

A REVIEW OF THE HISTORY, CULTIVATION, CHEMISTRY, PHARMACOLOGY AND ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS OF KHAT

AHMED BIN ALI JERAH, ANIL KUMAR BIDWAI & MOHAMMAD SHABBIR ALAM

College of Applied Medical Sciences, Jazan University, Jazan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

ABSTRACT

Khat is a term used for fresh leaves and buds of the plant *Catha edulis*. Khat chewing is a social tradition in some countries of eastern Africa, the southern part of Saudi Arabia and Yemen. It is chewed mainly for its intoxicating euphoric effect which is attributed to its active ingredients, cathinone and cathine. These are nervous stimulants that exhibit an effect similar to that of amphetamine. Habitual khat chewing is a growing concern worldwide and has been reported to have various adverse health effects. This review describes the history, cultivation, chemistry, biochemistry and pharmacology of khat. We have mainly focused to review the available literature on the adverse effects on human health. An effort is also made to survey existing regulations on khat use in different countries of the world.

KEYWORDS: Amphetamine, Cathine, Cathinone, Khat, Substance Abuse