“Gettin’ on the dingers”

Exploring drug use, drug-related problems and risky behaviours among young, regular ecstasy users

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NDARC
Gettin’ on the dingers

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Outline

Background
- What did we look at and why?
- How did we do it?

Results
- Demographics
- Drug Use Patterns
- Drug Related Problems
- Risky Behaviours

Conclusions
- Summary
- Implications
What did we look at and why?

AIMS

1. To characterise drug use among young REU in Australia.

2. To investigate the prevalence of drug related problems (DRPs) among young REU.

3. To examine risky behaviours among young REU including:
   - Sexual practices
   - Driving
   - Injecting, and
   - Bingeing
What did we look at and why?

Rationale

1. Provide an up-to-date snapshot of drugs used and the frequency of use compared with older REU.

2. There is evidence that REU experience problems in their daily functioning related to their use of ecstasy and other drugs, including:

   • mental health problems (e.g. Hansell & White, 1991; Daumann et al., 2007; Scott et al., 2010)
   • modestly reduced cognitive abilities (Hoshi et al., 2007; Roiser et al., 2007; Dumont et al., 2008)
What did we look at and why?

Rationale

Try to investigate how these harms translate into problems in daily functioning across four areas:

- Exposure to risk
- Upholding responsibilities
- Personal relationships
- Legal issues

→ Which drugs are involved?

3. Evidence also suggests that young REU are at higher risk of engaging in risky behaviours, such as risky sexual practices (Elifson et al. 2010, McElrath et al. 2005).
How did we investigate these relationships?

The Ecstasy and Related Drugs Reporting System (EDRS) is a drug market monitoring project concerned with:

- Ecstasy
- Methamphetamine
- Cocaine
- Ketamine
- GHB
- Cannabis
- LSD/Mushrooms
- Inhalants and more...
Background

- What did we look at and why?
- How did we do it?

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- N=1362 REU
- Face to Face interviews
  - e.g. health professionals, law enforcement personnel
- ACC, AIHW, ABS, ADIS

Participant Interviews
Key Expert Interviews
Indicator Data
### Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Young</th>
<th>Older</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=971</td>
<td>n=391</td>
<td>N=1362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males (%)***</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (median yrs)***</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Aust. (%)**</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;TSI (%)**</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yrs edu (median)***</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual (%)***</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (%)**</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrested this year (%)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Drug Tx(%)***</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Results

#### Drug Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Young</th>
<th>Older</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>n</strong></td>
<td>971</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>1362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age first used E</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(range)</td>
<td>(12-23)</td>
<td>(11-50)</td>
<td>(11-50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use ERDs ≥weekly</strong>*</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Drug of choice**

- **Young**
  - Ecstasy
  - Cannabis
  - Alcohol
  - Cocaine
  - LSD

- **Older**
  - Ecstasy
  - Methamphetamine
  - Cannabis
  - Cocaine
  - Alcohol

National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre
# Results

**Drug Related Problems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N=1362</th>
<th>Young</th>
<th>Older</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 or more DRP recently***</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug use caused problems (%)</th>
<th>Young</th>
<th>Older</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility***</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk***</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

Demographics
Drug Use Patterns
Self Report Mental Health Problems
K10
Drug Related Problems

Drug Related Problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alcohol</th>
<th></th>
<th>Cannabis</th>
<th></th>
<th>Ecstasy</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young</td>
<td>Older</td>
<td>Young</td>
<td>Older</td>
<td>Young</td>
<td>Older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=1362</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

→ Older REU also report that **crystal methamphetamine** contributes:
  Responsibility – 10%
  Legal – 21%
Results

Sexual Behaviour - No. Casual sex partners recently

Young REU have 1.4 the odds (OR=1.4, 95% CI: 0.57 - 0.92) of engaging in risky sexual practices (i.e. not using condoms) than older REU.

→ Young REU seem to have more casual sexual partners than older REU.
### Results

#### Driving

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Young</th>
<th>Older</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=1362</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driven recently</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driven under influence of alcohol (among recent drivers)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driven over limit of alcohol recently (among recent drivers after alcohol)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driven soon after drugs recently (among recent drivers)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Results

### Driving - Driven soon after taking...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Young</th>
<th>Older</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cannabis**</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecstasy</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed*</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSD</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine**</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice***</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base***</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=622
Injecting

• Significantly more ‘older’ REU have experience injecting a drug at some stage in their life (Young 7% vs Older 40% ($\chi^2 = 221.1, p<0.000$)).

• Older REU had 1.9 the odds of having injected a drug in the last six months than young REU.

  $\Rightarrow$ the frequency of injecting drug use is similar among young (20 times) and older (13 times) REU who have recently injected a drug.

• Most common locations of injection:
  • Older REU: own home (68%); and friend’s home (20%).
  • Young REU: own home (37%), friend’s home (31%), street/park/bench (17%).
Bingeing (Recently used stimulants for more than 48 hours without sleep)

• Bingeing is reported significantly more commonly among young (43%) rather than older (33%) REU ($\chi^2 = 14.0, p < 0.000$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Young</th>
<th>Older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecstasy</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal*</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSD</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannabis</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol (&gt;5std)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

Demographics

- Young REU are LESS likely to be male and MORE likely to be born in Australia, to have completed year 12 and to identify as heterosexual.

- Older REU are more likely to identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, to be unemployed and to be in current drug treatment.

Drug Use

- Young REU were first exposed to ecstasy at a younger age however they report less frequent use of ERDs overall.

- Older REU express a greater preference for methamphetamines.

- Older REU tend to use drugs more frequently than younger REU.
Summary

Drug Related Problems

Young REU report significantly more DRPs than older REU

Two thirds of young REU report at least 1 recent DRP. Mainly:
  Problems maintaining responsibilities
  Exposure to risk

Alcohol, cannabis and ecstasy commonly associated

Risky behaviours

Young REU are more likely to engage in risky sexual practices.
Young REU are more likely to drive soon after smoking cannabis and older REU do so more often after cocaine and methamphetamines.
Older REU are more likely to have ever or recently injected a drug.
Young REU are more likely to binge on ecstasy and related drugs.
Implications

• For **clinicians**:
  o Contributes to understanding of every day issues specific to young people e.g. Location of drug use;
  o data to back up your experience and support fine-tuning of policy and practice.

• For **researchers**:
  o Future work - especially in areas of ‘subclinical’ complaints and exploring the heterogeneity of ‘youth’.
  o Further investigation of risky behaviours - what, when, where and why (some work on this in 2011 EDRS).

• For **educators and youth workers**:
  o Data supporting a balanced and holistic approach to drug education.
Acknowledgements

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- REU who participated
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Acknowledgements

References


References


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