

Factors associated with teenage ecstasy use

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Abstract

Aims: The aim of this article was to investigate the factors associated with ecstasy use in school-aged teenagers. **Methods:** This was a longitudinal study of adolescent drug use, which was undertaken in three towns in Northern Ireland. A questionnaire was administered annually to participants. In this article ecstasy use patterns amongst a cohort of young people aged 14-16 years participating in the Belfast Youth Development Study (BYDS) was explored. **Findings:** The percentage of those who had used ecstasy at least once increased from 7% when aged 14 years to 9% at 15 and 13% at 16 years. Female gender, delinquency, problem behaviours at school and the number of evenings spent out with friends each week were found to be significant variables predicting ever use of ecstasy in all 3 years by logistic regression. **Conclusions:** The findings suggest that ecstasy use patterns may be changing from their historical perception as a party drug, as the demographic profile ecstasy of users in this study reflected the traditional profile of illicit drug use during adolescence, which raises challenges for addressing the problems associated with this drug.

Web link

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