

Crime Prevention News

To Enhance the Safety of Faculty, Staff and Students

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Club Drugs

*Ecstasy, Herbal Ecstasy, Rohypnol, GHB, and Ketamine are among the drugs used by teens and young adults who are part of a nightclub, bar,

that 20 percent of young, gay men reported using Ecstasy. GHB is the drug of choice among white, gay males in New Orleans' French Quarter and is popular among high school and college students. Ecstasy

MDMA, called "Adam," "Ecstasy," or "XTC," on the street, is a synthetic, psychoactive drug with hallucinogenic and amphetamine-like properties.

Ketamine

rave, or trance scene. Raves and trance events are generally night-long dances, often held in warehouses. Many who attend raves and trances do not use drugs, but those who do may be attracted to the generally low cost, seemingly increased stamina, and intoxicating highs that are said to deepen the rave or trance experience. Recent hard science, however, is showing serious damage to several parts of the brain from use of these drugs.

"Club drug use appears to be increasing in many cities around the country"

Many problems MDMA users encounter are similar to those found with the use of amphetamines and cocaine. Psychological difficulties can include confusion, depression, sleep problems, severe anxiety, and paranoia. Physical problems can include muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, nausea, blurred vision, faintness, and chills or sweating. Use of the drug has also been

associated with increases in heart rate and blood pressure, a special risk for people with circulatory or heart disease. Recent research also links Ecstasy use to long-term damage to those parts of the brain critical to thought, memory, and pleasure.

Many users tend to experiment with a variety of club drugs in combination. Also, combinations of any of these drugs with alcohol can lead to unexpected adverse reactions and death.

Club drugs are an increasing challenge for treatment programs. Many teens and young adults enter treatment with a number of these drugs and alcohol, rather than a single drug, as their primary problem.

Club drug use appears to be increasing in many cities around the country,* with Atlanta, Seattle, Chicago, Detroit, Miami, and New York reporting widespread use at rave and club scenes. A recently completed survey in the Seattle area found



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Club Drugs (cont.)

Rohypnol, GHB, and Ketamine

*Rohypnol, GHB, and Ketamine are predominantly central nervous system depressants. Because they are often colorless, tasteless, and odorless, they can be easily added to beverages and ingested unknowingly. These drugs have emerged as the so called "date rape" drugs.

Because of concern about these abused sedative-hypnotics, Congress passed the "Drug-Induced Rape Prevention and Punishment Act of 1996" in October 1996. This legislation increased Federal penalties for use of any controlled substance to aid in sexual assault.

Rohypnol

Rohypnol, a trade name for flunitrazepam, has been of particular concern for the last few years because of its abuse in date rape. When mixed with alcohol, Rohypnol can incapacitate a victim and prevent them from resisting sexual assault. Also, Rohypnol may be lethal when mixed with alcohol and/or other depressants.

In addition to sedative-hypnotic effects including muscle relaxation and amnesia, Rohypnol it can produce physical and psychological dependence. In Miami - one of the earliest sites of Rohypnol abuse - poison control centers report an increase in withdrawal seizures among people addicted to Rohypnol.

Rohypnol is not approved for use in the United States and its importation is banned. Illicit use of Rohypnol began in Europe in the 1970s and started appearing in the United States in the early 1990s, where it became known as "roofies," "roofies," "roach," and "rope."

Another very similar drug is now being sold as "roofies" in Miami, Minnesota, and Texas. This is clonazepam, marketed in the U.S. as Klonopin and in Mexico as Rivotril. It is sometimes abused to enhance the effects of heroin and other opi-

ates. Based on emergency room admission information, Boston, San Francisco, Phoenix, and Seattle appear to have the highest use rates of clonazepam.

GHB

Since about 1990, GHB (gamma hydroxy-butyrate) has been abused in the U.S. for euphoric, sedative, and anabolic (body building) effects. It is a central nervous system depressant that was widely available over-the-counter in health food stores during the 1980s, purchased largely by body builders to aid fat reduction and muscle building. As with Rohypnol and clonazepam, GHB has been associated with sexual assault in cities throughout the country.

GHB has not been sold over-the-counter in the U.S. since 1992. However products containing gamma butyrolactone (GBL), a chemical that is converted by the body into GHB, are used in a number of dietary supplements in health food stores and gyms.

*"Colorless, tasteless
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Reports from Detroit indicate liquid GHB is being used in nightclubs for effects similar to those of Rohypnol. It is also common in the club scene in Phoenix, Honolulu, and Texas, where it is known as "liquid ecstasy," "somatomax," "scoop," "Georgia Home Boy," or "grievous bodily harm." In Miami, poison control center calls have reflected problems associated with increased GHB use, including loss of consciousness. In New York City, there have been reports of GHB use among those in the fashion industry. GHB is one of the most popular manufactured drugs in Atlanta. It is available in some gyms and reputed to be widely accessible at some gay male party venues. ■



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*A Poison Control Center in Denver reports that in 1998, 33 calls involved GHB, and almost half of these cases were considered life threatening. GHB accounts for an increasing number of sexual assault cases in Los Angeles and overdose deaths involving drug combinations.

Coma and seizures can occur following abuse of GHB and, when combined with methamphetamine, there appears to be an increased risk of seizure. Combining use with other drugs such as alcohol can result in nausea and difficulty breathing. GHB may also produce withdrawal effects, including insomnia, anxiety, tremors, and sweating.

Ketamine

Ketamine is another central nervous system depressant abused as a “date rape” drug. Ketamine, or “Special K,” is a rapid-acting general anaesthetic. It has sedative-hypnotic, analgesic, and hallucinogenic properties. It is marketed in the U.S. and a number of foreign countries for use as a general anesthetic in both human and veterinary medical practice.

It is similar to phencyclidine (PCP), although ketamine has a more rapid onset and is less potent. Depending on the dose, ketamine induces everything from feelings of pleasant weightlessness to full-fledged out-of-body or near-death experiences. Ketamine is reportedly used as an alternative to cocaine and is generally snorted.

Ketamine abuse has been reported in many cities around the country. It has been reportedly stolen from veterinary supply sources in Minnesota, Louisiana, and Michigan. In Miami, Ketamine has been diverted from shipments intended for other countries. Ketamine is widely available in New York City where it sells for about \$20 a dosage unit. A small but stable market for ketamine has been established in suburban areas outside Baltimore. Three ketamine deaths were reported in New Orleans in 1998, and the Detroit Poison Control Center reported six ketamine contacts in early 1999.

Sreet Terms for “Club Drugs”

GHB	MDMA	Rohypnol	Ketamine
Soap	XTC	R-2	Jet
Scoop	Go	Mexican Valium	Super Acid
Max	Ecstasy	Rophies	Special “K”
Liquid Ecstasy	Disco Biscuit	Rope	Honey Oil
Grievous Bodily Harm	Cristal	Roofies	Green
Goop	X	Roaches	K
Georgia Home Boy	Adam	Forget Me Drug	Cat Valium
Easy Lay	Hug Drug	Circles	Super C

* The information in this article is taken primarily from the June 1999 Advance Report, *Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse*, a summary of the proceedings of the June 1999 meeting of NIDA’s Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG). CEWG is a NIDA-sponsored network of researchers from 21 major U.S. metropolitan areas and selected foreign countries who meet semiannually to discuss the current epidemiology of drug abuse.

*Source: OHS Health and Safety Services Incorporated web site.