

## ADDICTION TO HIGH DOSE BUPRENORPHINE AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES IN TUNISIA

A. Belarbi, H. Ben Ammar, O. Moula, A. Bouasker, R. Ghachem

External Consultations and Emergencies Services, Razi University Psychiatric Hospital, Tunis, Tunisia

**Introduction:** High dosage buprenorphine (Subutex) is actually the principal treatment for substitution medication. Some misappropriations and wrong uses have been seen; the most frequent and sever being using tablets for injections. Since the introduction in different countries, the high dose buprenorphine as a substitution treatment for opioid drug dependence, the number of overdose deaths and heroin users are significantly declined. But the existence of non-use replacement of this processing, mainly intravenously, was born a new scourge of addiction, especially in Tunisia. Besides the risk of overdose, there is a risk of viral contamination.

**Objectives:** To study the sexually transmitted diseases among patients addicted to high dose buprenorphine in Tunisia and followed in the outpatient hospital Razi.

**Materials and methods:** It is a retrospective study of twenty-three (23) patients (23 men), injection of high dose buprenorphine, having consulted the outpatient clinic of Razi Hospital between January and July of 2012.

**Results:** 8 patients had a communicable disease: 1HIV, 5 Hepatitis C, 1Hepatitis B, 1 syphilis. 4 patients had infectious complications: 3 cases of skin infections and 1 case of endocarditis. 9 had never been screened. 8 recognized using a used needle.

**Conclusion:** The addiction to high dose buprenorphine is a widespread phenomenon in Tunisia. Lack of information and awareness of companion in Tunisia is at the origin of serious infectious complications. Health professionals have to play an important role in drug addict patients' education and supervision, to prevent addiction to buprenorphine and related infectious complications.