

Patterns, Trends, and Meanings of Drug Use by Dance-Drug Users in Edinburgh, Scotland

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Published

2004

Publisher

Drugs: Education, Prevention & Policy

Type

Journal article

Volume

11

Issue

3

Page(s)

243-262

Abstract

A survey of drug use in the past year was completed by 124 clubbers (50% male, 50% female, age range 14-44, mean 24 years). Participants were self selecting and recruited in clubs and pre-club bars. Prevalence rates for alcohol, cannabis, and ecstasy were over 80%; 63% reported cocaine and 53% amphetamine use, 15%-43% used ketamine, psilocybin, LSD and nitrites. A pattern of polydrug and co-drug use was identified. Most participants (70%) bought their drugs through friendship/family networks. Main reasons given for drug use were relaxing, socializing and dancing. Risk behaviours identified were drug driving (19%), unprotected sex (39%); and 'taking too many drugs' (44%). At least 40% reported anxiety, nausea and paranoia. Three focus groups aided the interpretation of data, for example describing the strategic use of drugs and alcohol throughout a night and explaining how negative experiences may change, but not necessarily stop, drug use. The study provides further evidence that there is a characteristic pattern of dance-drug use, while identifying an increase in cocaine and alcohol use. Older participants' greater experience with cocaine and fewer negative drug-related experiences are discussed in relation to health promotion.

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