

# Mysterious Wave of Severe Poisonings in Poland by New Psychoactive Substances

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In July 2015, there was in Poland a number of serious poisonings caused by use of “new psychoactive substances (NPS)” [1]. The health services recorded approximately 500 such intoxications. The hospitals in Silesia treated 200 people, and our Regional Center for Acute Intoxications hospitalized 22 people. Two people died, despite treatment. One of the most plausible explanations of this wave of poisonings is the fact that just from July 2015 came into force the amendment to the Polish Law on Drug Prevention, which indicated 112 new NPS, which was added to the list similar to the US Schedule-I [2]. Perhaps the distributors of the illicit market decided to get rid of stockpiles of substances just put on the list of drugs. An important fact is also, that the mentioned amendment determined a new definition of the illicit substances. Namely, it was stated, that it is also illegal to distribute and sale the substitutes of drugs “used in place of a narcotic drug or psychotropic substance or for the same purposes as a narcotic drug or psychotropic substance.”

Most people hospitalized in July 2015, had smoked cigarettes with a substance called “Strongman” (in Polish: “Mocarz”). Patients were admitted to hospitals by reason of severe disorders, such as loss of consciousness, disturbed breathing and respiratory insufficiency, requiring mechanical ventilation, extreme agitation, aggressive behaviors, requiring often binding. The medical and psychological interview indicated a fairly typical life trajectories of drug addicts [3-5].

The chemical composition of packages of drugs, sold in July 2015 was determined only after a relatively long time. Packages often contained two synthetic cannabinoids. One of them is probably a recently synthesized compound known as AB-CHMINACA [6-10], put recently to the US - Schedule-I [11]. Sales of this designer drug took place mainly in so called “head/smart shops”. In our country, in 2010, after the first wave of mass poisonings, the authorities closed, within a few days 1,400 such stores [12-14]. In subsequent years many shops, were reopened, selling NPS - this time as chemicals for the household. After the recent, new wave of mass poisonings the societal expectations arisen to immediate close of these outlets [1]. At the moment, the Polish authorities prosecute approximately 200 criminal proceedings, presumably on the basis the new, mentioned definition of illicit substances.

Experiences gained from dealing with such a massive wave of poisonings incline to develop new concepts of the legislation that would prohibit selling of all sorts of “chemicals” - when they are sell with the “inappropriate intention” and suggestion for the possibility to use them as drugs. Justification of such accusations for “inappropriate intention of sale” would be similar to conjectural prosecution (circumstantial evidences).

The existing problems in our country incline to look again, at the consequences of legislation implemented in Portugal and the neighboring Czech Republic, where the penalization of possession of small amounts of classic drugs such as marijuana is abolished [15-17].

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