

# Childhood sexual abuse, risk behaviours and chemsex engagement among men who have sex with men in Paris, France

Marc Shelly <sup>1,2</sup>, Solène Bost,<sup>1</sup> David Moreau<sup>1</sup>

Drückler *et al* suggest that chemsex engagement among men who have sex with men (MSM) is significantly associated with reporting non-consensual sex.<sup>1</sup> Inspired by clinical stories gathered in a sexual healthcare service, we investigated a possible relationship between childhood sexual abuse (CSA), that is, having been a victim of forced genital contact by an adult before age 13, and current chemsex engagement. To our knowledge, only one recent study reports a ‘higher frequency’ of early sexual abuse—but without specification of type and age of sexual abuse—among adult chemsex-users MSM.<sup>2</sup>

These data were collected during youth festivals using a computerised, anonymous, self-administered survey of a non-selected population of 225 MSM (median age=23, aged 16–39) living mainly in the Paris area.

After adjustment for potential confounding factors, those who had experienced CSA were more likely than the other MSM to report not having a regular partner (adjusted OR=3.06 (95% CI 1.16 to 8.08,  $p<0.05$ )), less likely to

protect themselves with a new partner of unknown risk (aOR=0.2 (0.06 to 0.62),  $p<0.01$ ), were more likely to be chronic users of both illicit psychoactive substances (aOR=4.91 (2.18 to 11.0),  $p<0.01$ ) and psychotropic drugs (aOR=3.89 (1.78 to 8.50),  $p<0.01$ ) and were more likely to be chemsex-users (aOR=5.62 (1.83 to 17.2),  $p<0.01$ ).

This exploratory study suggests that CSA may be a strong vulnerability factor (nearly six times more likely) predisposing MSM to chemsex engagement. If confirmed by larger studies, these findings should encourage clinicians to systematically ask for a history of CSA in cases of chemsex engagement among MSM and, if deemed necessary, to integrate this major trauma into the overall clinical management of chemsex in a broad risk-harm reduction perspective.

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### ORCID iD

Marc Shelly <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4473-2057>

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<sup>1</sup>Association AREMEDIA, Paris, France

<sup>2</sup>HU Saint-Louis—Lariboisière Fernand Widal, CeGIDD, APHP, Paris, France

**Correspondence to** Dr Marc Shelly, Association AREMEDIA, Paris, France; [cartanit@gmail.com](mailto:cartanit@gmail.com)