The variety of ecstasy/MDMA users: Results from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions

Author(s)
Wu L-T, Parrott AC, Ringwalt CL et al

Abstract

This study investigates the potential heterogeneity of ecstasy or MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxy-N-methylamphetamine) users. Data came from the 2001-2002 National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC). Latent class analysis (LCA) and multinomial logistic regression procedures were used to identify subtypes of ecstasy users. Approximately 1.6% (n = 562) of adult participants (N = 43,093) reported lifetime ecstasy use. LCA identified three subtypes of ecstasy users. Class 1 exhibited pervasive use of most drug classes (ecstasy-polydrug users, 37%). Class 2 reported a high rate of use of marijuana and cocaine and a moderate use of amphetamines (ecstasy-marijuana-stimulant users, 29%). Class 3 was characterized by a high rate of use of marijuana and a low use of primarily prescription-type drugs (ecstasy-marijuana users, 34%). Subtypes were distinguished by family income, history of substance abuse treatment, and familial substance abuse. Class 1 exhibited the highest prevalence of disorders related to the use of marijuana (77%), tobacco (66%), amphetamines (36%), opioids (35%), sedatives (31%), and tranquilizers (30%). The recent resurgence in ecstasy use among adults underscores the need to monitor trends in its use.
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