

Work Hard, Party Harder: Drug Use and Sexual Behaviour in Young British Casual Workers in Ibiza, Spain

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Published

Wednesday, January 1, 2014 - 12:00

Publisher

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health

Volume

11

Issue

10

Page(s)

10051-61

Abstract

Background: Every summer, young people flock to nightlife-focused holiday resorts around the world to find casual work. Despite being exposed to hedonistic environments, often for several months, little is known about their substance use, sexual activity and health service needs over this extended amount of time abroad.
Methods: A short anonymous questionnaire examining alcohol and drug use, sexual behaviour and use of health services was administered to young British casual workers aged 16-35 in San Antonio, Ibiza (n=171).
Results: 97.7% of casual workers used alcohol in Ibiza, and the majority (85.3%) used drugs. Almost half (43.5%) of all participants used a drug in Ibiza that they had never used in the UK. Most casual workers arrived in Ibiza without a partner or spouse (86.5%). Of these, 86.9% had sex during their stay and 50.0% had unprotected sex; often while under the influence of alcohol. Only 14.3% of those having unprotected sex with a new partner sought a sexual health check-up in Ibiza, although 84.1% intended to do this on their return to the UK.
Conclusion: Substance use and sexual risk taking is widespread among young British casual workers in Ibiza. Such international nightlife resorts represent key settings for substance-related health

and social problems, and for the international spread of sexually transmitted infections. Addressing the health needs of casual workers and the environments that permit and promote their excessive behaviour requires collaboration between authorities in home and destination countries and the tourism industry.

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