

What role does substance use play in catatonia?

Jonathan Rogers:

The other area I'll address is substance use and catatonia. In London, we looked at the rates of catatonia between 2007 and 2016, and we found that over that period, the number of cases of catatonia increased by about 50 percent. Now, this is really worrying. It's not clear what could have driven that increase, but one hypothesis that we've investigated is changing patterns of substance use. It seems that various recreational drugs, including cannabis and particularly synthetic cannabinoids and ketamine and also central nervous system stimulants can trigger catatonia.

Sometimes it's actually stopping a drug like alcohol or benzodiazepines that can trigger catatonia.