Editorial

Call for national cooperation for the care of ketamine-induced uropathy in Taiwan

Ketamine abuse is a serious problem in Taiwan. Since 2006, ketamine is the country’s number one illicit substance, based on the amount of kilograms detained by the police. Since then, the number of people caught by the police has increased more than 10-fold (Fig. 1). If one in 10 persons using the illicit substance is caught by the police, then it is estimated that there are 220,000–330,000 persons using illicit ketamine in Taiwan. If one-quarter to one-third of ketamine abusers develop ketamine-induced uropathy (KU), then 55,000–110,000 people in Taiwan may already have KU.

In 2007, KU was first reported in Canada, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. To date, at least 350 cases of KU were reported in 13 hospitals in Taiwan before 2014.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of hospital</th>
<th>No. of patients</th>
<th>Name of hospital</th>
<th>No. of patients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaohsiung Municipal Hsiao-Kang Hospital</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Chang Gung Memorial Hospital (Linkou, Taiwan)</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaomei Urologic Clinic</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Tzu Chi Hospital</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chi-Mei Medical Center</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Cathy Hospital Si-Ji</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feng Yuan Hospital</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tri-service General Hospital</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Shin-Kong Wu Ho-Su Memorial hospital</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taipei Veterans General Hospital</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>En Chu Kong Hospital</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far Eastern Memorial Hospital</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1. The current condition of ketamine abuse in Taiwan. The blue bar represents kilograms of ketamine detained by the police and the red line represents the number of individuals with a ketamine-positive urine test. The values for 2014 are the expected number, based on the numbers reported between January to August.
hospitals around Taiwan (Table 1). KU is a new disease with many facets that involve the genitourinary tract, gastrointestinal tract, and the brain. Many clinical problems of KU remain unknown such as epidemiology, mechanism, and effective treatment options. At present, limited cooperation in gathering specific cases has been reported. If all urologists in Taiwan could register their patients on the same platform in the same way, we could accumulate more clinical experiences, unveil the nature of KU, and find the best treatment option for specific KU patients. Please join the National Cooperation Team for Ketamine-Induced Uropathy to work for a better Taiwan.

Conflicts of interest

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References


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