ChemSex is NOT the same as recreational drug use.

It is a specific form of recreational drug use.

Associated with

Extended sex for many hours/several days.

More extreme sexual practices

Multiple partners

Extreme sexual disinhibition/extreme sexual focus

Unpredictable drug interactions (e.g., GBL & alcohol)

Increased injecting use amongst an injecting-naïve population; BBV risks & injecting-related harms

Poor condom use

Poor ARV adherence

Frequent STI’s (including a current Shigella outbreak), HIV infections, HCV infection/repeated re-infections

Multipile and repeated use of PEP

Psychosis

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Typical presentations

20y/o MSM, ‘hooks up’ on Smartphone app (eg; Grindr) for casual sex after a night out drinking; snorts some mephedrone to ‘sober him up and feel sexier’. Has great sex, for about 8 hours, but regrets some of the choices & risks the following day.

26 y/o attends saunas after night out clubbing on ‘chems’; stays 10 to 20 hours, multiple partners, great sex, but regrets some of the choices & risks the following week.

30y/o (+); no longer clubs or cruises saunas, but pre-arranges weekends of ChemSex in private homes via use of smartphone apps; fast progression to riskier sex practices, harder drugs (methamphetamine), addictive behaviour, injecting. Disengagement from daily responsibilities, support networks and health appointments.

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Contributing Factors

• Confusion around current HIV messages
• Condom fatigue
• Gay Scene ‘norms’, online sex culture
• Poor understanding of how to form intimacies & relationships
• Shame around sex
• ‘Everybody does it’
• It feels good
People struggling with unprecedented on-line norms

Glad we’re hooking up finally. Fancied you for ages. See you when you get here.

Me too. This’ll be hot. I’ll bring Chems. Do you BB?

HELP YOUR CLIENT/PATIENT PHRASE THEIR RESPONSE HERE

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IS THIS A SEX PROBLEM OR A DRUG PROBLEM?

(FOR SEXUAL HEALTH SECTOR, OR SUBSTANCE MISUSE SECTOR?)
874 Unique MSM using (combinations of) Meth, Meph and GBL for sex consented to a brief intervention for drug use support.

71% were not specifically seeking drug use support on presentation

• ChemSex behaviour tended to accelerate;
  • Immediately after an HIV diagnosis
  • Immediately following the break up of a relationship
  • Following migration to London, and MSM sex tourism

• 98% had never previously accessed drug use support.
• 45% reported average of between four and ten partners per episode
• 70% reported no ‘chem-free’ sex in previous 6 months

**Injecting Drug Use**
29% were injecting drug users
34% had never injected drugs
37% unanswered

**Of the injecting drug users;**
23% reported having shared needles
27% reported never having injected themselves (allowing others to inject them)
30% had been injected by both themselves and others

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HEPATITIS C


HCV: of all screening options, MSM were \{anecdotally\} most reluctant to consent to an HCV test.

12% of cohort had previously tested positive for HCV

Of the 12% previously or currently HCV+ve:

- 52% were mono-infected
- 40% co-infected with HIV
- 68% had only been HCV-infected once
- 32% had been HCV infected multiple times
- 47% had never injected
- 36% were injecting drug users
- 23% were HIV-ve, non-injecting drug users
Drug drug interactions

**CYP450 metabolism**

CYP3A4 – inhibited by ritonavir and cobicistat, CYP3A4 metabolised drugs may increase exposure and therefore toxicity

- MDMA
- GHB/GBL
- Methamphetamine

CYP2D6 inhibited by cobicistat

- Mephedrone

In CYP2D6 slow metabolisers (7-14%) – drug would use CYP3A4 for elimination but the letter is also inhibited

CYP2B6 – inhibited by ritonavir and cobicistat

- Ketamine

CYP2C9 – inhibited by Efairenz

- Ketamine
Questions to ask

•“Do you use Party Drugs for sex?”
•(and if so…) “Tina, Mephedrone or G? (Ketamine?)”
•“Are you taking G every day?”
  (and if so.. It can be dangerous to stop without medical advice)
•“How long do you stay awake for?”
•“Have you had any bad experiences?” (eg; paranoia)
•“Do you sometimes regret the choices you make when high?”

When did you last have sober sex?
•“What’s your non-sexual/non-clubbing social life like?”
•“Are you slamming (injecting) ?”
•“Do you want to talk to someone about being safer with drugs?”

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