

## Abstract

**Background:** Chemsex is an emerging phenomenon primarily observed among non-heterosexual individuals. This complex issue holds significant public health implications and necessitates special attention in the realm of harm reduction. Among practitioners, there are specific patterns and motivations related to the combination of psychoactive substances used, the environments and companions with whom chemsex is conducted, and the methods through which chemsex arrangements are made.

**Objectives:** The main aim of my bachelor's thesis is to describe and compare the patterns and motivations of chemsex practice among non-heterosexual individuals aged 18-26 in the Czech Republic. Additionally, the study aims to explore the attitudes of practitioners towards chemsex and assess the impacts on their sexual and mental health.

**Methods:** The study was conducted as a quantitative research project, involving the creation of an online questionnaire comprising 23 questions. Prior to the questionnaire's publication, a pilot test was conducted among classmates. Data collection was carried out through social networks and groups that bring together the LGBTQ+ community and substance users („Drogy, závislosti a vše kolem", „Drogy, alkohol a party life bezpečněji", „LGBTQ+ CZ apod“.). I also asked the respondents to engage with their environment that satisfies the eligibility criteria of the study, with the aim of garnering the maximum quantity of responses. The research involved a total of 78 individuals meeting the entry criteria. The data were analysed and processed using Google Forms and Microsoft Excel, employing descriptive statistics and contingency tables.

**Results:** The main findings revealed that the most common motivations for engaging in chemsex are the enhancement of sexual experiences and social belonging. Individuals who have tried chemsex report a subjective improvement in their sexual experiences compared to their overall level of sexual satisfaction. There is a specific distribution of substances used in the chemsex scene, with methamphetamine being the predominant choice among cis gay men, regardless of their underlying motivation for participating in chemsex. Most respondents were aware of the health risks associated with chemsex, although their attitudes towards these risks varied. These findings align with studies such as EMIS-2017, which also identified similar motivations and risks.

**Conclusion and recommendation:** This work contributes to a better understanding of the phenomenon of chemsex and provides valuable insights for the development of effective prevention and intervention measures not only in the field of addiction science. The study highlights the need for increased awareness and education about the risks associated with chemsex, particularly in relation to the prevention of sexually transmitted infections and mental health issues. Recommendations include the implementation of targeted prevention programs aimed at raising awareness of the risks of chemsex and promoting safer sexual practices.

**Key words:** Chemsex – Sexuality – Stigma – Substance use risks – Questionnaire survey