

Diazepam, alcohol use and violence among male young offenders: 'The devil's mixture'

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Published

Saturday, January 1, 2011 - 12:00

Publisher

Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy

Volume

18

Issue

6

Page(s)

468-76

Abstract

Background: Diazepam is a benzodiazepine which has a history of usage among problem drug using groups. It has also been linked to aggression in laboratory settings. This article will examine illicit diazepam use and violence amongst predominantly alcohol-orientated offenders.
Methods: A self-complete survey of male Young Offenders (n=172) recruited during their induction into Scotland's only Young Offender's Institution was carried out during 2007. Qualitative interviews (n=30) were conducted during 2008 on another sample recruited in the same way.
Results: Survey respondents tended to report alcohol, rather than illegal drugs as being related to their offending behaviour. The exception to this pattern was diazepam, which when used in conjunction with alcohol was associated with violence, including weapon use. The 2008 interviews confirmed this and raised further concerns about the way in which diazepam was being mixed with alcohol, in relation to its mode of action, source of supply, dosage and users beliefs.
Conclusion: Although it receives little dedicated research, education or media attention, diazepam was a factor in more (violent) crime among this population than any/all other illegal drugs.

Web link

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.3109/09687637.2011.563762>

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