**The incidence of stimulants drugs abuse among highway drivers in Iraq in 2022**

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**Abstract**:

**Background**: Stimulants work by acting on the central nervous system (CNS) to increase alertness and cognitive function. Stimulants can be prescription medications or illicit substances, such as Cocaine. Stimulants may be taken orally, snorted, or injected. This class of drugs is considered CNS Stimulants. They work by increasing the amounts of the neurotransmitter’s dopamine and norepinephrine in the brain. The increase of these chemicals in the brain improves concentration and decreases the fatigue common in individuals who suffer from ADHD. However, Stimulants can also cause severe negative effects and addiction.

**Methodology**: It is a cross sectional study conducted among 1700 highway drivers in Iraq distributed on all the Iraqi provinces including only males. The questionnaire contains demographic questions and an addiction special validated questionnaire about stimulants in Arabic language.

**Results**: 1700 participants from 18 provinces were included with mean age of 35 years. About 87% of them were considered as stimulants addicts, and the most used drugs were Methamphetamine and cocaine respectively. There were statistically significant differences between the addiction and number of weekly working hours, the age, the number of accidents and the number of daily sheep hours. Baghdad, Basra and Dhi Qar have the highest rate of accidents with drug abuse. Basra, Kirkuk and Erbil have the highest incidence for the addiction.

**Conclusion**: Stimulants increase the number of specific neurotransmitters in the brain, including dopamine, which leads to heightened alertness and feelings of euphoria. At the same time, stimulants elevate a user’s blood pressure, heart rate and breathing. Heavy use can cause irregular heartbeat, heart failure and seizures, and, in some cases, death. Effects of chronic stimulant use may include paranoia, anxiety, confusion and decreased sexual function, as well as potential damage to the respiratory, cardiovascular and central nervous systems.

**Keywords**: stimulants addiction; abuse; drivers; Iraq; highways