

COCAINE ABUSE

Shiney C. Alex

Cocaine is a stimulant and a very efficient surface analgesic as mentioned in the article by Dr. M.S. Bhatia (Oct, 1994). It is obtained from coca plant namely *Erythroxylum coca* and *Erythroxylum truxillense* from Bolivia, Peru and Java. Cocaine hydrochloride is commonly used in the salt form. Since it is very expensive, most doses are heavily adulterated by chalk or stalk and may contain no cocaine at all but cheaper amphetamine.

Some Street Names

Some popular names of Cocaine are : Coke, snow, lady snow, C, big c, princess, sniff crack, flake, gold dust, green gold, blow and toot. Individual doses are referred to as 'snorts'.

Routes and Effects

The effect is termed as high which is related to the blockage of dopamine reuptake. The intensity of reaction is related to the marked lipid solubility of the free base form and produces the most severe medical and psychiatric symptoms. The drug

counters drowsiness and prevents sleep. The person feels more energetic but depressed reaction sets in as the effects of the drug wear off. A further dose relieves this and thus becomes habit forming.

Buccal absorption is enhanced by chewing the toasted leaves with alkaline material. Combined use of cocaine and ethanol results in metabolic production of cocaethylene by liver which produces more intense high and long lasting cocaine effects. Large doses give rise to hallucinations.

Alternatively, it may be dissolved in water and injected into the vein, a process known as main lining. This may also be mixed with tobacco and smoked, a practice known as free basing.

Cocaine and Crack

What is cocaine has been explained earlier. Crack is an impure form of free base, that is dried and broken into tiny smokable pellets. It produces a much faster and more intense high,

than does powdered cocaine. Crack and powdered cocaine are highly addictive.

Related Words

Cocainidine : Methyl cocaine.

Cocainism : Habitual use of cocaine or the disordered condition of the body and mind which results from addiction of cocaine.

Cocainist : A cocaine addict.

Cocainization : The putting or bringing of the system or an organ under the analgesic influence of cocaine.

Cocainomania : Cocaine addiction. Mental derangement resulting from cocaine addiction.

Nursing Diagnoses Related to Cocaine Poisoning

1. Altered thought process related to pharmacologic stimulation of nervous system possibly evidenced by an altered attention span, disorientation, hallucinations.

2. Ineffective breathing pattern, pharmacologic effects on respiratory centre of brain pos-

Ms. Shiney C. Alex, is III yr. Student, (BSc. N.), College of Nursing, Thiruvananthapuram. This article is written as a sequel to the article published on the same topic, in the Oct. 1994 issue of the Journal.

Route	Onset	Duration	Effect
Oral	5 - 10 mts.	1 hour	Mild high
Intra nasal	2 - 3 mts.	30 mts.	Moderate high
Snorting			
Intravenous	Within seconds	15 mts.	Fairly intense high
Smoking	30 seconds	Several minutes	Intense high

sibly evidenced by tachypnoea, altered depth of respiration, shortness of breath, abnormal arterial blood gases.

3. Ineffective individual coping, unwillingness to safely deal with actual or perceived stress possibly evidenced by use of potentially harmful substances.

4. Disturbance in self-esteem may be personal vulnerability evidenced by denial of problems which is obviously to others' projections of blame, rationalizing

personal failure and grandiosity.

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