



NATIONAL DRUG AND
ALCOHOL RESEARCH CENTRE



ONE PILL CAN BE ONE TOO MANY

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For immediate release

Ecstasy users who believed that taking only one pill protected them from the negative effects of the drug were mistaken, according to new research released today at the first national conference examining nightlife health issues.

Human studies undertaken at Australian 'raves' indicate that the blood concentrations of ecstasy and methamphetamine are higher in some individuals than previously thought. In one case identified in the study a female who had taken one pill had blood concentrations of the drug as high as others who had taken four pills.

Dr Rod Irvine, Senior Lecturer in Clinical and Experimental Pharmacology from the University of Adelaide presented findings of a study which involved interviewing patrons at venues and measuring the concentrations of drugs in the blood of 'clubbers' as well as resulting body temperatures.

These findings were presented today at Club Health 2005: Sydney, the 1st Australian National Conference on Nightlife, Substance Use and Related Health Issues from the 29-30 September.

"Anecdotally we know that some ecstasy users believe that using less of the drug protects them from some of the greater risks," said Dr Irvine. "This study suggests that that even persons taking one or two pills may be exposing themselves to harmful effects. The blood concentrations achieved by some of the clubbers were similar to those seen in monkeys who exhibit long term brain deficits after 'ecstasy' exposure."

Some of the problems that ecstasy users may experience include drowsiness, overreaction of the reflexes, feeling drunk and dizzy, muscle contraction and relaxation in the jaw, sweating, intoxication, muscle twitching, rigidity, high body temperature, mental status changes were frequent (including confusion and

hypomania - a "happy drunk" state), shivering, diarrhoea, loss of consciousness and in extreme cases, death.

Paul Dillon, one of the organisers of the Club Health 2005: Sydney, said that too many ecstasy users continue to believe that their drug of choice is relatively benign and that this can lead to great problems in some cases.

“This study suggests the continuing need for greater information to be made available to ecstasy users about the risks involved with the use of this drug,” said Mr Dillon. “Particular attention needs to be given to informing users of the potentially fatal outcome that could occur when even using small amounts.”

Club Health 2005: Sydney will be held from 29-30 September 2005 at the Rydges Jamison Sydney.

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