SELF-REPORTED USE OF NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES (NPS): A CASE SERIES REPORTED TO THE SANTA CATARINA POISON CONTROL CENTER FROM 2017 TO 2025

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RESUMO

Introduction: New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) are unregulated drugs designed as alternatives to traditional illicit substances, encompassing diverse chemical classes. By 2025, around 1,396 NPS had been identified worldwide. **Aim:** To assess the clinical and epidemiological profile of NPS intoxications reported to the Toxicological Information and Assistance Center of Santa Catarina (CIATox/SC) from 2017 to 2025. **Methods:** Observational case series based on patient records from the DATATOX system. **Results:** From 2017 to 2025, CIATox/SC recorded 4,798 cases involving drugs of abuse, of which 7 reported NPS use. Substances included synthetic cannabinoids (42.8%; 2023–2024), 25B-NBOH (28.6%), Methylenedioxypyrovalerone (14.3%; 2020), and Phencyclidine (14.3%; 2017). Cases were distributed across different municipalities of the state. Most patients were male (85.7%) and aged 18–36 years (71.4%). Neuropsychiatric/muscular symptoms were present in all cases, mainly agitation (57.1%) and muscle stiffness (28.6%). Other symptoms included drowsiness, altered consciousness, confusion, and mydriasis. Cardiological manifestations (42.8%), especially tachycardia, and gastrointestinal symptoms (28.6%) were also reported (such as nausea, malaise, or retrosternal pain). Only one patient had a biological sample sent for toxicological analysis; others relied on self-report use. All cases were classified as mild to moderate, with an average hospital stay of one day. No deaths occurred, but four patients were lost to follow-up. **Conclusion:** It is challenging to assess the physical and psychological harm profiles of NPS due to the limited data available on their metabolic, toxicological, and clinical characteristics. Underreporting of cases and a lack of toxicological testing also limit the ability to characterize these profiles. Strengthening toxicological surveillance and data collection by improving analytical capacity and expanding access to confirmatory testing is necessary to better understand and address the public health impact of NPS. **Acknowledgments:** CIATox/SC and FAPESC for their financial support.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: New Psychoactive Substances, Intoxication, Case Reports

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