

A choice between fun or health? Relationships between nightlife substance use, happiness, and mental well-being

Author(s)

Sumnall H, Bellis MA, Hughes K et al.

Published

Friday, January 1, 2010 - 12:00

Publisher

Journal of Substance Use

Volume

15

Issue

2

Page(s)

89-104

Abstract

Objective: To examine the substance use behaviours of young adults in Europe and to explore the association with self reported indices of mental well being, and the relative value of health.
Method: 1341 16-35-year-olds, representing youth and young adults who routinely engage in nightlife, were surveyed in nine European cities. Participants self-completed questionnaires, designed to gather demographic, social, and behavioural data on historic and current substance use, risk behaviours, and mental well being.
Results: Controlling for inter-country differences, we found that early initiation and frequency of use of a range of substances was associated with poorer life satisfaction, suicidal ideation, and hopelessness. Younger, more frequent substance users placed greater value on having fun than maintaining long-term health. Bi/homosexual participants were more likely to report hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, dissatisfaction with life, and preferring fun to health. Younger cocaine initiates were more likely to report considering suicide in the last 12 months than older initiates.
Conclusions: These findings confirm the importance of early intervention for young substance users. Whilst our study does not make assumptions on causality, identification of substance use in nightclub

attendees may be a good marker of comorbid disorders. It is important to recognize that negative mental states may also partly be a product of lifestyle and socioeconomic factors. Prevention and harm reduction interventions should recognize that the most at risk young people may discount future health gains from reducing their substance use.

Web link

<http://informahealthcare.com/doi/pdf/10.3109/14659890903131190>

[View PDF](#)