

SEDATIVE-TYPE DRUGS

Alcohol, Sedative-hypnotics, Inhalants, Opiates, Cannabis.

There are similarities in the CNS depressant and autonomic effects of this class of substances, which differ in degree and emphasis between the different drug subtypes. There is no recognised withdrawal syndrome from cannabis or inhalants, whilst the withdrawal syndrome from alcohol, sedative-hypnotics and opiates is frequently severe. In contrast to the alcohol and sedative-hypnotic withdrawal syndrome, the opiate withdrawal syndrome is only very rarely life-threatening.

INTOXICATION WITH ALCOHOL, SEDATIVE-HYPNOTICS AND INHALANTS

- Inappropriate sexual or aggressive behaviour
- Mood lability
- Impaired judgment
- Impaired social or occupational functioning
- Slurred speech
- Incoordination
- Unsteady gait
- Nystagmus
- Impairment in attention or memory
- Drowsiness, stupor or coma

INTOXICATION WITH OPIATES

- Initial euphoria followed by apathy and possible dysphoria
- Psychomotor retardation or occasionally agitation
- Impaired judgment, social, occupational functioning
- Slurred speech
- Impaired attention or memory
- Drowsiness, coma
- Pupillary constriction (or dilation due to anoxia from severe overdose)

INTOXICATION WITH CANNABIS

- Euphoria or anxiety
- Impaired motor coordination
- Sensation of slowed time
- Impaired judgment
- Social withdrawal

WITHDRAWAL FROM ALCOHOL AND SEDATIVE-HYPNOTICS

- Autonomic hyperactivity (e.g. sweating or pulse rate greater than 100)
- Increased hand tremor
- Insomnia
- Nausea, vomiting
- Transient visual, tactile, auditory hallucinations or illusions
- Psychomotor agitation
- Anxiety
- Grand mal seizures

WITHDRAWAL FROM OPIATES

- Dysphoric mood
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Muscle aches
- Lacrimation, rhinorrhoea
- Pupillary dilation, piloerection, sweating
- Yawning
- Fever
- Insomnia

STIMULANT-TYPE DRUGS

Amphetamine, Ecstasy, cocaine, hallucinogens and nicotine.

There are similarities in the CNS stimulant and autonomic effects of this class of substances, which differ in degree and emphasis between the different drug subtypes. There is no recognised intoxication syndrome with nicotine, or withdrawal syndrome from hallucinogens although a persistent 'flashback' disorder may occur with the latter. Whilst the intoxication syndrome with amphetamine and cocaine may be directly life-threatening, that with the hallucinogen sub-class is very rarely so.

INTOXICATION WITH AMPHETAMINE, COCAINE AND ECSTASY

- Euphoria or affective blunting
- Changes in sociability
- Hypervigilance
- Interpersonal sensitivity
- Anxiety, tension or anger
- Stereotyped behaviours
- Impaired judgment
- Impaired social or occupational functioning
- Tachycardia or bradycardia
- Pupillary dilation
- Elevated or lowered blood pressure
- Perspiration or chills
- Nausea or vomiting
- Evidence of weight loss
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation
- Muscular weakness, respiratory depression, chest pain or arrhythmias
- Confusion, seizures, dyskinesias, dystonias or coma

INTOXICATION WITH HALLUCINOGENS

Greater emphasis on the perceptual and cognitive abnormalities and less emphasis on the heightened autonomic state.

- Marked anxiety or depression

- Ideas of reference
- Fear of losing one's mind
- Paranoid ideation
- Impaired judgment, social or occupational functioning
- Perceptual changes occurring in full wakefulness and alertness e.g. hallucinations of all kinds, synaesthesias.
- Pupillary dilation
- Tachycardia
- Sweating
- Palpitations
- Blurring of vision
- Tremors
- Incoordination

WITHDRAWAL FROM AMPHETAMINE AND COCAINE (similar pattern but less frequent with Ecstasy)

- Dysphoric mood
- Fatigue
- Vivid unpleasant dreams
- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Increased appetite
- Psychomotor retardation or agitation

WITHDRAWAL FROM NICOTINE

Withdrawal: Similar to amphetamine and cocaine, but greater emphasis on anxiety, agitation and weight gain.

- Dysphoric or depressed mood
- Insomnia
- Irritability, frustration, anger
- Anxiety
- Difficulty concentrating
- Restlessness
- Decreased heart rate
- Increased appetite or weight gain