DRUG USE CHARACTERISTICS OF OPIOID AND AMPHETAMINE-TYPE STIMULANTS (COATS) DEPENDENT INDIVIDUALS IN KOTA BAHRU, MALAYSIA

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Introduction. More than 60% of opioid IDUs in many regions in Malaysia use amphetamine type stimulants (ATS) and 29% of opioid IDUs inject ATS. In Kota Bharu, approximately 65% of patients entering buprenorphine or methadone maintenance treatment have current ATS abuse or dependence at treatment. The objective of this study is to describe the drug use characteristics of COATS individuals.

Methods. A survey was conducted among n = 88 COATS dependent individuals who were interested to enter and undergo treatment in Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysia in Kota Bharu.

Results. Their mean (SD) age was 35.3 (8) years, 80% had between 7 to 9 years of education, 14.1% reported to be HIV positive while 30% have never been tested. 35.2% reported heroin use of less than 10 years; 25.7%, 11 to 15 years; 12.2%, 16 to 20 years and 15.1%, 21 to 25 years. While for ATS use, 48% reported using less than 10 years; 33.3%, 11 to 15 years; 12%, 16 to 20 years. 74% and 35% of them injected heroin and ATS. 35.5% reported to use ATS daily.

Conclusion. Individuals in this sample have a relatively long history of drug use and they also report high rates of injection drug use.