

## IMAGE AND PERFORMANCE ENHANCING DRUGS, A RISK FOR HCV OR FATTY LIVER DISEASE?

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**Background:** An influx in inexperienced users of image and performance enhancing drugs (IPED), attending an injecting equipment provision (IEP) service demonstrated gaps in awareness over screening for Hepatitis-C.

Concurrently, users of oral IPEDs in conjunction with alcohol or recreational substance misuse evidenced potentiality for incurring metabolic syndrome and liver damage.

**Description of model of care/intervention:** Attendees are offered Fib4, liver panel, full blood count, cholesterol, triglycerides, lipids and blood borne virus (BBV) screening by venous blood. Liver fibrosis is assessed by Fibroscan®.

**Effectiveness:** All sixty-eight attendees surveyed were males injecting IPED's, whilst 22% augmented oral-cycles of anabolic androgenic steroids (AAS).

All agreed to have a Fibroscan®.

39% provided bloods to calculate Fib4 scores, of which 94% evidenced no greater than mild fibrosis. Raised cholesterol and triglycerides were noted with 40% of those screened.

29% disclosed regularly consuming cocaine with alcohol, with 4% reporting 3,4-Methylenedioxy methamphetamine (MDMA) and cannabis use.

50% of attendees agreed to BBV screening with 100% so far returning negative.

Internet forums and peer awareness were familiar sources interpreting IPED validity with popularity and reputed sales regarded references of approval before users knowingly procured products via unregistered websites.

Flawed experiential technique of intramuscular administration brought frequency of bacterial infections and tissue scarring.

**Conclusion and next steps:** The fact Hepatitis C wasn't detected within this sample group is a welcomed outcome.

Opting to monitor bloods via independent laboratories without regulation or expert interpretation of results may misrepresent IPED user's wellbeing and inadvertently impede informed decision making.

Assurances were served, oral IPEDs may elevate cholesterol and triglycerides, therefore diet alone could not solely be accountable to presence of markers indicative to onset of NAFLD.

Whilst there is growing impetus for Hepatitis C screening, this survey suggests there remains imparity in efforts to openly monitor IPED populations risk of acquiring Liver damage.

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