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The Therapeutic Potential, Functions, and Use of Ibogaine

Authors : João Pedro Zanella, Michel J. O. Fagundes

Abstract : Introduction: Drug use has been practised by humans universally for millennia, not excluding any population from these habits, however, the rampant drug use is a global concern due to the harm that affects the health of the world population. In this sense, it is observed the reduction of lasting and effective public policies for the resolution, increasing the demand for treatment services. With this comes ibogaine, an alkaloid derived from the root of an African bush (Tabernanthe Iboga), found mostly in Gabon and used widely by the native Bwiti population in rituals, and also other social groups, which demonstrates efficacy against chemical dependence, psychic and emotional disorders, opioid withdrawal was first confirmed by a study in rats done by Michailo Dzoljic and associates in 1988 and again in 1994. Methods: A brief description of the plant, its neurohumoral potential and the effects caused by ingested doses, in a simplified and objective way, will be discussed in the course of this abstract. Results: Ibogaine is not registered or passed by Anvisa, regarding safety and efficacy, and cannot be sold in Brazil. Its illegal trade reaches R$ 5 thousand for a session with the proceeds of the root, and its effect can last up to 72 hours, attributing Iboga's psychoactive effects to the alkaloid called ibogaine. The shrub where Ibogaine is located has pink and yellow flowers, and its fruit produced does not have psychoactive substances, but its root bark contains 6 to 7% indolic alkaloids. Besides extraction from the iboga plant, ibogaine hydrochloride can be semisynthesized from voacangine, another plant alkaloid that acts as a precursor. Its potential has the ability to perform multiple interactions with the neurotransmitter system, which are closely associated with addiction, including nicotinic, opioid and serotoninergic systems. Studies carried out by Edwards found that the doses administered of Iboga should be determined by a health professional when its purpose is to treat individuals for dependence on other drugs. Its use in small doses may cause an increase in sensibility, impaired vision and motor alterations; in moderate quantities, hallucinations, motor and neurological alterations and impaired vision; in high quantities it may cause hallucinations with personal events at a deeper level lasting up to 24 hours or more, followed by motor and visual alterations. Conclusion: The product extracted from the Iboga plant is of great importance in controlling addiction, reducing the need for the use of narcotics by patients, thus gaining a space of extreme importance in the treatment of users of psychoactive substances. It is remarkable the progress of the latest’s research about the usefulness of Ibogaine, and its benefits for certain treatments, even with the restriction of its sale in Brazil. Besides this, Ibogaine has an additional benefit of helping the patient to gain self-control over their destructive behaviours.

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