis.

Gabapentin

- Indicated for neuropathic pain
- Similar neurochemical effect to benzodiazepines
- Now used in treatment of opioid dependence
- Used on the street as an adjunct to enhance the high from opioids
- Strict regulations up to schedule II in some states, proposed in NJ
- Some agencies are refusing to care for patients while on the drug, e.g. Salvation army
- Similar issues with Seroquel.

Amphetamines

- Indicated for treatment of Attention deficit disorders
- Indicated for treatment of certain mood disorders
- High abuse and dependence potential
- Increasing rates of prescribing to high school and college kids to enhance academic performance
- Increased use by adults for enhanced job performance

Data on Amphetamines

- In 10 million employment drug tests in 2017 in NJ, total opioids use dropped by 12%, amphetamines increased up to 6%.
- Quest labs report 2018 showed a drop in opioids positive screens from 4.1% to 3.6% from 2017.
- College recovery program reported an increase in amphetamine use from 2% to 6% in 2017.

Data on Amphetamines

- Highest Amphetamine positive results were in 078.. Zip codes, thus Morris, Warren and Sussex counties.
- In 079.. Zip codes the average amphetamine positive results were double those of the whole state.

Amphetamines long term side effects

- Neurocognitive deficits
- Impulse control
- Cardiac disease, these are the cause of sudden cardiac deaths similar to cocaine. Phen/Phen years ago used for weight loss caused multiple deaths leading to it being banned.
- Chronic debility and weight loss
- Unclear what else since historically were only used for a short period of time, wait and see.

Even newer threats

- Juul
- Vaping of nicotine
- synthetics

References

- Northjersey.com May 26, 2018
- www.niaaa.nih.gov
- www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets.

THANK YOU