

A comparison of self-reported sexual effects of alcohol, marijuana, and ecstasy in a sample of young adult nightlife attendees

Author(s)

Joseph J. Palamar, Marybec Griffin-Tomas, Patricia Acosta, Danielle C. Ompad & Charles M. Cleland

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Abstract

Alcohol, marijuana, and ecstasy (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine [MDMA], ‘Molly’) are among the most prevalent substances used by young adults; however, few studies have focused on the specific sexual effects associated with use. Examining subjective sexual effects (e.g. increased libido) associated with use can inform prevention efforts. Data were analysed from 679 nightclub and dance festival attendees in New York City (ages 18–25) to examine and compare self-reported sexual effects associated with use of alcohol, marijuana, and ecstasy. Results suggest that compared to marijuana, alcohol and ecstasy were more strongly associated with heightened perceived sexual effects (i.e. perceived sexual attractiveness of self and others, sexual desire, length of intercourse, and sexual outgoingness). Increased body and sex organ sensitivity and increased sexual intensity were most commonly associated with ecstasy use. Sexual dysfunction was most common while using alcohol or ecstasy, especially among males, and females were more likely to report sexual dysfunction after using marijuana. Post-sex regret was most common with alcohol use. Alcohol, marijuana, and ecstasy each have different sexual effects; therefore, each is associated with different risks and benefits for users. Findings can inform prevention and harm reduction as young adults are prone to use these substances.

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