

Drug related problems in gay and bisexual men living with HIV engaged in sexualized drug use: prevalence and warning signs.

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Purpose: Our objective was to explore the prevalence of drug-related problems and their associated factors in a group of gay or bisexual men (GBM) living with HIV who were engaged in sexualized drug use (SDU).

Method: Participants were recruited from 22 HIV Units in Madrid, Spain during 2019-20, and completed an online survey that included the Drug Use Disorder Identification Test (DUDIT). The U-Mann Whitney test, Pearson's Chi-square test and Fisher's exact test were used to compare participants with and without drug-related problems.

Results: One hundred and one GBM engaged in SDU were included. The majority of them (71%) were born in Spain, while 23% were born in South America. The mean age was 38.44 (SD=8.07), and 94% had completed secondary or university studies. The most commonly used drugs during SDU were mephedrone (70.30%), [PR1] GHB (70.30%) and cocaine (43.56%). Additionally, 17% of participants were engaged in slamsex.

The DUDIT test scores suggests that 80.20% (n=81) likely had drug-related problems. Symptoms of anxiety and depression, spending large amounts of money on drugs, absence of sex without drugs, engaging in slamsex, practicing long-term SDU sessions and engaging in polydrug use (using more than 3 drugs at a time) were associated with drug-related problems (Table 1). There was no relationship found between drug-related problems and the type of drugs used.

Table 1. Factors associated with drug-related problems among GBM engaged in SDU

	Total (101)	No drug-related problems (20)	Drug related-problems (81)	p
Anxiety , Median (IQR)	6.00 (6.00)	4.00 (5.25)	7.00 (6.00)	<.01*
Depression , Median (IQR)	2.00 (4.00)	0.50 (2.00)	3.00 (5.25)	<.01*
Expenses > 1000 € , n (%)	29 (28.71)	1 (5.00)	28 (34.57)	.02*
Inability to engage in sober sex , n (%)	20 (19.80)	0	20 (24.69)	.01*
Slamsex , n (%)	17 (16.83)	0	17 (20.99)	.02*
Polydrug use , n (%)	56 (55.44)	4 (20.00)	52 (64.20)	<.01*
SDU sessions > 12 h , n (%)	25 (24.75)	1 (5.00)	24 (29.63)	.02*

Conclusions:

Many GBM living with HIV have drug-related problems associated with SDU. Symptoms of anxiety and depressive excessive spending on drugs, inability to engage in sexual activity without drugs,, slamsex practices, polydrug use, or involvement in long SDU sessions may be consider warning signs in this population.

General conditions

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