

Abstract

Background: Ecstasy is one of the most commonly used substances in the nightlife environment. It is available exclusively on the illegal market, which entails risks such as unknown composition and variable amounts of the active substance. Drug checking programs help reduce these risks. However, standard testing services are not available in the Czech Republic, and drug users are therefore dependent on testing using colorimetric tests.

Aims: The main objective of the thesis was to find out the attitudes and experiences of participants at dance events who have experience with the use of ecstasy, with the composition of ecstasy and testing of its composition.

Methods: The research was carried out using a questionnaire survey carried out directly in dance clubs with electronic dance music in Prague in March 2023. A total of 149 participants of dance events obtained by random non-probability sampling were surveyed.

Results: The risk of high amounts of MDMA in ecstasy was not often a cause for concern, while the presence of more dangerous substances for most was. Colorimetric reagent tests were used by 21% of respondents, and the most common method of obtaining them was through friends. A free ecstasy checking service, if available, would be used by 82% of respondents and 76% said that if testing revealed a dangerous substance, they would not use it. Up to 20% reported health problems attributed to the composition of ecstasy, and almost half know someone who has had health problems after taking ecstasy.

Conclusion: Ecstasy users are interested in services providing ecstasy drug checking, and potential information about dangerous content would influence their user behavior towards harm reduction. The availability of colorimetric tests at dance events, or the availability of more sophisticated testing services provided alongside other harm reduction interventions, can significantly reduce the health risks arising from the use of ecstasy and other substances in the recreational setting.

Key words: MDMA, ecstasy, drug checking, nightlife, recreational setting