Gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) is a central nervous system depressant with euphoric and relaxant effects. At high doses drowsiness, and subsequently coma can occur. Combination with alcohol potentiates these effects. The relative proportion GHB related emergencies in the Netherlands is high (Monitor Drug Incidents). Also the fact that GHB is often combined with other substances creates additional risk. In order to be able to prevent such emergencies, and to best deal with GHB emergencies, more information would be necessary.

**Objective**

The aim of this study is to provide an update about the characteristics and clinical effects of GHB emergencies registered in the MDI and to investigate the role of other substances. In addition, motives of GHB combination use will be investigated.

**BACKGROUND**

Gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) is a central nervous system depressant with euphoric and relaxant effects. At high doses drowsiness, and subsequently coma can occur. Combination with alcohol potentiates these effects. The relative proportion GHB related emergencies in the Netherlands is high (Monitor Drug Incidents). Also the fact that GHB is often combined with other substances creates additional risk. In order to be able to prevent such emergencies, and to best deal with GHB emergencies, more information would be necessary.

**METHODLOGY**

- There were 7732 emergencies registered in the MDI. Of these emergencies, 1796 (24%) were registered as light; 2972 were registered as moderate (42%) and 2360 (33%) were registered as severe by first aid employees.
- Retrospective cross-sectional analysis was performed of the characteristics and clinical data of patients that experienced a GHB intoxication.
- SPSS multinomial regression model was used to identify correlations between the variables (gender, age, tourist, type of drug use, level of toxicity and certain clinical parameters).

**RESULTS**

The most frequently reported symptoms in the database free text field include:

- Apnoea and irregular/threatened breathing
- Alterations in behaviour (agitation, bizarre behaviour, anxious, psychotic behaviour)
- Vomiting
- Involuntary muscle contractions
- Cardiovascular disturbances (bradycardia, hypotension, cardiac arrhythmias)
- Decrease in consciousness (90%) to (deep coma)
- Reduced oxygen saturation

**DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

To explore the motives of the use of the simultaneous use of GHB with alcohol and/or cocaine (the why?), the psychosocial beliefs of recreational GHB-users are momentary examined using the theory of planned behavior. Data collection is ongoing using semi-structured interviews.

**REFERENCES**