Expert Committee on Drug Dependence
Thirty-sixth Meeting
Geneva, 16-20 June 2014

World Health Organization

1. Comments based on the review report

a. Evidence on dependence and abuse potential

Animal studies have shown that BZP possesses rewarding and reinforcing properties and it can substitute for amphetamine, cocaine and MDMA in self-administration and discrimination studies. The review report concludes that "BZP could possess an abuse and dependence potential".

b. Risks to individual and society because of misuse

The effects of BZP are similar to those produced by amphetamines and other sympathomimetics. Adverse reactions include anxiety, vomiting, headache, hypertension, tachycardia, palpitations, confusion, collapse and seizures. BZP is often co-ingested with other drugs (TFMPP, alcohol, cannabis etc). Intoxications (fatal and non-fatal) have been reported but the toxicological significance of BZP is difficult to determine because, BZP is often co-ingested with other drugs.

c. Magnitude of the problem in countries (misuse, illicit production, smuggling etc)

Seizures of BZP have been reported in the USA, New Zealand and Australia and in many European countries.

d. Need of the substance for medical (including veterinary) practice

BZP has no therapeutic uses.

e. Need of the substance for other purposes (e.g. industrial)

Nine countries reported that BZP was used for such purposes as research, as an intermediate in pharmaceutical manufacturing and as a reference analytical standard.

f. Measures taken by countries to curb misuse

BZP is controlled in Member States of the European Union, USA, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and Thailand.

g. Impact if this substance if scheduled

Since there are no therapeutic uses for BZP, the impact of scheduling would be nil.

2. Additional information to the critical review report

A clinical trial using 300mg BZP and 74mg TFMPP ingested alone or in combination with alcohol reported severe adverse events (agitation, anxiety, hallucinations, vomiting, insomnia and migraine) in both groups. The authors of the paper concluded that "BZP/TFMPP alone or with alcohol carries a significant risk of severe adverse events when taken in similar doses to those recommended by manufacturers.

References

Thompson, I, Williams, G, Caldwell, B et al. Randomised double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of the effects of the 'party pills' BZP/TFMPP alone and in combination with alcohol. Journal of Psychopharmacology 2010;24 (9): 1299-1308.

3. Other comments or opinions

4. Expert reviewer's view on scheduling with rationale

Recreational/harmful use of BZP has been confirmed in 18 Member States. BZP has the potential to be abused. Severe adverse reactions including seizures have been reported. Since it has no therapeutic use but does pose a significant risk of harm to the user, the recommendation is that BZP be scheduled under Schedule 1 of 1971 convention.