

Background

- Phencyclidine (PCP) is a synthetic compound derived from piperidine
- It is an anesthetic and a hallucinogenic
- PCP use as a recreational drug is resurging.
- Little has been published on clinical presentation of PCP intoxication

Objective

To quantify the incidence of clinical and behavioral findings in patients presenting to the emergency department (ED) under the influence of PCP

Methods

- A prospective, observational study conducted in a tertiary care center with an annual census of 90,000 patients/year
- Emergency physicians and research assistants identified patients with possible PCP intoxication, along with bystander/EMS and self-reported ingestions
- A structured data collection form was completed obtaining both clinical and behavioral events observed during the ED visit

Results

- The mean age of subjects was 32 years (20-53 years, range) and 64% were males
- Vital sign means were within normal limits for all subjects except for HTN in 50% of patients

Physical findings (N=177, % of N)	
Awake and alert on presentation to ED	78
Orientation X3* at presentation to ED	48
Amnesia	73
Agitation	40
Horizontal Nystagmus	64
Vertical Nystagmus	52

*Oriented to time, place and person

UDS findings (N=177, % of N)	
<i>UDS Positive for</i>	
Drugs	86.4 (153)
PCP (N=153)	99 (152)
BZP (N=153)	25 (39)
TCH (N=153)	41 (63)
Opiates	12 (19)

UDS: Urine Drug Screen; TCH: Marijuana

Self-reported data (N=177, % of N)	
PCP use	47
Co ingestion of Marijuana	25
Alcohol	21
Other substances	35

Outcomes (N=177)	
Length of ED stay (mean)	266 minutes
<i>Disposition (% of N)</i>	
Discharge to home	86
Admitted to floors	8
Transferred to psychiatry	6

Conclusions

- Patients with PCP intoxication tended to be young males
- The prevalent clinical signs and symptoms were: [amnesia](#), [nystagmus](#), and [agitation](#).
- Co-ingestion of other substances was the norm, however 25% of patients with a positive UDS received BZD in the ED, therefore it may not represent a co-ingestant
- The UDS may have underestimated the true incidence of co-ingestants
- The majority of patients had minimal alteration in vital signs and were discharged once their symptoms resolved
- Increasing recreational use of PCP warrants better understanding of its clinical presentation

Affiliations

