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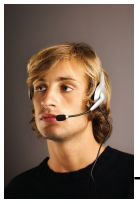
Stability in Number of Calls to U.S. Poison Control Centers About Exposure to Synthetic Marijuana



The number of calls to U.S. poison control centers about exposure to synthetic marijuana and synthetic cathinones remained relatively stable in the first six months of 2013, according to data from the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC).

After peaking in July 2011 at 705 calls, the number of calls for synthetic marijuana, also known as spice or K2, began to decline in 2012, reaching 173 in January 2013. Since then the number of calls for exposure to synthetic marijuana have remained relatively stable at around 250 calls per month, with a slight decrease from May to June 2013 (from 272 calls to 221 calls).

A similar pattern emerged for synthetic cathinones, also known as bath salts.

After peaking in June 2011 at 744 calls, the number of poison center calls for synthetic cathinone exposure declined sharply during the rest of 2011, stabilized for the first part of 2012, then declined again after a brief rise.

The number of calls for exposure to synthetic cathinones has remained around 90 calls per month since September 2012. The decreases in exposure calls for synthetic marijuana and bath salts since 2011 may be related to the heightened media exposure about the negative effects of these drugs as well as recent federal and state legal bans on the substances.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC), Synthetic Marijuana Data June 30,2013.