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Consideration for Drug Smuggling/Trafficking

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Short Report

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Not only Iran has one of the highest opium consumption rates [3], but also its long common border with Afghanistan, the world's largest illicit opium producer, has made this country a major part of many illicit drug transition routes. According to UNODC 43% of worldwide opium use is related to Iran [2].

In the past decades, various methods based on using human's or even animal's body as a container, have been formed and operat-

ed for drug smuggling and trafficking. Body packer, body stuffer, body pusher and body container are some of the terms that describe the individuals who are abused in different scenarios of this type of drug trafficking. Table 1 provides more details on definition of these terms [1].

Undoubtedly, these arrangements are not authorized ethically or legally. However, what we, as physicians, are mostly concerned about here is the large number of health risks in the process. Most obviously, the drug packs can be ruptured inside the body due to different reasons, and put the carrier's life in danger. In this case, the medical treatment should be conservative and symptomatic, and the necessity of a surgery must be decided from a combination of clinical findings, progression of symptoms, existence of a powerful antidote such as naloxone, and available health infrastructures.

The mentioned medical risks can vary based on different factors of the situation. As an instance, in the case of body stuffing, since the packs are not safely and professionally prepared, there is a larger amount of risk.

One last important point to be indicated here is that body containers should be protected by authorities. They also need to receive the necessary help regarding their social and psychological health, in addition to the provided physical care. Social workers can be really helpful in bringing these individuals back to a normal life.

Table 1. Different approaches of drug smuggling/trafficking.

Terms	Definition	Volume	Health risks	Common places
Body packer	Drugs are precisely wrapped in cellophane packets or condoms and intentionally swallowed for the purpose of trafficking. ^[1]	+++	+	Airports, terminals, Prison
Body stuffer	Drugs are sloppy wrapped in cellophane and swallowed when encountered with the Police.	+	+++	Streets
Body pusher	Drugs are wrapped in cellophane packets and pushed into rectum or vagina for the purpose of trafficking.	++	+	Prison
Body container	Precisely wrapped packets are given to mentally incapacitated subjects, children, or live animals for the purpose of smuggling.	+++	+	Airports, terminals
Carrier	Animals such as mules are made to be addict and trained for travel across the borders. They are loaded with illicit drugs. Upon their arrival they are given opium to control withdrawal.	+++	N/A	Borders

[1]. Pregnant women are at higher risk to be used by smugglers, as it is harder to pick them up due to potential sympathy of the police and limitation of using X rays. They should be treated, however, as high risk

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