

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Sexual Behaviour among Male Methamphetamine and Heroin Dependents Attending Drug Rehabilitation Clinic**

#### **Introduction**

The debates about associations between drugs use and sex have been going on for decades. Drugs use and sex are mediums of pleasure and bring about sense of euphoria and enjoyment. Illicit drugs use has evolved from natural-based drugs such as opiates and cannabis to synthetic-based substances such as amphetamine and methamphetamine. This evolution even modifies the motives of drug use from just a primary emotion-altering substance that cut the users on the loose into a substance that can increase enthusiasm, motivation and self-esteem. The effect of methamphetamine on sociability and emotional loosening effects of heroin has increased their use in social functions and also sexual activities. However, how far methamphetamine and heroin is used for sexual acts in a relatively conservative country like Malaysia is uncertain.

#### **Aim**

The aim of this study is to describe the pattern of sexual behaviour among users of the two most commonly used drugs in Malaysia currently. Malaysian methamphetamine and heroin users, who live in community-setting and are predominantly males and heterosexuals, may reveal another perspective with regards of their drug use and sexual behaviour. Unlike several previous studies, this current study aims to describe the pattern of sexual behaviour not only based on risky sexual behaviour, but other aspects of sex such as desire, interest,

drive and obsession in relation to the drug use. It is hoped that the results of this study can be utilized to improve the current drug treatment and rehabilitation programme which does not so much emphasize on sexual behaviour.

## **Methodology**

A cross-sectional study was carried out in three Malaysian cities: Kota Kinabalu, Kota Bharu and Kuala Lumpur which are well-known to have high numbers of methamphetamine and heroin users. The subjects were all living in the community and have satisfactory psychosocial functioning. This study was primarily based on a validated sexual behaviour self-rated questionnaire followed by a brief face-to-face interview.

## **Results**

A total of 227 subjects were included in this study with 124 (54.6%) were using methamphetamine while 103 (45.4%) were using heroin. Majority (218; 96%) of the participants were heterosexuals with 104 (45.8%) reported having been involved in high risk sexual behaviour. More methamphetamine than heroin subjects agreed that their sexual thoughts, feelings and behaviours were often associated with the drug ( $p < 0.05$ ). Methamphetamine subjects agreed that the use of methamphetamine caused them to be more obsessed with sex and they found themselves to be preoccupied with sexual thoughts while being under the influence of the drug ( $p < 0.05$ ). Heroin subjects mainly reported on negative effects of the drug on their sexual behaviour. Methamphetamine subjects reported that the use of drug had positively affected their sexual interest and drive (Adjusted OR = 1.050;  $p < 0.05$ ).

Methamphetamine subjects were also 1.97 times more likely than heroin subjects to be involved in risky sexual behaviour.

## **Conclusions**

Methamphetamine subjects reported positive effect of the drug on one sexual domain which is sexual interest, drive and pre-occupation while heroin subjects reported many negative effects of the drug on sex. Methamphetamine subjects were more likely than heroin subjects to be involved in risky sexual behaviour.

## **ABSTRAK**

### **Perilaku Seksual di kalangan Penagih Metamfetamin dan Heroin Lelaki Yang Menghadiri Klinik Pemulihan Dadah**

#### **Pengenalan**

Perdebatan tentang hubungan antara penggunaan dadah dan seks telah berlanjutan berabad-abad. Penggunaan dadah dan kegiatan seksual adalah pengantara kepuasan dan menerbitkan perasaan asyik dan seronok. Dadah-dadah haram telah berkembang daripada dadah berasaskan bahan semulajadi seperti opioid dan ganja kepada dadah bahan sintetik seperti amfetamin dan metamfetamin. Evolusi ini merubah sebab-sebab penggunaan dadah daripada sekadar sebagai bahan untuk mengubah emosi yang menyebabkan penggunaanya hilang kawalan kepada bahan yang boleh meningkatkan semangat, motivasi dan kepercayaan diri. Kesan metamfetamin terhadap fungsi sosial dan perlonggaran emosi telah meningkatkan penggunaannya di dalam majlis sosial dan aktiviti seksual. Walaubagaimanapun, sejauh mana metamfetamin dan heroin digunakan untuk kegiatan seksual di dalam negara yang konservatif seperti Malaysia masih tidak dapat dipastikan.

#### **Tujuan**

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menerangkan corak perilaku seksual dikalangan pengguna-pengguna dua dadah yang kerap digunakan di Malaysia sekarang. Pengguna metamfetamin dan heroin di Malaysia yang tinggal di dalam komuniti adalah kebanyakannya lelaki dan heteroseksual mungkin mendedahkan perspektif yang lain tentang

penggunaan dadah dan kegiatan seksual mereka. Tidak seperti kajian-kajian terdahulu, kajian terbaru ini bertujuan untuk menerangkan corak perilaku seksual bukan sahaja berpandukan perilaku seksual berisiko, tetapi aspek-aspek seksual yang lain seperti nafsu, kemahuan, minat, dorongan dan obsesi seksual berkaitan dengan penggunaan dadah. Adalah diharapkan bahawa hasil kajian ini boleh digunakan untuk menambahbaikkan program rawatan dan pemulihan dadah yang ada sekarang yang mana masih kurang menumpukan masalah perilaku seksual

## **Kaedah**

Satu kajian 'cross-sectional' telah dijalankan di 3 bandar utama di Malaysia: Kota Kinabalu, Kota Bharu dan Kuala Lumpur yang memang diketahui mempunyai ramai pengguna metamfetamin dan heroin. Semua subjek tinggal di dalam komuniti dan mempunyai fungsi psiko-sosial yang memuaskan. Kajian ini adalah berteraskan penggunaan soal-selidik perilaku seksual yang telah disahihkan dan kemudiannya diikuti dengan temubual secara bersemuka.

## **Hasil**

Sejumlah 227 subjek telah diambil menyertai kajian ini yang mana 124 (54.6%) menggunakan metamfetamin manakala 103 (45.4%) menggunakan heroin. Majoriti (218; 96%) peserta adalah heteroseksual dengan 104 (45.8%) melaporkan penglibatan dalam perilaku seksual berisiko tinggi. Lebih banyak subjek metamfetamin berbanding subjek heroin mengaku pemikiran, perasaan dan perilaku seksual mereka berkait dengan dadah ( $p < 0.05$ ). Subjek metamfetamin bersetuju bahawa mereka lebih obses dengan seks dan

mendapati diri mereka sibuk dengan pemikiran seksual ketika berada dibawah pengaruh dadah ( $p<0.05$ ). Subjek heroin kebanyakannya melaporkan kesan negatif dadah terhadap perilaku seksual. Subjek metamfetamin melaporkan bahawa penggunaan dadah memberikan kesan positif terhadap minat dan dorongan seksual ('Adjusted' OR=1.050;  $p<0.05$ ). Subjek metamfetamin adalah 1.97 lebih berkemungkinan daripada subjek heroin untuk terbabit dengan aktiviti seksual berisiko.

### **Kesimpulan**

Subjek metamfetamin melaporkan kesan positif penggunaan dadah dalam domain minat, dorongan dan obsesi seksual mereka manakala subjek heroin melaporkan kesan negative dadah terhadap seks. Subjek metamfetamin adalah lebih berkemungkinan untuk terbabit dengan perilaku seksual berisiko.

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## **Preface**

Amphetamine-type stimulant (ATS) is a very big group of substances due to its unique chemical structure that is easy to manipulate. The type of ATS being used depends on individual area. I choose to concentrate on methamphetamine due to its current menace and increasing popularity in Malaysia. Heroin on the other hand, is a substance derived from morphine and belongs to the opiate group. It has long been a thorn in Malaysian drug problems for many years but its ‘celebrity status’ is being challenged by the rise of synthetic drugs.



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