

The Risk of Khat (*Catha edulis*) Chewing for Common Mental Disorders: Cohort Study

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Introduction and Aims: Khat chewing becomes a common practice among young population in Ethiopia; however, its effect on mental health is not well understood. The aim was to determine the risk of khat chewing for common mental disorders among community residents in Northwest Ethiopia.

Design and Methods: A 12 months prospective follow up study was conducted among 135 khat chewers and 271 non-khat chewers in Mecha Demographic Surveillance and Field Research Center, North West Ethiopia. Standard self-reporting questionnaire was used to screen new onset of common mental disorders in the one-year duration.

Results: Khat chewing was associated with an increased risk of developing common mental disorder without affected by the frequency of use. The hazard of khat chewing for developing new onset of common mental disorders was 2.1, 95% confidence interval (CI) [1.03 - 4.27] ($P < 0.05$) among khat chewer adults than non-khat chewers. The incidence rate of common mental disorders found 16 cases per 100 person-year and the median survival time was 12 months for non-khat chewers with 95% [CI 10.75 - 13.25] and 9 months for khat chewers with 95% [CI 7.62 - 10.37].

Discussions and Conclusions: Khat chewing is a risk factor for common mental disorders among young population. Khat related policy should be revised along with increase community awareness about the risk of khat chewing for common mental disorders among young population in the community.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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