

What is Volatile Substance Abuse (VSA) & what is the SACKI warning?



What is VSA?

Volatile Substance Abuse (VSA) is the practice of inhaling volatile substances in common household products like glues, gases and aerosols in order to get high. It was commonly called glue sniffing in the 70s when it first emerged as an issue in the UK, mostly among young people. This serious social problem is complex and evolving- currently there are growing numbers of deaths among over 18s, (see www.vsareport.org).

In any home there are around 50 products, all with a legitimate purpose, which can be abused in this way. New abuses are becoming popular such as petrol and nitrous oxide; there is a long list of substances for potential abuse.

Why is BAMA involved?

Aerosols are among the products currently abused. (BAMA does not cover gas lighter refills). BAMA takes a highly proactive approach to the prevention of VSA and has worked in close partnership with government and VSA experts for 30 years. Our joint activities have helped to reduce the total number of VSA deaths from 3 per week in the 90s to less than 1.

BAMA research initiative

BAMA carried out a 3 year project with Brunel University to try to make aerosols less easily abusable while still allowing other consumers to continue to use their chosen product. Groundbreaking research with long term abusers was then conducted to assess how likely they were to be dissuaded. Sadly their verdict was that nothing would put off a determined abuser.

Education is key

Many adults are unaware that VSA still goes on. Teenagers are usually very aware but never expect to die from VSA. BAMA is actively involved in the education of professionals, retailers, young people and consumers in general about the hazards and agrees with the view of the experts that education is the only long term way to change the behaviour.

The SACKI Warning

In the mid 90s, a major research project was undertaken by the Department of Trade and Industry Consumer Safety Unit with the VSA Industry Forum, chaired by BAMA. The research showed a strong response from consumers that a new clear warning was required. BAMA's previous warning was not clearly understood. After careful consideration of the issues around labelling, BAMA recommends that **all** aerosols should be labelled with the warning about the dangers of



The SACKI voluntary warning appears on

nearly all aerosols marketed in the UK.

volatile solvent abuse to try to avoid signposting products. Free artwork for this logo can be requested from BAMA on tel: +44 (0) 207 828 5111 or by emailing enquiries@bama.co.uk

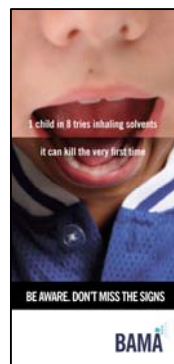
The Law

The Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985 was introduced primarily to prevent the sale of sniffing 'kits'. It make the sale of abusable products to under 18s illegal if the seller has reasonable cause to believe it is to be abused.

The Cigarette Lighter Refill (Safety) Regulations 1999 make it illegal to sell gas lighter refills to anyone under the age of 18. Gas lighter refills are the cause of the majority of deaths from VSA.

BAMA resources

BAMA has a leaflet updated in 2007 aimed at educating adults about VSA. Hard copies of our leaflet and an A3 poster showing the key points are available free of charge on request, please email enquiries@bama.co.uk indicating how many of each resource you require.



If you have an aerosol related question call us on tel: +44 (0) 207 828 5111 or email: enquiries@bama.co.uk

BRITISH AEROSOL MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION
www.bama.co.uk