

# Chemsex in France through Addictovigilance Network tools and researches

**A Batisse<sup>1</sup>, H Peyrière<sup>2</sup>, M Marillier<sup>1</sup>, C Chevallier<sup>1</sup>, S Djeddar<sup>1</sup>**

**And the French Addictovigilance Network**

**<sup>1</sup>CEIP PARIS**

**<sup>2</sup>CEIP MONTPELLIER**



Anne Batisse, Addictovigilance center of  
Paris

[Anne.batisse@aphp.fr](mailto:Anne.batisse@aphp.fr)



**The authors declare no conflicts of interest...**



A minority of gay men uses chemsex  
but it's a big problem for a small number of people



# Chemsex signal

- Substance use is prevalent in many studies on men who have sex with men (MSM) and well known for years
  - Several factors including social norms, homophobia, concomitant depression and anxiety probably contribute to the high rate of substance use in gay men (*Mayer et al., Lancet, 2012*).
- The SLAM phenomenon is an increasingly popular practice mainly in Paris gay scene, and defined by 3 characteristics:
- SIGNAL : Several cases have reported to French Addictovigilance Network since 2008:



Injection



Psychostimulant  
Drugs



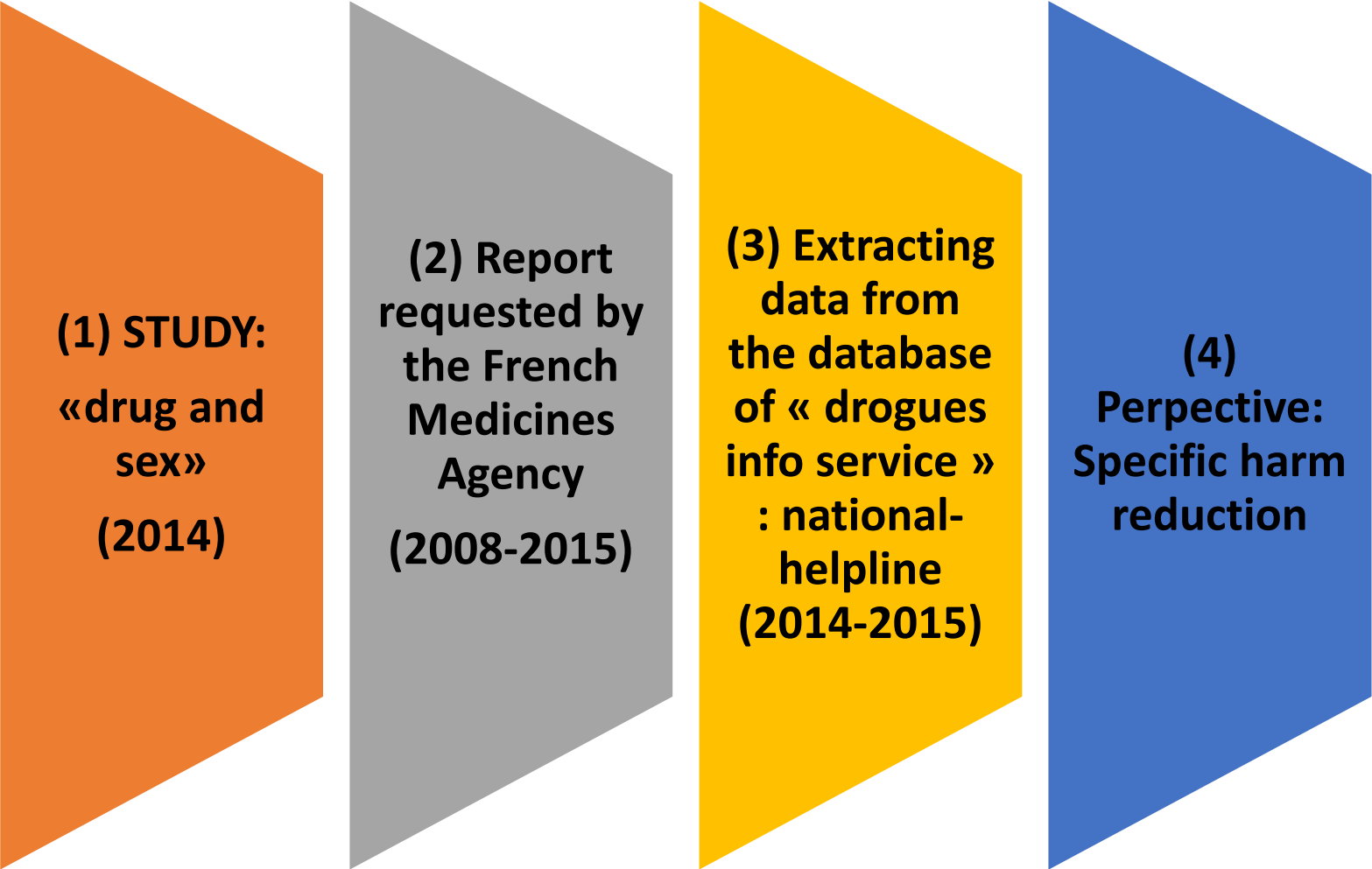
Sexual Party

Infectious  
complications  
(abscesses...)

Addiction and  
psychiatric  
complications

Acute  
intoxications

# Study of the signal in France: 4 steps



**(1) STUDY:  
«drug and  
sex»  
(2014)**

**(2) Report  
requested by  
the French  
Medicines  
Agency  
(2008-2015)**

**(3) Extracting  
data from  
the database  
of « drogues  
info service »  
: national-  
helpline  
(2014-2015)**

**(4)  
Perspective:  
Specific harm  
reduction**

# 1. *Different objectives and methods*



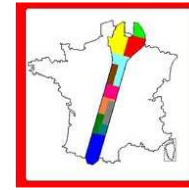
## Study «Sex and Drug»

- To investigate qualitative and declarative information on the **relationship between sex practice and PAS use among SUMSM**
- Methods: A **self-report anonymous form** was administered to SUMSM in addictology department or on a web site publicised by HIV association (AIDES) between **October 2013 and July 2014**



## French Helpline




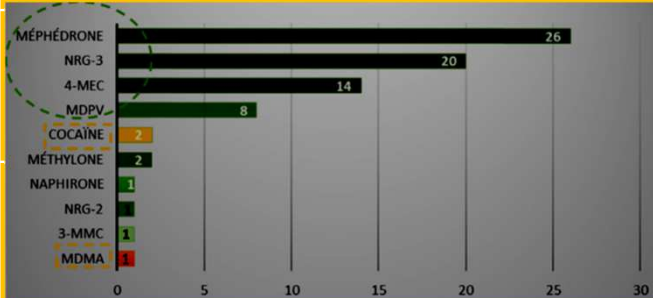
- « Drogues info service » is a free, confidential treatment referral and information service for individuals, entourage and families facing substance use disorders : **Analysis of the signal**
- **Methods** : Extracting data from the database between **January 2014 and december 2015**. All calls concerning synthetic cathinones



## French Addictovigilance Network

- Analysis of **complications** related to the chemsex practice **notified to the French network of addictovigilance centers**
- Period : Between **January 2008 to December 2015**

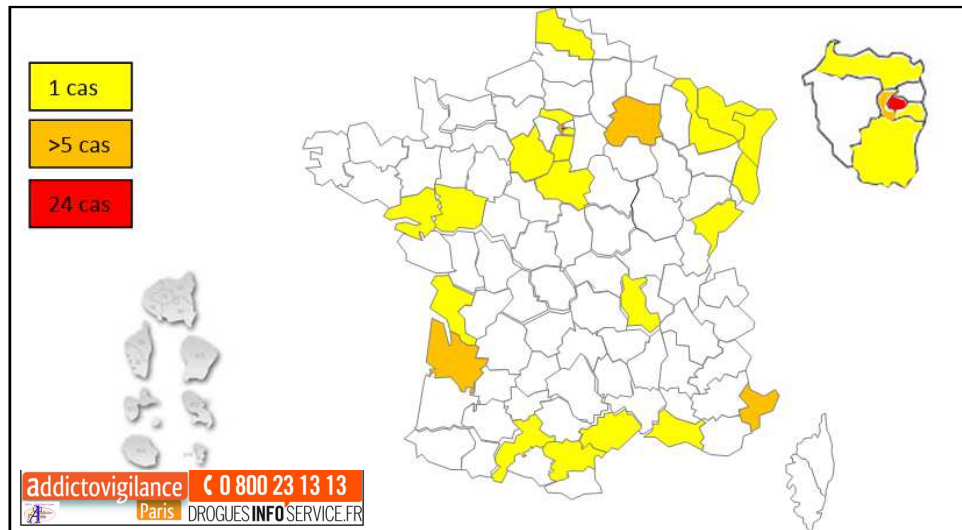
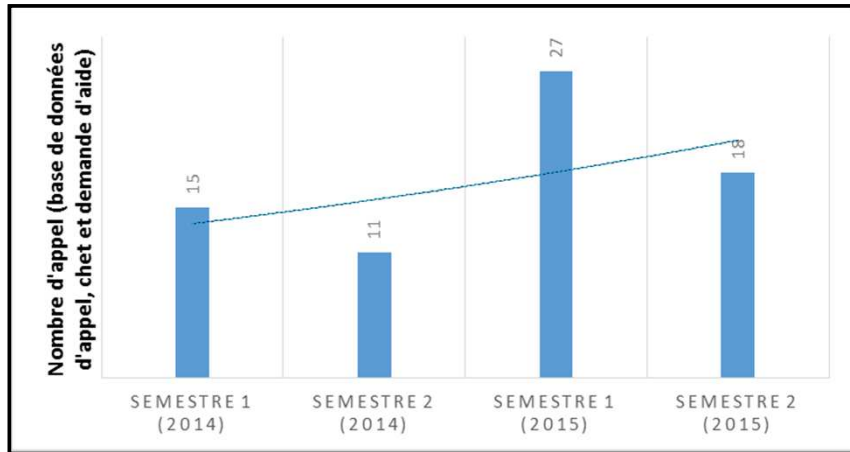
## 2. Results

	PARISIAN ADDICTOVIGILANCE CENTER		ADDICTOVIGILANCE NETWORK																				
	 « Sex and drug »	 French Helpline	 Addictovigilance Report																				
Population	228 users, employed 74% Mean age : 39 ± 13 years Men only	71 calls (13 requests for informations and 58 complications) Users are men (49/58) Mean age : 34 years Defined themself as MSM (20/58)	105 patients Men only, having psychostimulants exposure in sexual context, mainly in MSM context Mean age : 38 ± 10 years																				
Serological status	45% HIV +, co-infected HCV (23%)	-	The prevalence of HIV infection was 62 % with a high level of HIV/VHC co-infection 28% Syphilis : 10%																				
Polydrug users	82% (poppers, GHB, Cocaine, ...)	<table><tr><th>Produit</th><th>N</th></tr><tr><td>Mephedrone</td><td>22</td></tr><tr><td>Slam</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>4-MEC</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>MDPV</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>3-MMC</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>cathinones</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Methylone</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>khat</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>3-MEC</td><td>1</td></tr></table>	Produit	N	Mephedrone	22	Slam	15	4-MEC	8	MDPV	7	3-MMC	5	cathinones	3	Methylone	1	khat	1	3-MEC	1	40% (GBL, ketamine, MDMA, LSD...)
Produit	N																						
Mephedrone	22																						
Slam	15																						
4-MEC	8																						
MDPV	7																						
3-MMC	5																						
cathinones	3																						
Methylone	1																						
khat	1																						
3-MEC	1																						
Intravenous route	41% (intranasal or intrarectal route for others)																						
Mainly cathinones	29% of cases in the last six months (cocaine 62%)																						

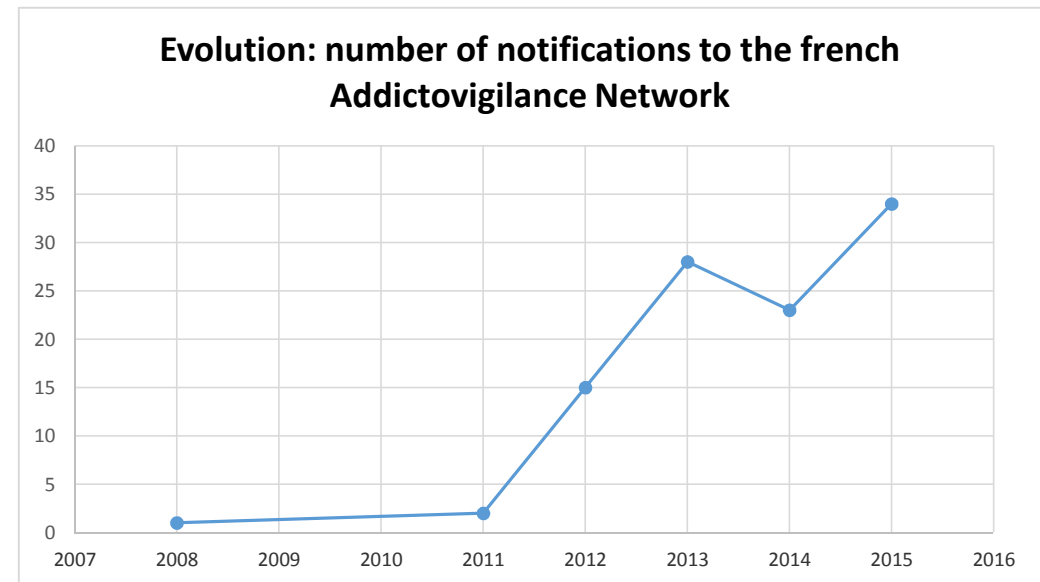
## 2. Results : Is there spread of slam phenomenon in France area?



### French Helpline drogues info service (2014-15)



### French Addictovigilance Network Report (2008-15)



The signal has **increased since 2012** in France

Presence of slam signal in **Helpline** is a **sign of spread**

The growth of addictovigilance notifications might be due to search of signal (**bias**)

## 2. Results: about complications



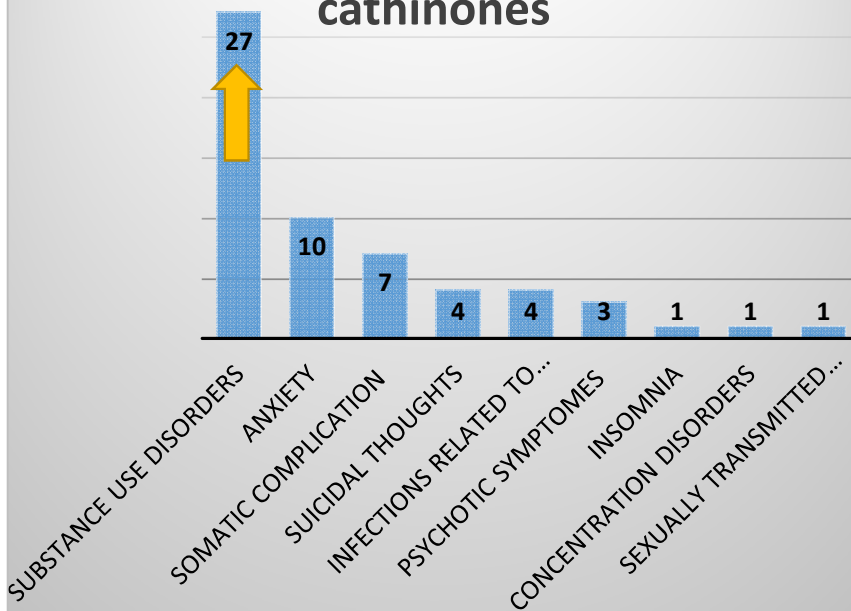
French Helpline drogues info service



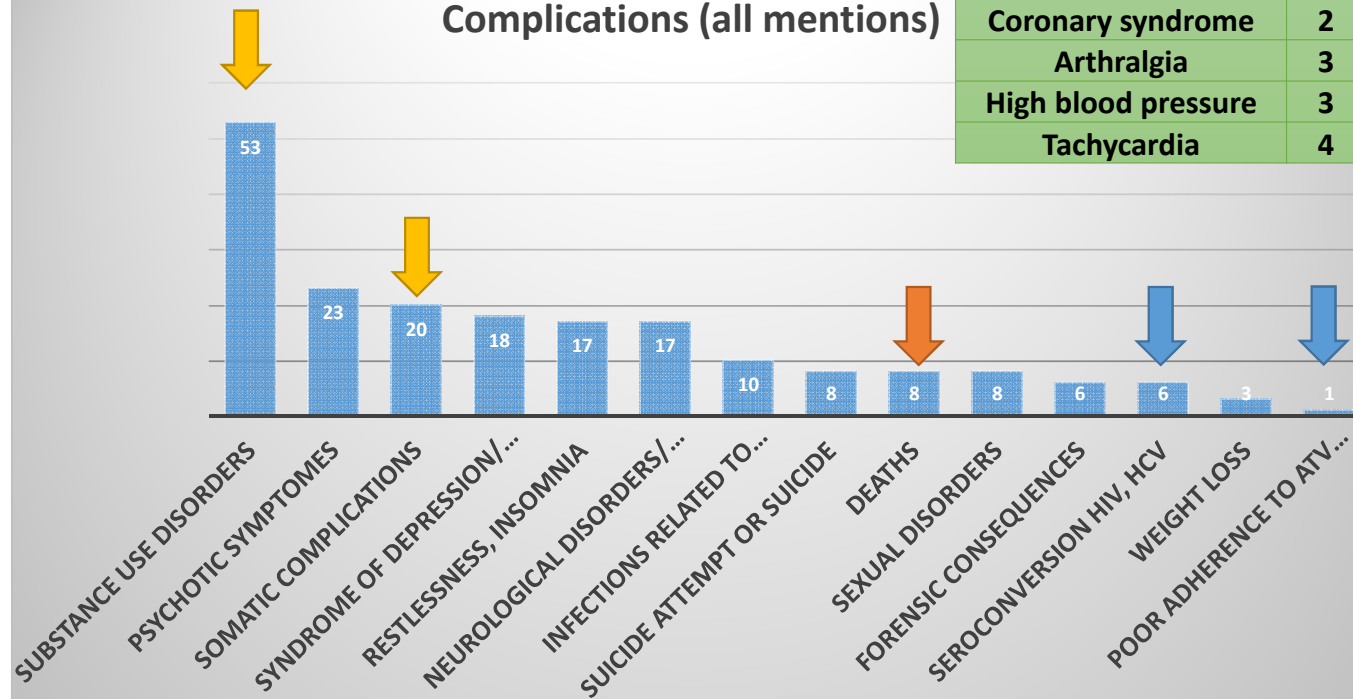
French Addictovigilance Network Report

Somatic complications	N
Vomiting	1
Hyponatremia	1
Serotonin syndrome	1
Diarrhoea	1
Rhabdomyolysis with renal failure	1
Hepatic cytolysis	1
Colorectal perforation	3
Amnesia	2
Hyperthermia	2
Coronary syndrome	2
Arthralgia	3
High blood pressure	3
Tachycardia	4

Complications with synthetic cathinones

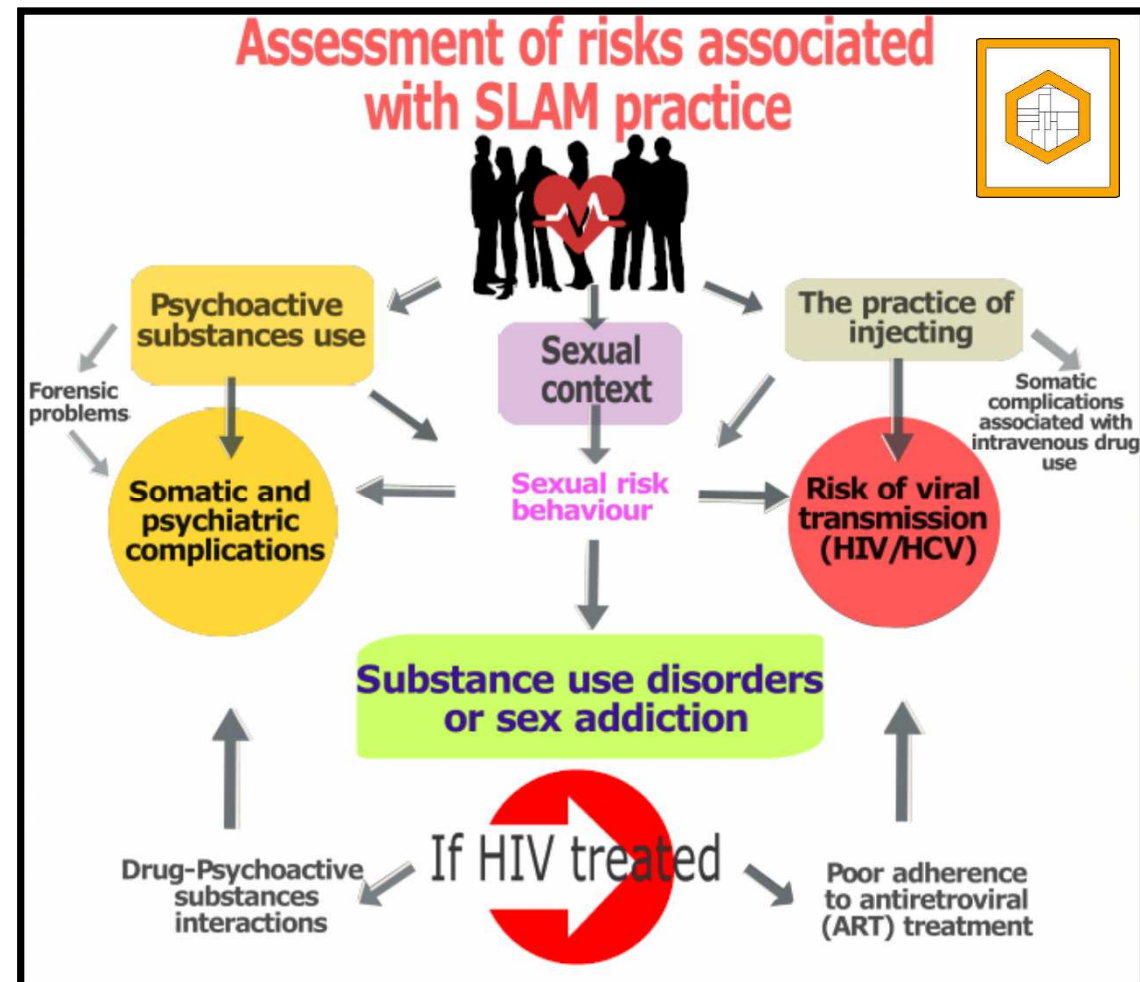


Complications (all mentions)



### 3. Discussion about Addictovigilance Network report

- **Infectious complications in 6%**
- **Seroconversion may be artificially low**
  - HIV and HCV infections can remain **asymptomatic** for a long period of time
  - HIV-HCV infected people remain **undiagnosed**
  - We know **the time** between infection and diagnosis is excessively long
  - It's difficult to know if people **are infected before or after chemsex**
- **The interest of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in this population**
- **Question about ART adherence and interaction**
- **The importance of the dialogue between patient and healthcare providers**



Developed by Addictovigilance Network



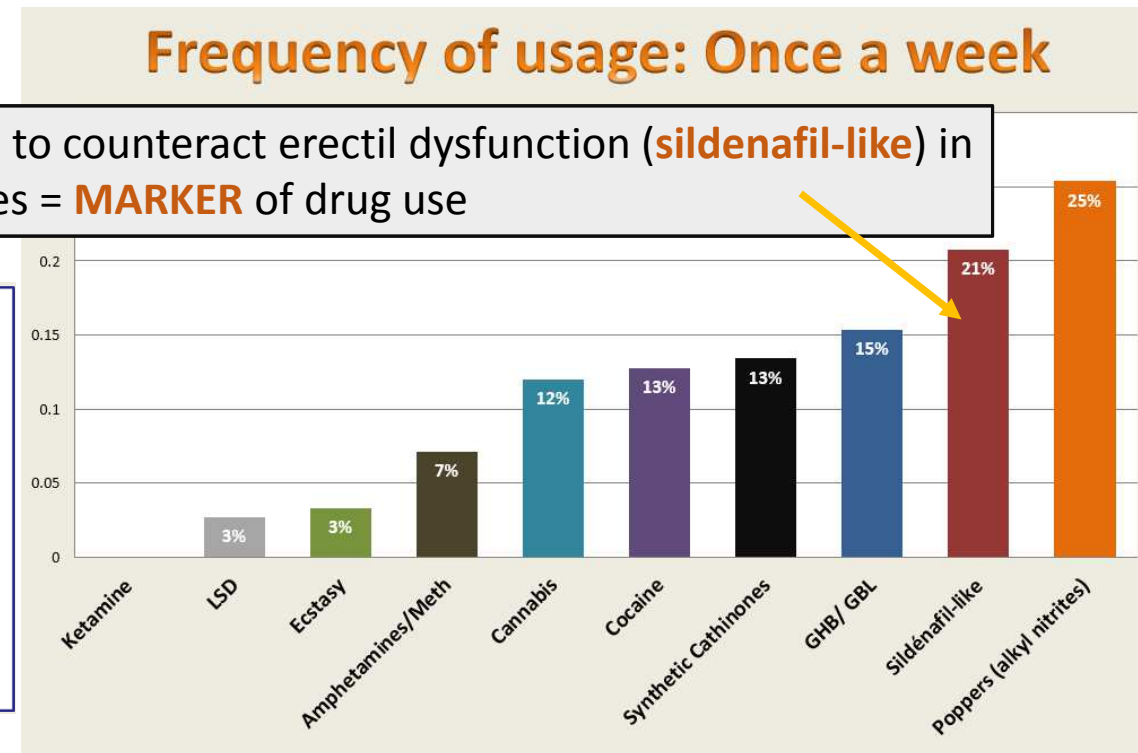
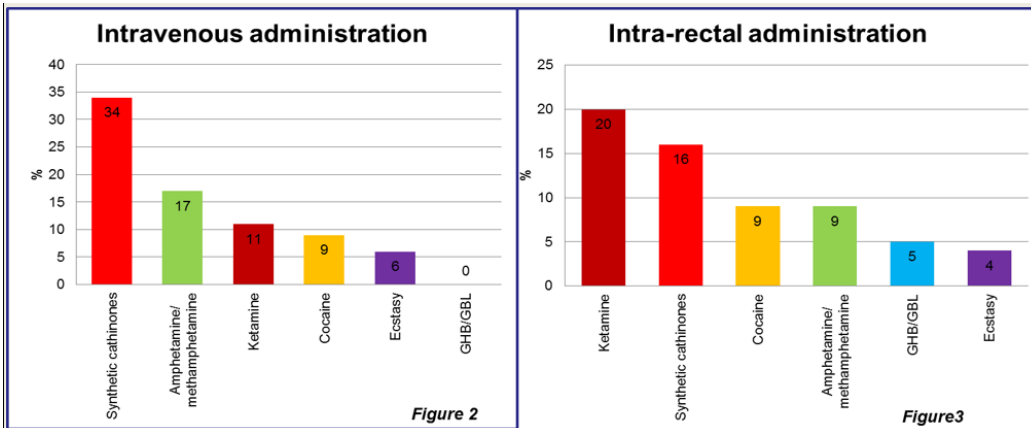
### 3. Discussion: study «drug and sex»

The impact of psychoactive substances (PAS) on the sexuality of men who have sex with men (MSM) is rarely considered

Importance of **other routes** of administration

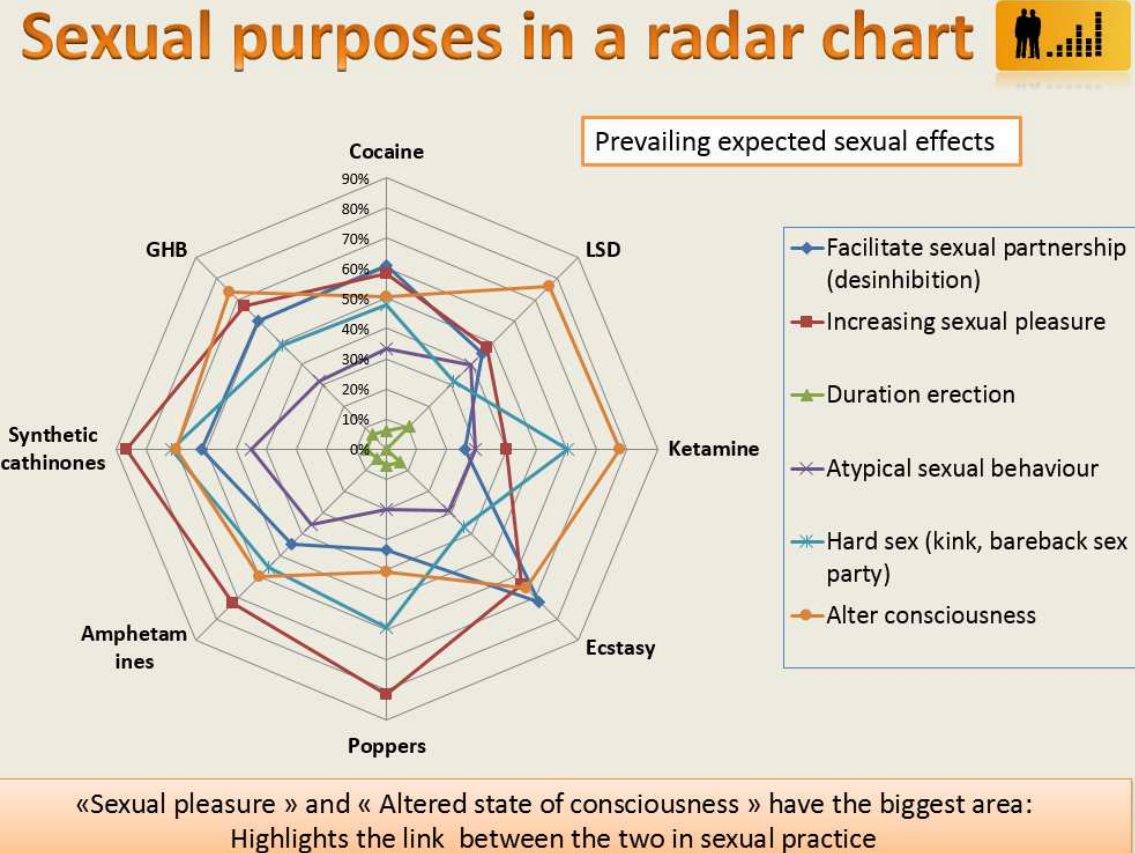
Medication to counteract erectile dysfunction (**sildenafil-like**) in **44%** of cases = **MARKER** of drug use

Frequency of usage: Once a week



### 3. Discussion: «drug and sex»

- ✓ **Prevailing expected sexual effect++**
- ✓ **Importance** of PAS on the gay sexuality
  - ✓ Experienced as booster of libido, performance increase
  - ✓ Nonsense : obligation of the use of sildenafil-like
- ✓ « Slam »: **Substance misuse problem or sexual health problem?**
- ✓ Sexual health = not merely the absence of disease (HIV, Viral Hepatitis..) but requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationship.
- ✓ **One of the message for chemsexers could be:** Don't forget recreational use but don't forget the ability to enjoy sober sex



## (4) Perspective: Study of chemsex harm reduction: impact of product analysis (in progress)

- **Variation of composition represents an interesting approach of harm reduction related to the use of NPS**
- The true content of the product can be very different from the one indicated on packaging. Providing information about product testing is a tool of harm reduction for drug users.
- Slammers are a specific group of drug users without knowledge about drugs, without knowledge about harm reduction and not in care in addiction structure



**OBJECTIVES: Impact of drug analysis as harm reduction for the slammers or chemsexers**

# CONCLUSION

- French prevalence of the slam data in futur PREVAGAY results
- Slam is the hard part of Chemsex\* phenomenon (\*wich must be investigated)
- Prevention strategy with (PrEP) pre-exposure prophylaxis/ Hepatitis C
- Marker of drug use: « sildenafil-like treatment » must be known
- Specific Harm reduction for chemsexers?
- Sexuality education

# Acknowledgements

- **Dr. Philippe Batel**, Clinique Montevideo, Paris
- **French addictovigilance network with:**  
Celine Eiden, Nicolas Authier, Anne Sylvie Caous, Amelie Daveluy, Nathalie Fouilhé, Marylène Guerlais, Reynald Leboisselier, Stéphanie Pain, Anne Roussin, Michel Spadari, Juliana Tournebize, ...
- « **Drogues info service** », Agence de Santé Publique
- **AIDES** association, who provided assistance to undertaking of the research