

Box 1. Recent findings on the effects of chewing khat

Animal research verifies:

- Dose-dependent effect of cathinone on aggression, anxiety, withdrawal and appetite using vervet monkeys (54)
- Dose- and time-dependent effect of cathinone on stress and sex hormone production (55)

Chronic khat use leads to:

- Impaired attention and working memory (19,56–58)
- Higher experience of anger and more pronounced negative reactions during stress (59)
- Abnormal diurnal stress hormone profile: enhanced evening and attenuated morning cortisol levels (18)

Concurrent tobacco use among khat chewers is:

- Greater in males (16)
- Culturally proscribed: males use cigarettes, while females use shisha (16,60)
- Harmful to short-term memory, learning and delayed recall (20,58)
- Linked to abnormal (blunted) cardiovascular response to stress (61)