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Methods of Forensic Electrochemistry Drug Detection

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Introduction

Global illicit drug addiction has serious negative effects on our society's health, prices of medical care, economy, and level of crime, as well as the environment due to contamination of wastewater, surface waterways, and soil. Therefore, it is crucial that illicit substances can be found in biological fluids and wastewater, as well as in street samples that have been confiscated in order to limit and prevent trafficking and use. By analysing wastewater streams (wastewater-based drug epidemiology), which is one of the key areas of interest for the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, it may also be possible to estimate the total amount of drugs consumed in a certain area [1].

The current study focuses on the environmental effects of illicit drugs as developing contaminants and new advances in the field of electrochemical drug detection. We also discuss drug detection techniques for confiscated street powders and biological samples, as well as electrochemical approaches to their direct examination in wastewaters. Drug detection in biological samples and street samples helps to fight drug use and trafficking, which indirectly benefits the environment [2].

Contrary to licenced medications, the exotoxicity of illicit substances is given less consideration, but they may have similar adverse effects on biota, aquatic life, and the ecosystem. It was established that cocaine causes problems due to mutations in several genes, resulting in disrupted dopaminergic signalling in the brain of mutagenized zebrafish, while amphetamine sulphate demonstrated a high toxicity to rainbow trout hepatocytes. While morphine reduced phagocytic and intracellular esterase activity, lipid peroxidation, and cell adhesion in freshwater mussels, moderate quantities of cocaine in water also produced primary DNA damage in Zebra mussels [3].

Description

The detection of drugs of abuse in confiscated street samples and in biological samples like saliva and urine has drawn increasing interest, despite the paucity of literature on electrochemical detection of forensic drugs in environmental samples in recent years. Detecting drug use and abuse and preventing it has an impact on preventing environmental contamination as well. Drugs can enter wastewaters either directly or as their metabolites by human excretion, such as large amounts of urine, following unlawful usage, or through unintentional or intentional disposal from underground drug labs [4].

Multivariate approaches are increasingly being used in forensic analysis because they make it easier to understand all the components of an investigation, including the identification, differentiation, and classification of evidence. The current evaluation suggests that fundamental understanding of mathematical modelling is still necessary since without the fundamentals of chemometrics, specialists would not be able to produce a meaningful, accurate, and trustworthy model for the interpretation of predictive data. The detailed explanation of supervised and unsupervised pattern recognition techniques, as well as their use in forensic science, was described in the current review [5].

Conclusion

In light of the incorporation of automated chemometric methods into normal operating procedures, the benefits of these methods are explored in the current review. The sample size needs to be large enough to capture the variability in the dataset, numerical variables should be used instead of string variables, and the developed model needs to be cross-validated in order to get satisfactory results. Additionally, it implies that a solid foundation in statistics is still necessary. This research could have benefited from some non-cross-validated studies in order to obtain descriptive and cross-validated data.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest by author.

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