

Chemsex Increases High-Risk Sexual Behaviors in HIV-Positive Men who have Sex with Men

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WHY THIS PRESENTATION IS IMPORTANT?

- According to Positive Voices Survey (2014), 3 of every 10 men living with HIV in England and Wales attending sexual health clinics reported having engaged in Chemsex in the previous year.
 - According to Antidote Data, 47% of the 2300 MSM who accessed their services asking for support between 2012 and 2018 are men living with HIV.
 - 50% of them report that their drug use escalated after their diagnosis
 - 33% of them claim they initiated use of drugs following diagnosis with HIV
- Positive Voices Survey 2014, presented at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2016)
- Oliver Stevens, Monty Moncrieff, Mitzy Gaffos (2019) Chemsex-related drug use and its association with health outcomes in men who have sex with men a cross-sectional analysis of Antidote clinic service data .Published in *Sexually Transmitted infections*

BEFORE ANYTHING...

- * Chemsex affects only a subset of gay, bi and MSM
- * Not all MSM using drugs are engaged in Chemsex
- * Not all engaged in Chemsex will experience problems

WHAT IS CHEMSEX?

Men using specific drugs to facilitate sex with other men.

Chemsex is where men take a certain drug or drugs ***because*** they are about to have sex.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- * Marked **change in drugs used**, which enhance the sex drive and the need of sex
- * Their use has been accompanied by **higher-risk sexual activity** than has ever been observed or associated with any other kind of drug use
- * Users of these drugs can feel **invulnerable to harm, supremely confident**, dismissive of consequences, sexually adventurous, experience a heightened sense of pleasure, and can possess a stamina and endurance that may **keep them awake for many days, sleeping with many partners.**
- * **Hook-up apps** and new technologies are very useful to connect with others who are involved in this reality.
- * **Sexual assaults** while under the influence of drugs in sexually charged environments are common

WHAT ARE THE DRUGS INVOLVED IN CHEMSEX AND THEIR EFFECTS?



CRYSTAL METH – TINA



HOW DO CRYSTAL METH AND MEPHEDRONE INCREASE HIGH RISK SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS?

- **Extremely strong stimulants**
- **Mainly for sex, affects the ability to avoid risks and to make right choices**
- **Prolonged high, that can keep people awake for days.**
- **Neglect of any other commitments, becoming sex the highest priority.**

GHB / GBL

- Powder, but comes dissolved as a liquid. It's ingested
- Depressant but at the right dose gives euphoric effect, people also use it compensate the effects of stimulants.
- Very cheap to buy online
- 1 – 2 ml dose – *VERY* dose specific, easy to over dose
- Can 'go under' – comatose
- Fatal at higher dose
- Inability to give sexual consent – sexual assaults



GHB / GBL



2 DISTINCT ISSUES

TOXICITY / OVERDOSE

- * Accidental
- * Provoked

In London in 2015,
someone died every 12
days because of GHB/GBL

DEPENDENCY

CONTEXT OF USE

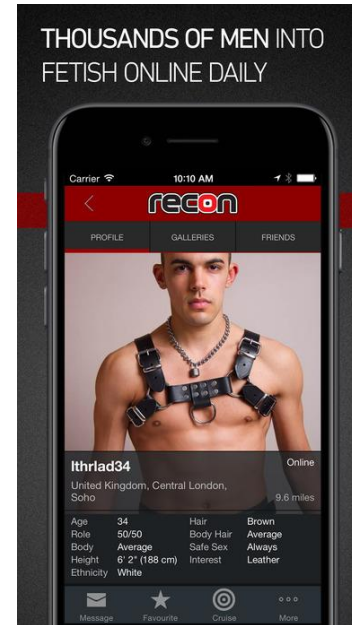
SAUNAS / SEX-ON PREMISES VENUES



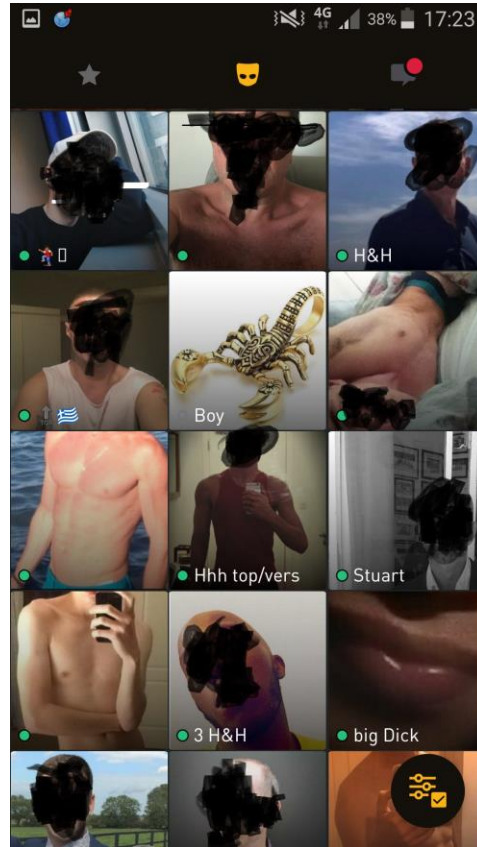
CHILL OUTS / SEX PARTIES

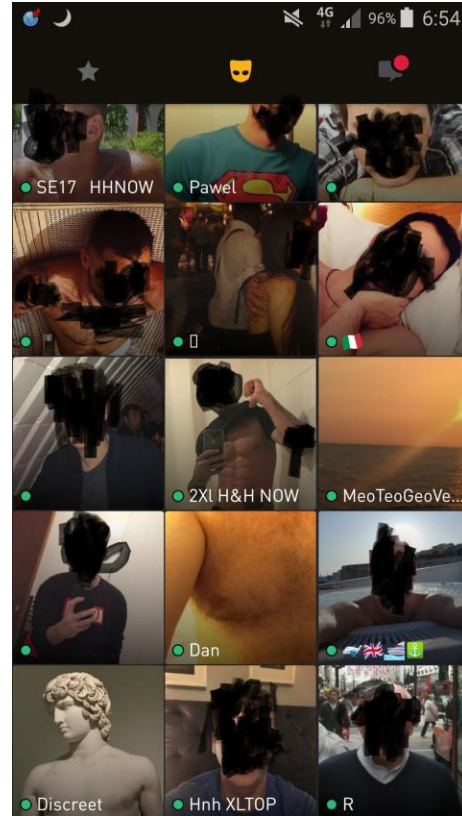


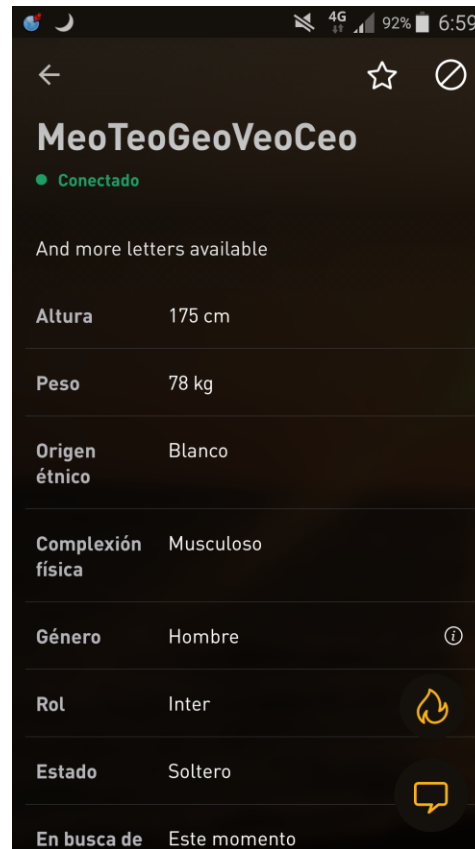
Apps / Websites...











WHY PEOPLE DO IT?

- ▶ It's fun
- ▶ Disinhibitor / Self-esteem / Confidence
- ▶ Boredom
- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Loneliness / intimacy / isolation
- ▶ Identity and belonging (Everyone does it)
- ▶ 'Ritual', sometimes associated with slamming
- ▶ Sexual experimentation

From "Huggy" to Hardcore"



THANK YOU FOR COMING

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