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'Zombies', 'cannibals', and 'super humans': a quantitative and qualitative analysis of UK news media reporting of the cathinone psychostimulants labelled 'monkey dust'

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Article

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Table 1: Summary of publications reporting on monkey dust

Genre	Publication	Total number of articles	%
Quality (n=16, 4%)	The Daily Telegraph	6	1.6%
	Independent	4	1.0%
	The-i	2	0.5%
	The Sunday Times	2	0.5%
	Guardian	1	0.3%
	The Times	1	0.3%
Middle-market tabloids (n=3, 1%)	Daily Mail	3	0.8%
Tabloids (n=23, 6%)	Daily Mirror	8	2.2%
	The Sun	7	1.9%
	Daily Record	5	1.4%
	Daily Star	3	0.8%
Online (n=9, 2.5%)	BBC News Online	4	1.0%
	Sky News Online	3	0.8%
	Mail Online	2	0.5%
Local/regional news sources (n=317, 86%)	e.g. The Sentinel Birmingham Evening Mail, Leek Post and Times, Bolton News, Liverpool Echo, Manchester Evening News	317	86.0%

Table 2: Actors quoted within monkey dust reporting

Actor	Number of articles	%
Criminal Justice actors	264	72%
Mitigating solicitor	164	45%
Police	51	14%
Judge	125	34%
Prosecuting solicitor	151	41%
Magistrate	5	1.4%

Public health/medical profession	44	12%
Paramedics/ambulance service	26	7%
Public Health England	8	2%
GP/consultant	12	3%
Mental health assessment team	1	0.3%
Coroner/pathologist	30	8%
Support worker (substance use or homeless services)	15	4%
Eyewitness/ member of public	16	4%
Relative or loved one of PWUD	11	3%
Local councillor/MP	12	3%
PWUD	9	2%
Academic	7	2%

Table 3: Data sources and evidence referred to in monkey dust reporting

Data source	Number of articles	%
Photographs (e.g. 'mugshots', images of crime scenes, images of drugs)	105	28%
Cases in which monkey dust compounds were confirmed as present (e.g. possession offences, supply)	83	23%
Calls to police for suspected monkey dust related incidents	60	16%
Calls to ambulance services for suspected monkey dust related incidents	23	6%
Anecdotal drug use cases from other countries	23	6%
Video footage (e.g. police, public or media footage)	41	4%
Confirmed deaths (i.e. pathology results) involving monkey dust use	6	2%

Table 4: Categories of photographs

Category	% of photos
Generic white powder	12% (n=43)
Authorities (e.g. Police, Prison, court, judge, paramedics)	9% (n=34)
Mugshot	9% (n=33)
Crime/incident scene	7% (n=25)
Location of incident (e.g. home of alleged offender)	4% (n=13)
Photograph of the accused (i.e. excluding mugshots)	2% (n=8)
Photographs of people who use drugs on the street	2% (n=8)
Drugs paraphernalia and preparation	2% (n=6)
Fictional photographs (e.g. superheroes, characters from TV).	2% (n=6)
Person who is homeless	2% (n=4)
Photos of the deceased	1% (n=3)

Table 5: Effects of monkey dust use reported

Effect category	Effect	Number of articles reporting the effect	%
Behavioural effects and effects to others (n=278, 77%)	Violence	103	28%
	Acquisitive crime	68	18%
	Incident involving a weapon	68	18%
	Aggression/volatile/threatening	78	21%
	Economic impact and impact on NHS and police resources	57	15%
	Cannibalism	40	13%
	Drug driving	23	6%
	Threat of violence (e.g. death threat)	21	6%
	Arson	19	5%
	Anti-social behaviour	15	4%
	Impact on local businesses	15	4%
	Impact on children (e.g. care system, dealing, exposure to drug use)	9	2%
	Threatening behaviour (e.g. intimidating others)	8	2%
Psychological effects (63%, n=230)	Implied addiction (e.g. 'addict', 'addicted')	147	40%
	Paranoia	101	27%
	Hallucinations	62	17%
	Hospitalisations	46	13%

	Psychotic symptomatology/psychosis	44	12%
	Mental health issue	30	%
	Agitation	31	8%
	Changes in personality	29	8%
	Distortion of reality	13	3.5%
	Memory loss (e.g. recollection of events)	12	3%
	Euphoria	3	1%
	Suicidal	1	0.3%
Physical effects (64%, n=236)	Implied addiction (e.g. 'addict', 'addicted')	147	40%
	Death	64	17%
	Hospitalisation	46	13%
	Sensory pathology (e.g. no sense of pain)	47	13%
	Heightened strength	30	8%
	Heart attack/Chest pain	21	6%
	Prawn/urine smell to skin	20	5%
	Hyperthermia/high temperature	18	6%
	Seizures	18	5%
	Stroke	12	3%
	Neurotoxicity (e.g. 'kills brain cells')	11	4%
	Self-harm, suicide or accidental death	8	2%
	High blood pressure	7	2%
	Panic attack	7	2%
	General effects on nervous system	6	2%
	Hyperactive	3	1%
	Talkative	2	1%
	Light headedness	2	1%
	Perspiration	1	0.3%
	Nausea	1	0.3%
Headaches	1	0.3%	
Slurred speech	1	0.3%	
Unable to communicate	1	0.3%	