

Trend of new addictive substances: Hashish

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Areasantichai C, Perngpam U. Trend of new addictive substances: Hashish. Chula Med J 2007 Feb; 51(2): 105 - 14

- Problem/background** : *The severe trend and excessive increase of addictive substances in Thailand entail an intense problem. At present, a new form of cannabis, previously came only in fresh hemsps or smashed in chinks of chunks, called "hashish" is being unfolded. Smoking is the method of its consumption, like cannabis. The most addictive substance in hashish is Tetahydrocannabinol (THC), which is stronger than fresh hemsps and has direct effect on the nervous system.*
- Objective** : *To present baseline data of supply and demand situation and trend of new addictive substances: Hashish.*
- Design** : *Retrospective and descriptive study*
- Setting** : *Drug Dependence Research Center (WHOCCR), Institute of Health Research, Chulalongkorn University.*
- Materials and Methods** : **Hashish** : *Take the records and analyze the data, i.e., the nationality of the accused, year and the details of the case, weight of the drug evidence etc from the Office of the Narcotics Control Board, Ministry of Justice.*

Results : *Supply situation:* According to the statistics of hashish trade seizure since 1993, among various nationalities drug pushers, the Nepalese are the majority (75.75 kg, 74.42 kg, and 57.16 kg in 2000, 1999 and 2003, respectively) followed by the Polish and the Western European. Thai people have less role in hashish trading, the last report in 1993 stated Thai pushers were seized of 9.10 kg.

Demand Situation: The statistics of hashish use and possession cases in Thailand are very few compared to the supply side. Thai people were arrested for smoking hashish almost every year. Of those, the highest quantity of hashish seizure was 50.0 gm in 2001.

Conclusions : The existing statistics showed consecutive hashish trade and intake. In fact, there was a tendency that hashish will be ubiquitous. An effective planning to simultaneously reduce both supply and demand must be implemented to avoid future epidemic of hashish.

Keywords : Trend, Addictive drugs, Hashish.

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Received for publication. July 27, 2006.

จิตรลดา อารีย์สันติชัย, อุษณีย์ พึ่งปาน. แนวโน้มการแพร่ระบาดของสารเสพติดชนิดใหม่: ยางกัญชา. จุฬาลงกรณ์เวชสาร 2550 ก.พ; 51(2): 105 - 14

- เหตุผลของการทำวิจัย** : แนวโน้มการใช้สารเสพติดในประเทศไทยมีการขยายตัวเพิ่มสูงขึ้น “ยางกัญชา” (Hashish) ก็เป็นสาร ๔ ชนิดหนึ่งที่มีแนวโน้มที่จะเข้ามาระบาดในประเทศไทย ยางกัญชาเป็นยางแห้งที่ได้จากใบกัญชา และยอดช่อดอกหรือเกสรตัวเมียของต้นกัญชา มีลักษณะเป็นผงละเอียดและมีส่วนที่เป็นยางเหนียวมากกว่ากัญชาชนิดอื่น เสพโดยการสูบเช่นเดียวกับกัญชาสารสำคัญที่มีฤทธิ์ต่อการเสพติดเป็นอย่างมาก คือ ทีเอชซีเอ็มซีเอ็น (Tetrahydrocannabinol : THC) ยางกัญชามีฤทธิ์แรงกว่ากัญชาสด และส่งผลโดยตรงต่อจิตประสาท
- วัตถุประสงค์** : เพื่อนำเสนอข้อมูลพื้นฐาน ทั้งในด้านอุปสงค์และอุปทาน และสถานการณ์การแพร่ระบาดของยางกัญชา
- รูปแบบการวิจัย** : การศึกษาแบบย้อนหลังเชิงพรรณนา
- สถานที่ทำการศึกษา** : ศูนย์วิจัยยาเสพติด สถาบันวิจัยวิทยาศาสตร์การแพทย์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
- ตัวอย่างและวิธีการศึกษา** : นำข้อมูลที่บันทึกเกี่ยวกับการจับกุมยางกัญชา ปี สัญชาติ นำหนักของกลาง และคดีที่ถูกจับกุมที่รายงานมายังสำนักงานคณะกรรมการป้องกันและปราบปรามยาเสพติด กระทรวงยุติธรรม ระหว่างปี 2536-2548 มาวิเคราะห์
- ผลการศึกษา** : **สถานการณ์อุปทาน:** สถิติการจับกุมกลุ่มผู้ค้ายางกัญชาตั้งแต่ปี 2536 จนถึงปัจจุบันพบว่า มีหลายสัญชาติ ส่วนใหญ่ผู้ค้ายางกัญชาหลัก คือ ชาวเนปาล รองลงมาได้แก่ชาวโปแลนด์ และกลุ่มยุโรปตะวันตก ปริมาณของกลางที่ได้จากชาวเนปาล คือ 75.75 กิโลกรัม 74.42 กิโลกรัม และ 51.16 กิโลกรัม ในปี 2543, 2542 และ 2546 ตามลำดับ ส่วนผู้ค้าชาวไทยมีรายงานจับกุมการค้ายางกัญชามีเพียงปีเดียว คือ 2536 จับคนไทยได้ของกลางหนัก 9.10 กิโลกรัม หลังจากนั้นไม่มีรายงานคดีค้ายางกัญชาอีกเลย

- สรุป** : สถานการณ์อุปสงค์ : สถิติจับกุมคดีเสพยาเสพติดในประเทศไทย มีน้อยมากเมื่อเทียบกับคดีจำหน่าย คนไทยถูกจับกุมคดีเสพยาเสพติดเกือบทุกปี แต่ได้ปริมาณไม่มากนัก ปริมาณยาเสพติดที่ถูกลักขโมยสูงสุด คือ ในปี 2544 ได้ของกลางหนัก 50 กรัมเท่านั้น
- สรุป** : สถิติการจับกุมยาเสพติดที่มีอยู่ในปัจจุบันบ่งบอกว่าการค้าและเสพยาเสพติดอย่างต่อเนื่องและประเมินได้ว่า การแพร่ระบาดของยาเสพติดมีแนวโน้มความรุนแรงสูงขึ้นเรื่อยๆ ข้อมูลดังกล่าวมีน้ำหนักเพียงพอที่จะมีการพิจารณาวางแผนเพื่อวางแนวทางที่มีเป้าหมายลดอุปทานอุปสงค์ เพื่อป้องกันการระบาดของยาเสพติดในอนาคต
- คำสำคัญ** : แนวโน้ม, สารเสพติด, ยาเสพติด

For years, Thailand has been facing problems of addictive substance epidemic. Even though there was a strong policy on “ War on Drug “ in 2003, the National Household Surveys⁽¹⁾ and the Synthesizing Existing National Data of Addictive Substances during⁽²⁻⁴⁾ indicated that many substances such as methamphetamine (*yabaa*), heroin, *kratom* and some psychotropic drugs have been widespread. In addition, hashish, a psychoactive drug in another form of cannabis has appeared. In the past, Thailand knew only cannabis in fresh hemp or smashed in chunks of chunks, but at present hashish has been imported. Hashish is solid, hard but pliable when heat. Its color can vary from reddish brown to black greenish or golden. It is usually smoked in pipes, and sometimes mixed with tobacco or cannabis buds. It can also be ingested by adding in cookies or other food.

According to the 2522 BE Act of Narcotics, cannabis, an addictive substance type 5, is considered a psychoactive plant. The major active chemical compound Δ -9 tetrahydrocannabinol, commonly referred to as THC, has psychoactive and medicinal effects when consumed.^(5,6) Hashish has an average of 2 to 8% THC and can contain as much as 20 % THC.⁽⁷⁾ It has 4-8 %⁽⁸⁾ more direct effect to mental system than fresh cannabis. Therefore, hashish users have high risk to develop mental disorder. David M Fergusson, et al.⁽⁹⁾ have examined possible linkages between cannabis use and psychosis in a 25-year longitudinal study among a birth cohort of 1,265 children in New Zealand. It has been reported that daily users of cannabis had higher rates of psychotic symptoms, between 1.6 and 1.8 times ($P<0.001$), than that of non-cannabis users.

Hashish is the drug of choice in many countries, especially in Central Asia. It is popular among youngsters in their twenties. Its wholesale price in Lebanon, India, Egypt⁽¹⁰⁾ and Morocco⁽¹¹⁾ ranged from 40 to 320 baht per gm. After “the War on Drug” was declared, new drugs such as club drugs (ecstasy, Ketamine, cocaine and Ice) including psychotropic drugs have been epidemic nationwide. Even though there was fewer reports of “hashish” consumption in Thailand, the evidence of trafficking might be a clue of attention to the new drug use in the future.

Objectives

1. To present baseline data of hashish both the supply and demand in Thailand
2. To present the situation of hashish epidemic

Type of research

Retrospective and descriptive study

Setting

As this study is an analysis of the existing national data of hashish obtained from the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB), Ministry of Justice, therefore, the analytical process has been done at the Drug Dependence Research Center, Institute of Health Research, Chulalongkorn University.

Material and Methodology

The data on law enforcement, i.e., seizure amount of narcotics, narcotic law offender population, intelligence records and drug analyses have been regularly reported to the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB).⁽¹²⁾ This study collected the data related

to hashish during 1993 - 2005. The data on the quantity, hashish trade and substance taking is compiled only that appeared in statistical reports of the seized quantity of hashish and the weight of substance evidence exceeding 0.10 kilogram (100 gm).

Statistical analysis

Frequencies, percentage and histogram graphics are used to analyze the data.

Results

The statistic has indicated that during a 12-year cycle from 1993-2005, the quantity of hashish seized fluctuated. The three highest quantities seized of 121.2, 91.9 and 84.4 kg were in 1999, 2000 and 2003, respectively. Correspondence with the quantity of seizure, the cases fluctuated, but different peaks have been found in 2000, 1997 and 2003 of 41, 17 and 16 cases, respectively (Figure 1).

From the aforementioned, it is noted that in some years the quantity of seizure was not related to the number of cases. For instance, in the year 1999

the highest quantity of hashish seized was 121.2 kg, but it was only 15 cases. In the following year, the quantity of seizure was reduced to 91.9 kg while the cases have increased more than double since 1999. Therefore, both the quantity and number of cases seizure should be under consideration in epidemic discussion.

Supply Situation

According to the statistics of the hashish trade seizure since 1993, there have been drug pushers of various nationalities but the majority of them were the Nepalese. The highest amount of hashish being seized from the Nepalese pushers was 75.75 kg in 2000, while the year 1999 ranked the second at 74.42 kg, and the year 2003 ranked the third at 57.16 kg. Presently, hashish of 7 kg was seized.

The second majority group was from Poland. The first Polish case of 21.18 kg was seized in 1996. Only a few cases were reported in the following years. In 2002, the highest amount of hashish, 28.5 kg was seized, but there was no case after that.

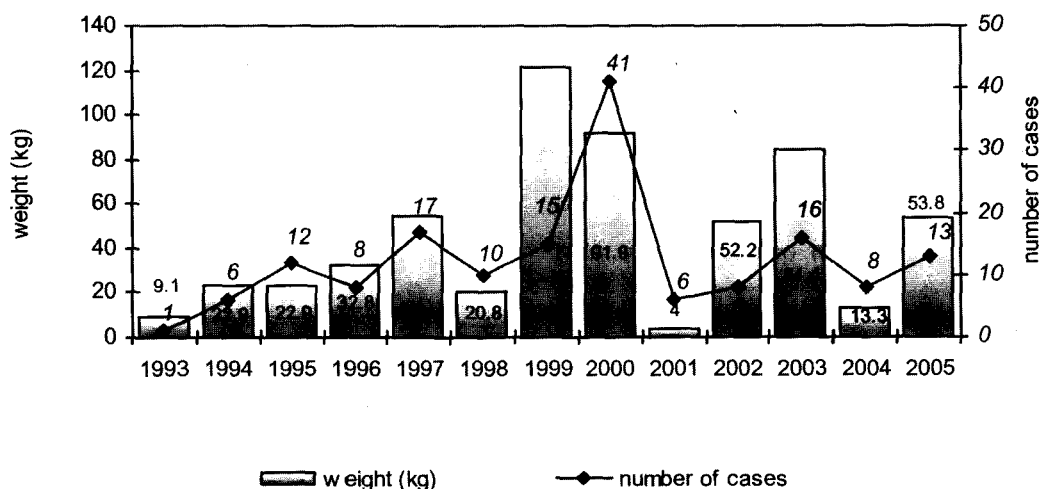


Figure 1. Seizure amount of hashish (kg) and number of cases during 1993-2005.

As for the Western Europe, statistics showed their continuous trades for 11 years since 1994. However, the seized quantity was only 0.40 - 7.70 kg, which was not much compared to other pushers from Nepal and Poland. Noticeably, the trade of hashish became international, as in some years many nationalities were arrested at the same time. Thai people have less role of hashish trader, the last report in 1993 stated that 9.1 kg were seized from Thai pushers (Table 1).

Noticeably, since 2003 a group of pushers from various countries have been arrested at the same time. In 2003, 2004 and 2005 the citizens of Iran, New Zealand and Nepal, Italy and Thailand, and German and Iran were arrested as carrying hashish weigh 18 kg, 0.26 kg and 1.7 kg, respectively. These situations indicated that hashish pushers have their network worldwide.

Table 1. Types and quantities of hashish seized (kg) for drug pushers classified according to nationality during 1993-2005.

Nation/year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Nepal		6.5	14.35		22.33	1	74.42	75.75	3.55	6.25	57.16	6.42	7
Middle East e.g. Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Israel, Turkey		2.7			12.9			4.5				0.6	
Western Europe e.g. United Kingdom, German, France, Belgium, Austria		0.45	5.96	3.79	4	5.8	5.3	4.8	0.4	6	7.7	6	
Scandinavia e.g. Sweden, Demark, Iceland, Norway		2.7	2.52	5		5.62	11			9.5			
North America e.g. Canada, America				2.8						1.92	1.5		
Australia and Southeast Asia e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Philippines		10.5				0.17		1.9					
Thailand	9.1												
Japan							13.5	0.9					0.91
Poland				21.18	13.3	8.15		4		28.5			
Singapore													8.1
German and Iran													1.7
Italy and Thailand												0.26	
Iran and New Zealand and Nepal											18		
Un-identify					1.8		17						36
Total weight (kg)	9.1	22.85	22.83	32.77	54.33	20.74	121.22	91.85	3.95	52.17	84.36	13.28	53.71

Demand Situation

Statistics showed the hashish use and/or possession cases in Thailand were very few compared to the supply side. The three highest quantity seizures of 84.0, 100.0 and 122.35 gm were found in 1995, 2001 and 2005, respectively. People from the Middle East were arrested in 2005 with the highest amount of 88.5 gm.

Referring 12 years backwards, citizens of Thailand being arrested for smoking hashish were in 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001 and 2004. Seized hashish were 0.5, 0.5, 3.7, 50 and 2 gm, respectively (Table 2). The frequencies of the Thai and the European arrested were almost the same but the European tended to get more amount of seizure at a time. Noticeably, in 2005 the latest year, there were many cases of hashish users were arrested.

Discussion

The existing data indicated consecutive hashish trade and consumption. In fact, there is a high tendency that hashish will be widely spread. This study reports epidemic baseline data showing Thailand as a transitional area of hashish as well as other substances, despite the fact that other nationalities have also been arrested for hashish pushers or traders. Even though there was no supportive evidence of hashish use and the health consequence in Thailand, the trend of Thai hashish smoker seizures should be concerned with. Some studies and national seizure data have reported an epidemic of cannabis. Although there has been a strong effort in eradication cannabis plants, it is difficult to deny the fact that hashish can still be produced in the country. At the same time, drug users especially

Table 2. Types and quantities of hashish seized (gm) for use/possession classified by nationality during 1993-2005.

Nation/year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Middle East e.g. Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Israel, Turkey					1.76						4		88.5
Western Europe e.g. United Kingdom, German, France, Belgium, Austria					54	1		46.6					30.12
Scandinavia e.g. Sweden, Denmark, Iceland													1.5
North America e.g. Canada, America													1.21
Thailand			0.5	0.5		3.7	50					2	
Japan						21		5.95			6		
Thailand and Iran													0.02
Israel and Japan													1
Un-identify			84						50	1.5			
Total weight (gm)			84	0.5	55.76	22.5	-	56.25	100	1.5	6	6	122.35

adolescents often find other alternative substances. This evidence is supported by the epidemic of club drugs and other psychotropic drugs after 'War on Drugs' was declared. Therefore, policy makers should take immediate action to prevent and remedy the problems. An effective plan to simultaneously reduce both the supply and demand of the drug must be implemented to avoid future epidemic of hashish.

Conclusion

Statistics of the supply and demand of hashish in the country have indicated the severity of an epidemic. As for the supply, the seizures of hashish showed that Thailand is possible to be a transit country. Since 1993, many citizens of Nepal, Europe, Poland and the Middle East have been reported regular drug traders. Even though there were a few use and/or possession cases, the Thais and Europeans were among most outstanding cases.

Acknowledgements

It gives us great pleasure to express our appreciation to many people who have contributed in one way or another for the completion of this study. Our thanks go to Professor Dr. Vichai Poshyachinda, Head of Drug Dependence Research Center, Institute of Health Research who gave us good advices and encouraged us to apply for publication in this journal. Moreover, thanks to Mrs. Naramol Chuangrangsri from Policy and Planning Bureau, Office of the Narcotics Control Board and her staff for their most assistance and beneficial information.

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