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**MEPHEDRONE AS RECREATIONAL DRUG FOR YOUNG ADULTS
IN INDIA: CURRENT SITUATION AND CONCERNS**

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New designer and recreational drug often burst on the global landscape rapidly. One such emerging scene is the soaring numbers of mephedrone users around the globe. Mephedrone is a synthetic psychoactive drug of the amphetamine and cathinone classes. Street names for mephedrone include White Magic, M-Cat, bubbles, meow-meow (because of its strong smell of cat piss). Like other psychoactive substances, mephedrone is often used by teenagers and youth in a social environment, but even using this so-called less dangerous drug recreationally can turn into addiction.

The illegal mephedrone use has fast gained popularity among the youth of India, fueled by a sharp increase in online sale of mephedrone, which is sold as plant fertilizer and bath salts and comes comparatively cheap. It is available easily from street dealers and can also be ordered online through internet pharmacy websites and is delivered to the doorstep. One recent report suggests almost 8 out of 10 drug addicts in Mumbai city are using this cheap party drug^[1].

Recent studies suggest that use of recreational drugs could lead to serious psychiatric, neurological, cardiovascular, and sexual health sequelae as well. Also, use of these drugs may lead to multi-organ failure and death^[2]. In fact, mephedrone is being investigated after two party-goers have died in 2013, who are believed to have taken the lethal cocktail, a mixture of alcohol, amphetamine and mephedrone shortly before their deaths^[3]. It has become increasingly evident that mephedrone is highly dangerous to public health. Therefore, the drug was not in the list of banned drugs in India, mephedrone was later included in the list in March 2015.

In India, mephedrone is produced by many small-scale industries present in Uttaranchal, Himachal, Haryana and other states, manufactured under the license of plant fertilizers^[1]. As the production of this drug is high, it has also attracted international drug cartels to operate in India. However, after its inclusion in the banned list, about 500kg of mephedrone was seized by the crime branch in 2015-16 from national capital^[4]. On June 20, 2015, the Narcotics

Control Bureau (NCB) along with the CISF arrested a woman from New Delhi airport when she was boarding a flight to Ethiopia carrying 14.250 kg of extremely excellent quality mephedrone^[1].

Indian government must introduce a vigilance department to regulate online pharmacies and stores to control wide-spread selling of this illegal and banned drug. Studies are required to gauge the actual burden of mephedrone abuse on public health in India.

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