

Captagon Use in Saudi Arabia: What Do we Know?

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Abstract

Background: Captagon is a stimulant that has been banned worldwide since 1981. The greatest number of Captagon seizures worldwide occurs in Saudi Arabia, yet little is known about its use in this country. This review summarizes Captagon in Saudi Arabia in terms of drug purity, amounts of pills seized, trends of use in the clinical settings and complications of use in patients.

Methods: We searched Pubmed, Psychinfo, Annals of Saudi Medicine, Saudi Medical Journal, Arab Journal of Psychiatry and LexisNexis databases for articles related to Captagon in Saudi Arabia, published in English.

Results: The majority of Captagon tablets examined between 1986 and 2012 were counterfeit that rarely contained fenethylamine, but were rather composed of amphetamine and a mixture of other adulterants. Studies from substance use treatment centers from 2008 to 2010 suggested that prevalence of amphetamine use among patients was from 39% to 72.8%. Although Captagon was rarely mentioned in these studies, other studies suggest it is the most common source of amphetamine in Saudi Arabia. Medical complications reported with amphetamine use, in the Saudi literature, included myocardial infarction, hearing loss, psychosis, suicidal ideation and deterioration of cognitive functions.

Conclusion: Available Captagon tablets are most probably counterfeit; containing amphetamine. The most commonly used illegal substance by patients in treatment for drug use is amphetamine, and the most common source of amphetamine might be in the form of "counterfeit Captagon". Further analytical research is needed to back up these assumptions and better understand the scope of Captagon use in Saudi Arabia.

Key words: Fenethylamine; Captagon; Stimulant; Amphetamine; Saudi Arabia

Introduction

Captagon is a central nervous system stimulant that was first introduced in the 1960s as a treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, depression and narcolepsy.¹⁻³ There is no current acceptable medical use for Captagon.^{4,5} Since its first production in Germany in 1961, Captagon has never gained any approval for use by the United States Food and Drug Administration.⁴ In 1981, it was classified as a controlled drug on the Schedule 1 of the Controlled Substances Act, and its production has been banned by almost all countries since 1986.^{4,6} The psychoactive substance in Captagon is fenethylamine.¹ This substance is chemically composed of amphetamine that is connected to theophylline via an alkyl chain.⁴ As a result, fenethylamine's two major active metabolites in humans are amphetamine and

theophylline.^{5,6} Amphetamine is a well-known stimulant that mainly produces its effects through increasing the availability of norepinephrine and dopamine.⁷ Although amphetamine does have medical uses, it also has high abusive potential. Individuals who abuse amphetamine seek the drug to experience euphoria, to increase energy and to improve concentration.⁷ Amphetamine use in large doses can cause serious psychiatric symptoms such as hallucinations and paranoia that can reach to the level of acute psychosis (with a presentation similar to paranoid schizophrenia).⁷ Chronic use of amphetamines can lead to "amphetamine use disorder", a maladaptive behavior for using amphetamines that can cause significant functional and physiological impairment, and is currently diagnosed based on availability of a set of criteria from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders fifth edition (DSM-V).⁸

Captagon is used in the form of pills or injection, and like amphetamine, it is mainly consumed for its euphoric and energizing effects.⁴ It can cause serious adverse effects such as psychosis, hallucinations and visual distortion. Physiological effects of this drug mostly target the cardiovascular system, causing increased cardiac-output, vasodilatation, hypertension and increased blood flow to the kidneys and brain.^{4,9} Other reported side effects include epileptic fits, hyperthermia, increased respiration and loss of appetite.^{10,11}

Although the use of Captagon is currently banned around the world, it is still illegally, manufactured and used in different Eastern European and Middle Eastern countries.^{4,6} Its purchase and trade are considerably feasible through the black market.^{4,10,11} Most of the available Captagon pills in the Middle East rarely contain fenethylline, but are rather composed of a mixture of amphetamine, methamphetamine, theophylline, caffeine, and other adulterants.^{4,6} However, the brand name "Captagon" stuck with the street drug for marketing purposes.¹² The two C's that are traditionally found on the white Captagon pill resemble crescents, which made the drug known as "Abu Hilalain" in Arabic, meaning "the father of two crescents".¹²

Regional and international drug control officials are greatly concerned about the potential use of local Captagon trade for funding different militant groups fighting in the Syrian war.^{4,6} The major source of Middle Eastern Captagon is Syria, although some reports suggest previously available production laboratories in Lebanon, Turkey, Bulgaria and Serbia.^{3,4,6,11,12} Syrian production of Captagon seems to be at exponential growth.^{4,6,12} This has been suggested by annual increases in the amounts of pills being seized at the borders of different Arab nations, including Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.^{4,6,12}

Unfortunately, limited data about Captagon use prevalence is available from scientific sources and most information is gathered from news outlets and seizure reports.¹³ Captagon trade primarily targets affluent Gulf countries of the Arabian Peninsula, where most of the drug is seized.^{4,6,12} In these countries, one Captagon pill can cost anywhere from \$10 to \$25.4

Reports from the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) indicate that there is a growing market for amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) worldwide.¹⁴ Although methamphetamine accounts for the bulk of seizures related to ATS in most parts of the world, this does not seem to be the case in Middle Eastern countries.¹⁴ In this region, amphetamine is the most commonly seized ATS, which is usually in the form of Captagon.¹⁴ Worldwide, the greatest amounts of Captagon seizures occur in Saudi Arabia.¹³ However, the use of Captagon in Saudi Arabia remains understudied in scientific literature. In this country, the use of alcohol and illegal drugs are banned both by religion and law.¹⁵ Furthermore, Captagon

has been officially banned in the country since 1986.¹⁶ The Saudi authorities have placed severe punishments for possession, dealing and smuggling of this drug. According to Saudi law, imprisonment is enforced on users (unless enrolled to a treatment center) and first time dealers. Harsher punishments are implemented for second time dealers or smugglers, who are sentenced to death.¹⁷ Despite these regulations, Saudi Arabia, like its neighboring Gulf countries, is susceptible to the growing worldwide substance use problem.¹⁸

The aim of this article is to review the available data on Captagon use in Saudi Arabia. First, we summarize information about the chemical purity of the available types of Captagon in Saudi Arabia and the amounts confiscated from seizure reports. Then, we summarize its use in the psychiatric and general Saudi populations, in addition to reported complications associated with its use. We finally conclude by raising important questions that need to be addressed in regards to the use of Captagon in Saudi Arabia, and offer recommendations for future research. Although this article was not intended to be a systematic review, we provide a brief description of the search strategy used.

Methods

The literature search was conducted in August 2017. We searched Pubmed and Psycinfo databases for English studies and reviews that reported on Captagon use in Saudi Arabia, without specifying a certain time period. We adopted the terms "Captagon"; "fenethylline"; "Captagon AND Saudi Arabia"; "fenethylline AND Saudi Arabia"; "amphetamine AND Saudi Arabia"; "stimulant AND Saudi Arabia"; "drug abuse AND Saudi Arabia"; and "substance use AND Saudi Arabia", for our search. Additionally, because some Saudi studies may not be indexed in these two databases, we searched the archives of the Annals of Saudi Medicine, Saudi Medical Journal and Arab Journal of Psychiatry using the same search terms. We also scanned the abstracts for relevant information about the use of Captagon or amphetamines in Saudi Arabia. Studies with relevant abstracts were fully reviewed. Only studies that reported data related to amphetamine or Captagon use in Saudi Arabia (epidemiology, prevalence, analysis of tablets, complications of use or seizure reports), which were in English, were included. Research cited in the selected studies was searched for relevant information pertaining amphetamine or Captagon use. We also searched through the UNODC's annual reports, from the past ten years, for additional data.

Because studies on Captagon use are sparse and most information is obtained from drug-seizure reports, we also conducted an English search in LexisNexis, adopting the search term "Captagon AND Saudi Arabia". Selected news articles that reported confiscation of Captagon by the Saudi authorities in the past five years were also included in this report.

Results

Purity of available Captagon in Saudi Arabia

Three studies that explored the composition of Captagon tablets in Saudi Arabia were identified.^{16,19} In 1993, Al-Gharably and Al-Obaid examined a sample of tablets seized by the General Directorate of Drug Control in Riyadh.¹⁶ They found that 84% of the confiscated tablets contained fenethylamine, while the remainder (16%) were composed of caffeine and quinine.¹⁶ On the other hand, Al-Hussaini examined confiscated Captagon tablets between 1986 and 1993, only to find that none of them contained fenethylamine.¹⁹ In fact, the tablets he examined contained mixtures of other adulterants such as acetaminophen and ephedrine (10%), ephedrine and amphetamine (13%), and caffeine and quinine (16%).¹⁹ In 2011, officials from the Saudi Ministry of Health examined the content of 98 stimulant tablets that were seized by law authorities as Captagon tablets.²⁰ Fenethylamine was not found in any of these tablets. Instead, 38.8% of the tablets contained considerable amounts of amphetamine, 49% contained trace amounts of amphetamine, and 12.2% did not contain any amphetamine. Additionally, the most frequent adulterants identified in these tablets were caffeine (96.9%), theophylline (93.9%), allopurinol (59.2%), and acetaminophen (57.1%).²⁰ These findings come in agreement with a report from Jordan that showed that most Captagon tablets obtained by authorities do not contain fenethylamine, but are rather composed of amphetamine and caffeine.²¹ This supports the perception that most Captagon tablets worldwide are “fake” and rarely contain fenethylamine.²² Furthermore, amphetamine seems to be the active substance in most of these counterfeit pills.^{16,19,21}

Amounts of Captagon confiscated by Saudi authorities

Amounts of Captagon seizures from 2006 to 2011 were fairly stable in Saudi Arabia, according to UNODC reports, with a slight reduction in 2010 [Figure 1].^{13,22–25} These data suggested that a total of 72.2 metric tons of Captagon pills were confiscated during this 6-year period. Although more recent UNODC reports indicate a growing trend of Captagon seizures in Saudi Arabia, they did not provide data on the amounts confiscated from 2012 onwards.^{14,26,27}

Local newspaper reports suggested that a big portion of Captagon smuggling attempts were halted at Al-Hadithah entry port, which is located in the northern part of Saudi Arabia at the Jordanian border.^{28,29} Additionally, reports indicated that smuggled Captagon tablets destined to Saudi Arabia came from the United Arab Emirates or Lebanon.^{30,31} Furthermore, from 2012 to 2016, a total number of 367,870,293 Captagon pills were seized in Saudi Arabia, according to law enforcement reports.³² It is important to point out, however, that newspaper data should be interpreted with caution, as they do not provide methodologically sound information about the scope of Captagon use that can be generalized to the Saudi population.

Trends of Amphetamine use in clinical and general Saudi population settings

Although substance abuse has been briefly explored in Saudi Arabia, few studies address amphetamine use, and none make reference to Captagon as the source of amphetamine [Table 1].^{33–40} In 1995, Hafeiz explored types and patterns of substance use among 116 patients admitted for drug abuse treatment at Al-Amal Complex, Dammam.⁴³ The major substance abused in that population was heroin (83.6%), while only 10% abused stimulants.⁴³ Unfortunately, amphetamine was not particularly assessed and it was not clear if it was categorized under “stimulants”. This pattern of high heroin abuse is consistent with other studies published between 1992 and 2000, which found that between 43% and 63% of drug intoxicated patients admitted to treatment centers were dependent on heroin, while amphetamine dependence did not exceed 6.5%.^{33–35} This phenomenon was observed in both male and female patients. It is important to note that these studies assessed drug dependence and abuse using criteria from the DSM, and did not assess drug use per se.^{34,35,43} In 2000, a study was conducted on 423 male patients admitted to Buraidah Mental Hospital (in the central region) and reported that 25.3% of the admitted patients were diagnosed with amphetamine abuse.³⁶ In 2012, a study conducted on adolescent patients admitted for drug dependence showed that 28.7% were dependent on amphetamine.⁴⁰

In more recent studies, there was a shift toward more frequent use of amphetamines. AbuMadini and colleagues investigated 12,743 medical records from 1986 to 2006 at a substance use treatment center in Dammam. They assessed frequency of substances used among patients, demographic characteristics and changes in trend.³⁷ Their results indicated that the frequency of amphetamine use increased over time from 12 % in 1987 to 72.8% in 2006. There was a dramatic rise in amphetamine use between 2000 and 2002 (from 38% to 51%).³⁷ Amphetamines are also the most used substance among criminal offenders treated at that same center.³⁹

In 2008, Bassiony explored age at onset and stages of progression of substance abuse at Al-Amal Complex in Jeddah.³⁸ He found that, after excluding tobacco, amphetamine was the most common substance initiated in both adolescents and adults in his sample. Among the 101 patients included in that study, the prevalence of amphetamine use was 71.3%.³⁸ This finding comes in agreement with a review of substance abuse literature conducted in 2013, which concluded that the most commonly abused drug by adolescent and adult males in the country was amphetamine.⁴⁴

Despite the efforts in studying drug use trends in Saudi Arabia, only three studies addressed amphetamine “use”, while the rest addressed amphetamine use disorder (in the form of dependence or abuse) [Table 1]. This makes it difficult to comment on change in trends of use, that did

not reach the level of disorder, across these studies.

Another noteworthy observation is that these studies rarely addressed drug use among women. The only three studies that did sample women reported crude prevalence estimates (for men and women combined)^{33,39,40} Additionally, none of these studies assessed amphetamine use patterns, demographic differences in trends, or associated risk factors for amphetamine use. Furthermore, Captagon is not explicitly mentioned in these studies. However, Bassiony and colleagues make the assumption that Captagon may have been generally categorized under “amphetamines.”⁴⁴

To our knowledge, none of the reviewed studies reported on Captagon use (or amphetamine use) in the general population. Newspaper reports suggested an increasing trend in the use of Captagon by high school and college students, in order to increase concentration – especially during the examination season.⁴⁵ This information is alarming because this vulnerable age group may be unaware of the dangers of this substance and could be easily targeted by drug dealers.

Medical complications of Captagon use reported in Saudi Arabia

Some Saudi studies have reported complications associated with amphetamine use, but few relate complications with Captagon [Table 2].^{40,56–62} One of the reported complications for Captagon (when urine was positive for amphetamines) was myocardial infarction. A case report was published about a 35-year-old man, with no history of heart disease, who presented to the ER with acute chest pain and shortness of breath after using amphetamines and benzodiazepines.⁶¹ After further examination and testing, he was diagnosed with myocardial infarction.⁶¹ A case series of 7,450 patients, admitted with cardiovascular conditions at a hospital in Riyadh, showed that 9.6% of the patients had positive urine screening for amphetamines at the time of admission.⁶⁰ Prolonged Captagon use may also have ocular complications.⁵⁷ Three cases of hemorrhagic central retinal vein occlusion have been reported after prolonged Captagon use.⁵⁷ Additionally, acute hearing loss has been reported in association with Captagon use.⁵⁶

Important psychiatric complications have also been associated with amphetamine use. Amphetamine-induced psychosis has been reported, without explicitly referring to the use of Captagon as the source of amphetamine.^{40,59} El-Tantawy and colleagues described the psychotic episodes as brief, acute in onset, with sudden remission and characteristic of paranoid psychosis. They examined substances associated with drug-related psychosis in 106 patients at a mental hospital in Al-Qassim and found that 32% of the psychotic episodes were related to amphetamine use.⁵⁹ Interestingly, all of the amphetamine-related psychotic episodes occurred in males and the most common symptom presented was auditory hallucinations.⁵⁹

Suicidal ideation has also been reported in association with amphetamine abuse.⁶² Additionally, the chronic use of amphetamines is thought to negatively impact on cognitive functions.⁵⁸ Al-Zahrani and Elsayed examined executive brain functions in substance abuse patients (who used alcohol, amphetamine tablets or heroin) who completed detoxification treatment in comparison to a group of controls (individuals who had no history of substance use). Their results showed that all substance users functioned worse than the control group, and that, after alcohol, amphetamine users functioned more poorly compared to heroin users.⁵⁸ However, the source of amphetamine was not mentioned and Captagon was not referenced in their study.

Discussion

This review presents a summary about the use of Captagon in Saudi Arabia. The reviewed literature suggests that most of the Captagon pills marketed to Saudi Arabia are most probably “fake” pills; rarely containing fenethylamine, the psychoactive substance from which the original Captagon tablet was manufactured. Although this observation was proven in the retrieved studies,^{16,19,20} to our knowledge, the most recent study that analyzed confiscated Captagon tablets was conducted on a small sample (98 tablets). UNODC seizure reports suggest that the country is a well-known target for the Captagon market. This is implied by the considerably large amount of pills confiscated over the past decade.^{13,14,22–27}

Although substance use has been discussed in the clinical setting in the Saudi medical literature, little reference is given to the use of Captagon and it is most probably categorized under “amphetamines”. Most recent studies on substance use in patients at dependence treatment centers suggest that amphetamines are the most used illegal substance in the country.^{37,38,44} The shift from heroin use to amphetamine use suggested by these studies, and which possibly took place in the late 1990s, comes in agreement with UNODC reports that indicate a rise in ATS use in Middle Eastern countries from 2000 onwards.⁶⁴ Additionally, in 2005, there was a notable jump in the amounts of seized amphetamines from Saudi Arabia, as compared to 2000.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, we could not support this review with information about prevalence and trends of Captagon use in the general non-hospitalized Saudi population, which to our knowledge, has not been explored.

In our review, we found studies that have been published about complications associated with amphetamine use in Saudi Arabia. One complication related to short-term use is amphetamine-induced psychosis.^{40,59} Captagon-induced hearing loss that is acute in nature was also reported.⁵⁶ Complications related to chronic use include myocardial infarction, hemorrhagic central retinal vein occlusion, suicidal ideation, and deterioration of cognitive functions.^{57,58,60–62}

Even though helpful information was available for this review, many deficiencies in these data should be noted. First, the latest study that tested the chemical composition of available Captagon pills was conducted in 2011 and on a small number of tablets. Additionally, it was not clear if all tablets in the sample were collected from the same source. Thus, it is difficult to generalize these findings to the composition of all available tablets currently circulating in the region. Second, few studies are conducted about illegal substance use in the clinical setting in Saudi Arabia, and even fewer address the use of Captagon, although there is a consensus that amphetamine may be the drug for major public health concern.^{38,44} Third, we could not find data for the prevalence of Captagon use in the general population. Finally, little attention is given to female illegal substance use and trends of Captagon use in women are nonexistent in the Saudi medical literature. In the reviewed studies, most of the patients were men. This could be related to the fact that most of the studies were conducted at specialized substance dependence treatment centers that do not treat women. Instead, women usually seek treatment for substance dependence at psychiatric hospitals.⁴⁴

A noteworthy limitation to our review is that we limited our search to published articles related to Captagon or amphetamine use in Saudi Arabia, that were in English. This subjects our data to selection bias. Additionally, our findings cannot be generalized to the Saudi population. Despite these shortcomings, this review provides an outlook on Captagon use in Saudi Arabia, pointing out the related issues that have yet to be addressed in the literature. We hope that this can stimulate substance use researchers to understand the need for extended research on Captagon use in the country, in order to better grasp the scope of this problem.

Conclusion and recommendations

This review reinforces the common perception of amphetamines being the most used illegal substance in Saudi Arabia, and that most of the consumed amphetamine in the country could be in the form of counterfeit Captagon. A lot of work needs to be done to fully understand the scope of Captagon use in the country and many questions still remain unanswered. For example, we still do not know the prevalence of Captagon use in any well-defined population. It is essential to estimate the prevalence of Captagon use among substance users in the community. This can be partially achieved by conducting descriptive studies on institutionalized populations receiving treatment. It is also important to learn the overall prevalence of using this substance in the general population (or at least in potentially vulnerable groups such as high school and college students) in order to monitor change of population trends of use over time. The community needs to be educated about the harms of Captagon use, in order to abolish false claims about Captagon's ability to increase concentration. We also need to explore psychiatric and medical conditions that may be associated with chronic Captagon use through conducting case-control studies, or longitudinal studies in which Captagon users in treatment centers are followed up for substance-use relapse and other health complications. Additionally, other analytical studies could be conducted in order to understand the demographic characteristics of Captagon users, and identify potential environmental, medical and psychological risk factors for its use. Conducting this kind of research is crucial for directing law enforcement officials, substance use treatment experts, and other stakeholders toward the best methods to prevent and control Captagon use in Saudi Arabia.

Figure 1: Trends of Captagon Seizures in Saudi Arabia from United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Reports, from 2006 to 2011

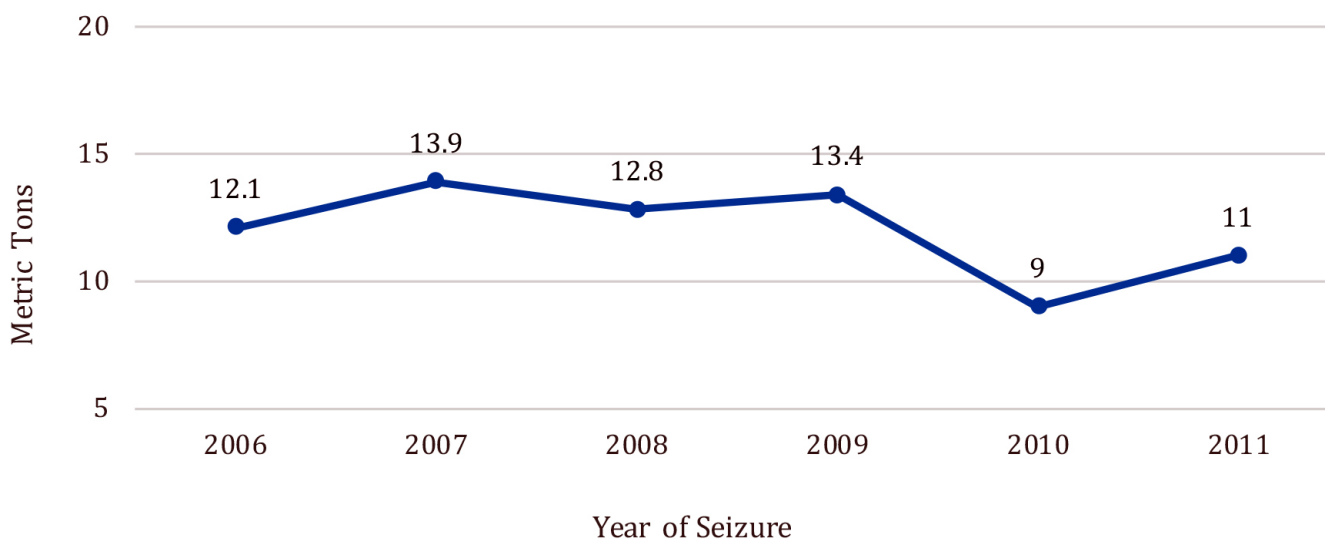


Table 1. Studies Addressing Amphetamine Use in Published Saudi Literature, from 1992 to 2010

Author	Year Published	Study Sample	Study Setting	Region, City	Estimate Reported
Osman ³³	1992	485	Male and female adult patients admitted for drug abuse* at Jeddah Psychiatric Hospital	Western region, Jeddah	5.2% were identified as amphetamine abusers*
Abalkhail ³⁴	1999	382	Male adult patients admitted for drug dependence [‡] at Al-Amal Complex	Western region, Jeddah	6.5% were admitted for amphetamine dependence [‡]
Iqbal ³⁵	2000	799	Male adult patients admitted for drug dependence [‡] at Al-Amal Complex	Western region, Jeddah	4% were admitted for amphetamine dependence [‡]
Qureshi and Alhabeeb ³⁶	2000	423	Male adult patients at Buraidah Mental Health Hospital	Central region (Al-Qassim), Buraidah	25.3% were identified as amphetamine abusers [‡]
Abumadini, et al. ³⁷	2008	293	Male adult patients admitted for polydrug abuse [†] at Al-Amal Complex	Eastern region, Dammam	72.8% reported using amphetamine
Bassiony ³⁸	2008	101	Male patients admitted for substance abuse [†] or dependence [‡] at Al-Amal Complex (adults and adolescents)	Eastern region, Dammam	71.3% reported using amphetamine
El-Sayed, et al. ³⁹	2010	100	Male and female adult criminal offenders admitted for legal mental health assessment at Al-Amal Complex	Eastern region, Dammam	39% reported using amphetamine
Alibrahim, et al. ⁴⁰	2012	69	Male and female adolescents admitted for drug dependence at Al-Amal Complex	Western region, Jeddah	27.8% were admitted for amphetamine dependence [‡]

References

- * Abuse was defined as “the compulsive use of any psychoactive substance, illicit or prescribed, in enough and regular doses to such an extent that it adversely affects a person’s health or socio-occupational functioning”.³³
- ‡ Dependence was defined according to criteria from the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM-IV); presence of three or more of the following over a period of 12 months: 1) tolerance, 2) substance is taken to relieve withdrawal symptoms, 3) persistent desire or unsuccessful attempts to quit, 4) reduced or impaired social, occupational and daily functions because of use, 5) spending prolonged time on obtaining, using and recovering from use, 6) continued use despite awareness of having physical and psychological problems related to use.⁴¹
- † Abuse was defined according to the revised DSM-III criteria; presence of at least one of the following over a period of 12 months without meeting criteria for dependence for that substance: 1) persistent use in situations where using the drug is physically hazardous, 2) continued use despite awareness of the social, occupational, psychological and physical consequences of using the substance.⁴²
- ‡ Abuse was defined according to DSM-IV criteria; presence of one or more of the following over a period of 12 months and without meeting the criteria for dependence for that substance: 1) recurrent use resulting in failure to fulfill major daily obligations, 2) recurrent legal problems related to substance use, 3) recurrent use of the substance in situations where use is physically hazardous, 4) recurrent use despite having social or interpersonal problems caused by or exacerbated by using the substance.⁴¹

Table 2. Medical Complications Reported in Association with Captagon or Amphetamine Use in the Saudi Literature, from 2002 to 2016

Medical Complication	Drug Reported	Study Design	Year Published	Authors
Hearing loss	Captagon	Case-series	2002	Iqbal ⁵⁶
Hemorrhagic central retinal vein occlusion	Captagon	Case-series	2009	Al-Ghaydan, et al. ⁵⁷
Cognitive impairment	Amphetamine	Cross-sectional	2009	Al-Zahrani and Elsayed ⁵⁸
Amphetamine-induced psychosis*	Amphetamine	Cross-sectional	2010	El-Tantawy, et al. ⁵⁹
		Cross-sectional	2012	Alibrahim, et al. ⁴⁰
Cardiovascular conditions [‡]	Amphetamine	Case-series	2016	Alghamdi, et al. ⁶⁰
Myocardial infarction	Captagon	Case-report	2016	Al-Shehri and Youssef ⁶¹
Suicidal ideation	Amphetamine	Case-control	2016	Youssef, et al. ⁶²

References

- * El-Tantawy and colleagues diagnosed amphetamine-induced psychosis using the ICD-10 definition; “A psychotic disorder occurring during or immediately after drug use (usually within 48 hours) provided that it is not a manifestation of drug- withdrawal state with delirium”.⁶³ Alibrahim and colleagues assessed presence of psychotic symptoms.⁴⁰
- ‡ These included acute coronary syndrome, acute myocarditis, cardiomyopathy, heart failure and arrhythmia.

المخلص:

نبذة حول الدراسة: يعتبر عقار «كابتاجون» محفز تم حظره عبر العالم سنة ١٩٨١. وقد تم تسجيل أكثر عمليات الججز في المملكة العربية السعودية إلا أن القليل يعرف تعاطي هذا العقار في هذا البلد. و تلخص هذه الدراسة عقار «كابتاجون» في المملكة العربية السعودية من منظور ثقائه و عدد الحبات التي تم احتجازها و أنماط التعاطي في السياق السريري و مضاعفات التعاطي عند المرضى.

الطريقة المتبعة: بحثنا على مقالات مرتبطة بعقار «كابتاجون» في المملكة العربية السعودية مكتوبة باللغة الإنجليزية في محرك البحث «بوب ميد» و قاعدة البيانات «سايك إنفو» و «حولييات الطب السعودي» و «المجلة الطبية السعودية» و «المجلة العربية للطب النفسي» و قاعدة بيانات «لكسس نكسس»

النتيجة: معظم أقراص عقار «كابتاجون» التي تم معاينتها من سنة ١٩٨٦ و إلى غاية سنة ٢٠١٢ هي عبارة عن أقراص مغشوشة و نادرا ما تحتوي على مركب «الفينيثيلين» و هي في الواقع مكونة من «الأمفيتامين» مغشوشة بمركبات أخرى. و أظهرت الدراسات الخاصة بعلاج تعاطي المؤثرات العقلية التي أجريت في الفترة بين ٢٠٠٨ و ٢٠١٠ أن انتشار تعاطي «الأمفيتامين» بين المرضى تراوح بين ٣٩٪ و ٧٢,٨٪. و رغم أنه نادرا ما جاء ذكر عقار «كابتاجون» ضمن تلك الدراسات إلا أن دراسات أخرى أشارت إلى أنه المصدر الرئيس لعقار «الأمفيتامين» في المملكة العربية السعودية. و شملت المضاعفات الطبية المرتبطة بتعاطي «الأمفيتامين» التي جاء ذكرها ضمن الدراسات السعودية السكتة القلبية و فقدان حاسة السمع و الهوس و التفكير في الإنتحار و تدهور في الوظائف الإدراكية.

الخلاصة: في غالب الضن أن أقراص «كابتاجون» مغشوشة و تحتوي على عقار «الأمفيتامين» الذي يعتبر المؤثر العقلي غير الشرعي الأكثر تعاطيا من قبل المرضى المتلقين للعلاج بسبب تعاطي المخدرات كما يعتبر المصدر السائد لـ «الأمفيتامين» عبارة عن «كابتاجون مغشوش». و هناك حاجة لإجراء دراسات أوفر للتحقق من هذه الافتراضيات و للتوصل لفهم أفضل لمدى تعاطي عقار «كابتاجون» في المملكة العربية السعودية.

Utilisation de Captagon en Arabie Saoudite: Que savons-nous?

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Abstrait

Contexte: Captagon est un stimulant interdit dans le monde entier depuis 1981. Le plus grand nombre de saisies de Captagon dans le monde ont lieu en Arabie saoudite, déjà peu est connu au sujet de son utilisation dans ce pays. Cette revue résume Captagon en Arabie saoudite en termes de pureté de la drogue, les quantités de pilules saisies, les tendances d'utilisation dans les milieux cliniques et les complications liées à l'utilisation chez les patients.

Méthodes: Nous avons effectué des recherches Pubmed, Psychinfo, Annales de médecine saoudienne, Journal Médical Saoudien, Journal arabe de Psychiatrie et bases de données LexisNexis pour les articles liés à Captagon en Arabie Saoudite, publié en anglais.

Résultats: La majorité des comprimés Captagon examinés entre 1986 et 2012 étaient des médicaments contrefaits contenant rarement de la fénéthylline, mais étaient plutôt composés d'amphétamine et d'un mélange d'autres adjuvants. Les études des centres de traitement de la toxicomanie de 2008 à 2010 ont suggéré que la prévalence de la consommation d'amphétamine chez les patients allait de 39% à 72,8%.

Bien que la Captagon ait rarement été mentionnée dans ces études, d'autres études suggèrent que c'est la source la plus commune d'amphétamines en Arabie saoudite.

Les complications médicales rapportées avec l'utilisation d'amphétamine, dans la littérature saoudienne, incluaient l'infarctus du myocarde, la perte auditive, la psychose, les idées suicidaires et la détérioration des fonctions cognitives.

Conclusion: les comprimés Captagon disponibles sont probablement contrefaits; contenant des amphétamines. La substance illégale la plus couramment utilisée par les patients dans le traitement de l'usage de drogues est l'amphétamine, et la source la plus commune d'amphétamine pourrait être sous la forme de «Captagon contrefaits».

D'autres recherches analytiques sont nécessaires pour sauvegarder ces hypothèses et mieux comprendre la portée de l'utilisation Captagon en Arabie saoudite.

Mots clés : Fenethylline; Captagon; Stimulant; Amphétamine; Arabie Saoudite

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