

PARTY DRUG USE WITHIN GAY COMMUNITY NETWORKS IN AN ONLINE COHORT OF GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN

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Introduction and Aims: Gay and bisexual men (GBM) use party drugs, such as methamphetamine, cocaine, GHB, and ketamine, at higher rates than in other populations. Participation in gay community networks where drug use is common may be a factor in individual GBM's drug use.

Design and Methods: Participants were 2,251 men from the study of Following Lives Undergoing Change (FLUX) study. They were recruited through targeted online advertising. Once consented, they are followed up six-monthly for up to 3 years. Current drug use was defined by reporting use in the last 6 months.

Results: The mean age of participants was 33.0 years (SD 12.6), and 88.4% were gay-identified. Overall, 56.5% of men reported ever using any party drugs, including 28.0% who were current users. When asked about their gay friends, the mean number of gay friends reported was 21. One third (32.5%) indicated that the majority of their gay friends used drugs. Most men participated in gay community networks, including the club scene (54.5%), and the sex party scene (27.9%). In multivariate analysis, current use of party drugs was associated with being gay (OR=1.53; 95%CI=1.02-2.30), having more gay friends who use drugs (OR=2.66; 95%CI=2.39-2.96), and participating in the gay clubs (OR=1.78; 95%CI=1.48-2.13) and sex party (OR=1.23; 95%CI=1.01-1.49) scenes. Age was not associated with party drug use.

Discussion and Conclusion: GBM who participate in gay community party subcultures are very likely to use party drugs.

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