

Fenethylline in the Middle East, A Thriving Trade in the Post-Saddam Era

INTRODUCTION

Performance and Imaging Enhancing Drugs (PIEDs) is a term utilized for the description of all existing forms of substances, natural or synthetic, that can enhance the image of an individual, their physiologic performance, or both.

Fenethylline, also known as “Captagon”, is a PIED. It best fit as a performance enhancer and a psychostimulant.

Additionally, it has potential hallucinogenic & epileptogenic properties.

In 1981, it was listed as a schedule I controlled substance in the United States, and it became illegal in most countries in 1986 after being listed by the World Health Organization for international scheduling under the Convention on Psychotropic Substances.

AIM

To reach up-to-date data on Captagon and its commerce in the Middle East in the post-Saddam era.

METHODS

To collect the data of the best quality and the highest amount of available evidence in the literature, four medical literature databases were searched: Google Scholar, PubMed, the Cochrane Library, and OpenGrey.

Nine keywords were used across each database (as seen in the figure), to generate Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs). This literature search was conducted from the 3rd of December to the 29th of December 2015. The search was done from Baghdad, Iraq via the Earthlink-Telenet Internet Service Provider (ISP). The total SERPs for the search were 463137.

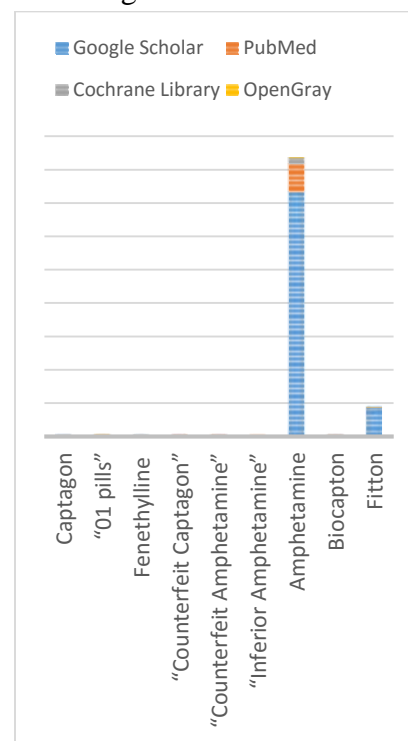
The most relevant and up-to-date papers were used for referencing this paper. The total number of references is 22. These were gathered from medical literature databases, paramedical databases, social networks, and others.

RESULTS

Illicit drugs, including Captagon, have emerged as a growing problem in the Middle East. Captagon is most commonly seized in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, UAE, and Qatar.

Its production has specifically shifted to Syria and Iraq.

In the post-Saddam era in Iraq, the Iraqi law enforcement were able to seize increasing amounts of Captagon, including around 200 kilograms in 2008.



CONCLUSION

Captagon is a dangerous psychoactive substance that can be addictive. It can affect the body physiology and induces particular disturbances of the nervous and the cardiovascular system. The substance’s legal production was discontinued in the 1980s. However, illegal commerce thrived later. Currently, Captagon trade is thriving in the Middle East.

This substance is being highly utilized by consumers in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, in the post-Saddam era of the Middle East (after 2003), this substance has been traded and distributed at an exponential and alarming rate in Syria and Iraq. The main explanation is that the rise in the illegal commerce of such an illicit drug is related to the lack of order and a proper law system in the regions of conflict and civil war in Syria and Iraq to be specific.