Drugs – Ecstasy

Sommer Antipuna, Austin Sharpless, Hemadri Joshi
Overview

- Ecstasy, also known as methylene dioxy methamphetamine (MDMA) is a combination of a stimulant and an hallucinogen.
- It is used to enhance an individual's sense of well-being or intimacy and to reduce anxiety.
- Many young adults use ecstasy to boost their energy levels.
- Others seek the sense of euphoria.
- It is highly addictive and its overdose could lead to death.
Street Names

- Molly
- Dancing Shoes
- Disco Biscuits
- Happy Pill
- Skittles
- Scooby Snacks
- Vitamin E
- Adam
- Beans
- Doves
Appearance

- Ecstasy is an illegally manufactured drug that usually comes in tablet or capsule form. The appearance varies ranging from brown, white or pink tablets to yellow, clear, red and black, or red and yellow capsules.
- Some pills have pictures, designs, or logos on them.
Methods of Use

- It is available in tablet and capsule form so it is usually ingested.
- It is also available as a powder and is sometimes snorted and occasionally smoked.
- RARELY injected.
How does the drug work?

- MDMA increases levels of neurotransmitters norepinephrine and dopamine in the CNS - at the same time, MDMA destroys serotonin-producing neurons which play a direct role in regulating aggression, mood, sexual activity, sleep and sensitivity to pain.
- Rapidly absorbed into the body.
- Following oral administration, affects onset in 20–30 mins.
- MDMA has a half-life of seven hours:
  - During this time, ecstasy is metabolized to a metabolite called MDA which is found in blood and plasma, as are its derivatives HMA and HHA - these polar metabolites are conjugated prior to urine excretion.
  - Peak concentrations observed at 1.5–2 hrs. and at 4 hours after ingestion, levels of MDA peak.
- Desired effects may last only an hour or more, depending on dose:
  - Other general effects last for approximately 2–3 hrs.
Advantages/Disadvantages

Advantages

● Called “love pill” because it heightens perceptions of color and sound and amplifies sensations when one touches or caresses another (particularly during sex), causes excitation, suppresses fatigue/hunger/pain, enhanced self-confidence, feel understood and accepted by one another.

Disadvantages

● Could be laced with any drug, often contains hallucinogens which can throw a person into a scary or sad experience from the past, emotionally damaging and often causes depression, confusion, severe anxiety, paranoia, and psychotic behavior.
Cost

- Ranges from $20-$35 depending on what it’s cut with and who you’re buying it from
Short-term and Long-term Effects

Short Term Effects of Ecstasy

Impaired judgement, false sense of affection, confusion, depression, sleep problems, severe anxiety, paranoia, drug cravings, muscle tension, faintness and chills or swelling, involuntary teeth clenching, blurred vision, nausea

Long Term Effects of Ecstasy

Long-lasting brain damage affecting thought and memory; damage to portions of the brain that regulate critical functions such as learning, sleep and emotion; degenerated nerve branches and nerve endings; depression/anxiety/memory loss; kidney failure; hemorrhaging; psychosis; CVD; psychosis; convulsions; death
Ecstasy is not physically addictive but is considered to be psychologically addictive.
User can be addicted to the high and the intense feeling of euphoria.
Can become addicted to the powerful feeling of love and intimacy.
The users become addicted to the “trips”.
Ecstasy consumption has increased 70% worldwide, and its use is currently outweighed heroin and cocaine.
Groups of People Most Likely to Use

- Ecstasy is mainly abused by teens and young adults.
- Appealing to people at a party or a rave.
- It is appealing to teens and young adults because it is easy to obtain and is believed to decrease anxiety and inhibition in social and sexual situations.
Interesting Facts/Statistics

- Ecstasy is sometimes mixed with substances such as rat poison.
- Ecstasy can cause kidney, liver and brain damage, including long-lasting lesions (injuries) on brain tissue.
- Even a small amount of Ecstasy can be toxic enough to poison the nervous system and cause irreparable damage.
The most effective treatments for drug abuse and addiction are cognitive behavioral interventions that are designed to help modify the patient's thinking, expectancies, and behaviors, and to increase skills in coping with life's stressors.

Drug recovery support groups can be effective as well.