

Drug use and risk behaviour among regular ecstasy users: Does sexuality make a difference?

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Abstract

This study aimed to compare homo/bisexual men and women with their heterosexual counterparts who were regular ecstasy users, to consider whether patterns of drug use or risk differed across these groups. Respondents (n=852 ecstasy users) were recruited via advertisements in entertainment street press, gay and lesbian newspapers, music and clothing stores and at university campuses. Interviewer contacts and 'snowball' sampling were also utilized. In total, 23% of females in the sample self-identified as lesbian or bisexual and 13% of males interviewed self-identified as homo/bisexual. Rates of use of 'newer' drugs on the dance scene--crystal methamphetamine and ketamine--were higher among homo/bisexual men and women. Self-reported risk behaviours such as unprotected sex and needle sharing (among those who had injected drugs) did not differ according to sexuality. However, homo/bisexual men and women were significantly more likely than heterosexual men and women to report a greater number of sexual partners and higher rates of injecting drug use. These findings suggest that among a group of people who were selected because they were regularly involved in the party drug market, initiatives designed to reduce harms related to injecting and sex risk may be needed for a greater proportion of homo/bisexual males and females who are involved in the dance/ nightclub scene. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2009 APA, all rights reserved)

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