

Nightlife and Drug Use in Tbilisi, Georgia: Results of an Exploratory Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Tbilisi is fast becoming a regional hub for electronic dance music. This study describes the use of illicit psychoactive drugs by frequent nightclub visitors in a club setting. We conducted 16 qualitative in-depth interviews with young nightclubbers with a history of drug use in Tbilisi. The majority of respondents had experience with two or more drugs consumed in a club setting, with the most prevalent substances being MDMA/ecstasy, amphetamines, and synthetic cannabinoids. Most respondents had limited information regarding the drugs they consumed. Often this information was provided by dealers or friends and was limited to the name of the drug (but not the substance) and its expected effects. Receiving often unknown substances from unknown people was prevalent. The majority of respondents reported combining psychoactive substances with alcohol, or mixing the use of other substances. Participants by their own account indicated a lack of knowledge about the adverse effects of drugs, as well as an ignorance of overdose signs and response strategies. Study findings may guide future efforts to investigate the prevalence and context of

club drug use in the country, to assess health risks associated with it, and to propose strategies to mitigate those risks.

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