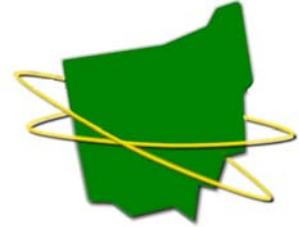




OSAM-O-GRAM

DATE: June 2003

DATELINE: Ohio



Wright State University
The University of Akron

MDMA/Ecstasy Abuse May Be Leveling off in Various Areas of the State

Since January 2000, the OSAM Network has been reporting continuing increases in the abuse of 3, 4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA/Ecstasy), primarily among white high school and college-age youth. According to statewide data collected by the Pride Survey in 2002, about 8.9% of 12th graders reported having abused Ecstasy within the past year. However, in June 2003 the OSAM Network reported potential decreases in Ecstasy abuse in Akron-Canton, Columbus, Dayton, Youngstown, and the rural southeast.

According to interviews with active users and treatment providers, Ecstasy continues to be relatively easy to obtain, but its popularity in the rave and dance club scenes may be decreasing. For example, a 20-year-old white woman from the Columbus area, who has used Ecstasy and various other club drugs, commented:

Participant 1: *I haven't like tried to find any [Ecstasy] in a really long time, and I haven't seen any of my friends really doing it as much anymore....*

Interviewer: *Huh, how do you explain that?*

Participant 1: *I don't know, it was just something that we did more last year, and I've just chosen not to really do it as much this year so....*

Despite the fact that the Miami Valley Regional Crime Laboratory in Dayton, Ohio, reports that most Ecstasy tablets tested in that lab test positive as MDMA, active club drug users believed that the quality of the drug has decreased significantly. Some participants expressed the opinion that many Ecstasy tablets may contain cocaine or heroin. For some individuals these perceived decreases in quality of the drug were among the reasons why they reported decreasing or even stopping Ecstasy use. For example, a 20-year-old white man from the Dayton area, who had used Ecstasy on multiple occasions, explained:

That's why I don't even do them [Ecstasy] anymore 'cause you just don't know what you're getting these days. I'm not gonna spend my money on something that I don't know what's in it....

Interviews with active users suggest that the reported stabilization or decline in Ecstasy abuse is "compensated" by increases in abuse of powdered cocaine and methamphetamine in the rave and dance club scenes.

Further monitoring will attempt to validate this preliminary finding as well as help explain it. It may be that the abuse of Ecstasy is cyclical and/or that prevention messages indicating the potential dangers of Ecstasy abuse are having some impact. While reports of declines in Ecstasy abuse are welcome news, reports of increases in the abuse of powdered cocaine and methamphetamine among the same population are of significant concern.

OSAM-O-GRAMS report key findings of the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring (OSAM) Network. Informants located throughout the state use qualitative and quantitative data to provide semiannual monitoring of substance abuse trends. The OSAM Network is funded by the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services by contract to Wright State University and by subcontract to the University of Akron. This OSAM-O-GRAM is based on the June 2003 OSAM Network meeting.

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