

# Ibiza uncovered: Changes in substance use and sexual behaviour amongst young people visiting an international night-life resort.

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## **Abstract**

Background: Each year more young people travel to international resorts where levels of substance use, sex and associated health risks are unknown. This study measures changes in levels of substance use and sexual behaviour of young people from the UK when on holiday in a youth oriented international resort, Ibiza. Methods: Data were collected through a cross-sectional survey collecting matched information on individuals' behaviour in the UK and abroad. Questionnaires were administered to 846 individuals aged between 15 and 35 at Ibiza Airport prior to their returning to the UK. Results: Young visitors to Ibiza significantly alter patterns of drug, alcohol and tobacco use. For ecstasy, in the UK 2.9% of users (9:313) used 5 or more days a week, while in Ibiza this rises to 42.6% (127:298). Fewer individuals use amphetamine, ketamine, cannabis, LSD, cocaine and GHB (+ $\alpha$ -hydroxybutyrate) in Ibiza although those continuing to use in Ibiza consume at substantially higher rates than when in the UK ( $P < 0.001$ ). Using multiple drugs over a 1 or 2 week stay was common (31.9%). Most individuals (53.8%) had sex while in Ibiza; 26.2% had sex without a condom and 23.2% had more than one sexual partner. Overall, 7.3% of individuals went to hospital or to see a doctor while in Ibiza with male ( $P < 0.001$ ),

older ( $P < 0.05$ ) and staying for shorter times ( $P < 0.005$ ) being the key risk factors. Conclusions: While the potential for substance related ill health is dramatically elevated in Ibiza, harm minimization measures in such resorts remain scarce. Equally, although holiday companies attract a sexually active cohort, safe sex messages are either absent or ineffective. Coordinated information campaigns to protect the health of young people are urgently needed and will require European cooperation across both public and private organizations. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2009 APA, all rights reserved) (from the journal abstract)

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