

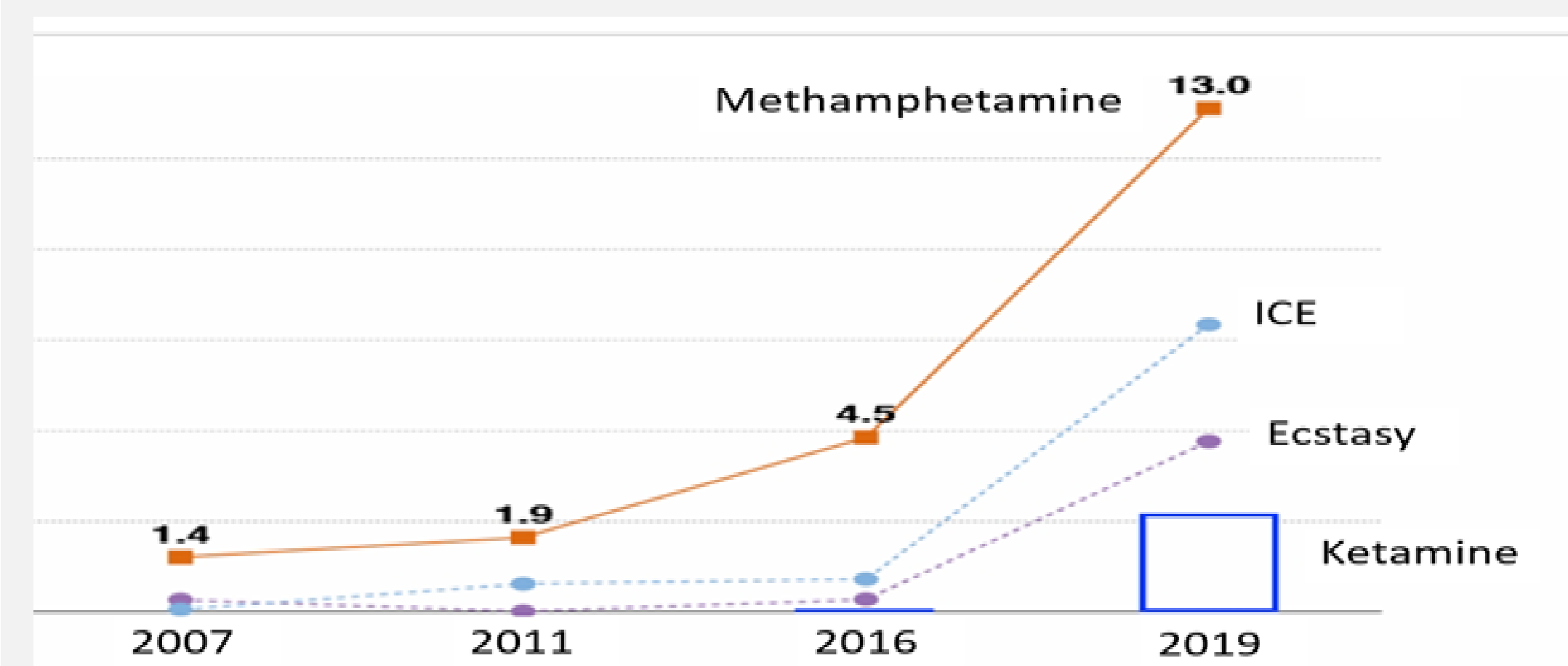
Synthetic Drug Use Experience Among Thai Women and Youth: An Interview Study of Patients and Key Stakeholders

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Introduction

The prevalence and growth of synthetic drug use are significant issues in Thailand. This study aimed to comprehend experiences of synthetic drug use among women and youth in Thailand.



Prevalence (/1,000 population) of synthetic drug use.
Source: Kanato et al., 2016 & Kanato et al., 2020

Methods

This qualitative research involved in-depth interviews with key stakeholders. Thematic content analysis was employed for qualitative analysis. Interviews included 6 key managers and experienced synthetic drug users from three regions: 9 young adults (5 males, 4 females) from the central, 17 young adult males from the south, and 12 youth (8 males, 4 females) from the north.

Results

Five themes emerged:

Local Drug Scene: Synthetic drug use and sale are prevalent and easily accessible in communities. Youth and women actively participate in transportation and sales, utilizing their advantages for avoiding police detection and finding new clients.

Diverse Motivations: Motivations for synthetic drug use vary widely, from productivity enhancement to recreational purposes. Youths commonly use drugs for recreation, while adults use them for extended work hours.

Social Influences: Family, friends, community, and financial factors play a crucial role in synthetic drug use. Youths, influenced by friends, use drugs to escape family conflicts, and normalization within the family and community contributes to this behavior.

Gender and Age-Related Risks: Women face higher risks of sexual abuse, while youths exhibit more violent behavior and engage in risky activities compared to adults. Injected drugs pose additional risks, including sharing needles and potential infections.

Access to Treatment: Family involvement is crucial for guiding patients to accept treatment. Women face challenges due to societal stigmas, concealing usage until severe symptoms appear. Youths often lack access to care due to unrecognized problems.

Conclusion

The local situation reveals prevalent transportation methods and synthetic drug use involvement among women and youth. Addressing societal stigmas and emphasizing family support are crucial for effective treatment, particularly for women facing challenges in accessing care.



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Acknowledge

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