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DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF IV DRUG ABUSERS COMMENCING TREATMENT IN OPIATE DETOXIFICATION CENTERS IN IRAN

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Introduction: IV drug abuse is a medical and social problem in countries all over the world including Iran.

Objectives: Knowing about the characteristics of drug abuser could help policy makers to have more precise plan of action for prevention and management of addiction

Aims: This study was designed to investigate the demographic characteristics of IV drug abusers in Iran and determining the risk factors for shifting to IV drug abuse.

Methods: 150 intravenous drug addicts (147 males and 3 females) aged 19-61 referred to opiate detoxification centers in Yazd city in autumn 2008 were randomly enrolled to this descriptive cross sectional study. Data collection was undertaken through a structured interview, a questionnaire for demographic data and written documents at detoxification centers. Analysis of data was done with SPSS software (version 13).

Results: There was positive family history of addiction in 56.7%, known psychiatric illness in 43.3%, known physical disease in 32% and history of psychotropic medication abuse in 58% of participants. The mean age of onset in opium and its derivatives abusers was 19.12, heroin abusers 23.5 and IV bupropion abusers 27.2 years. The most common injecting drug at the time of study was heroin (65.2%).

Conclusion: Family history of addiction, psychiatric disease, physical illness and low education could all be risk factors for exacerbating an addiction. Identification of these risk factors could lead to the development of interventions to reduce the burden of addiction. Further research about this subject is required to determine if this is true.