

Ketamine Use - What Albertans Need to Know

Ketamine is an anesthetic and analgesic that acts rapidly. It is used mainly in veterinary surgeries and is now also used in human medicine. It is a dissociative drug; that is, it creates a sense of mind-from-body separation. The sale, possession, or production of Ketamine is illegal unless authorized for medical, scientific, or industrial purposes.

Inclusion Criteria for Depression in Alberta

Ketamine treatment can only be administered to an adult patient that has undergone psychiatric consultation and meets the following criteria:

- A major depressive episode, with an emphasis on acute or potential suicidality or significant functional deficit.
- Failure to respond to pharmacological treatment, with at least two adequate trials of appropriate psychotropic medication.

Short-term Effects

Mental Effects

- Inability to speak or move
- Feeling sleepy, confused, or losing coordination
- Feelings of weightlessness
- Intense and terrifying hallucinations and feeling that the mind is separated from the body

Physical Effects

- Feeling Numb
- Blurry vision
- Difficulty in breathing
- High blood pressure and heart rate, which may lead to strokes, accidents, or heart attacks
- Reduced response to pain, which may lead to more injuries

Long-term Effects

- Long-term use may lead to urinary and bladder problems such as bladder inflammation, painful urination, frequent or urgent urination, etc.
- Long-term mental effects may include flashbacks, loss of memory, reduced sociability, and attention deficit or dysfunction.

Uses of Ketamine

Ketamine is legally only used by veterinarians in surgery and doctors for medical use. It is a fast-acting anesthetic and painkiller.

Research on psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy has shown impressive results. Ketamine Assisted Therapy (KAT) has been exploding in the last few years for treatment-resistant depression and anxiety, PTSD, bipolar affective disorder, and chronic pain. It acts at the NMDA receptor in the Central Nervous System.

Resources – [Ketamine FAQ](#), Ketamine Assisted Therapy Association of Canada

References – Government of Canada: [Ketamine](#),

Alberta Health Services: [Intravenous Ketamine for the treatment of Adult Depression](#)