

Microdosing amongst people who regularly use ecstasy and other illicit stimulants in Australia, 2021-2022

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Introduction and Aims: Microdosing refers to the practice of routinely ingesting a small quantity of psychedelics, to obtain the positive effects of the drug, and minimise adverse effects. This study aimed to explore the extent of microdosing among people who regularly use ecstasy and/or related stimulants.

Design and Methods: Data from the Ecstasy and Related Drug Reporting System cross-sectional surveys with people who regularly use psychoactive stimulants recruited from capital cities were used. In 2021, participants in Greater Brisbane and Hobart were asked about patterns and motivations for recent microdosing (n=175). In 2022, participants in all jurisdictions were asked. Logistic regression will be used to explore links with mental and general health.

Results: In 2021, 21% of participants in Queensland and Tasmania reported recent microdosing, most commonly with mushrooms (61%) and LSD (39%). Of those who had microdosed, few (n<5) reported microdosing daily: 37% weekly or more and 46% less than monthly. Experiences were mostly consistent with expectations (e.g., enhanced mood), with most (56%) reporting no challenges from microdosing. Reported challenges included dissociation/rumination and stomach pain, headaches/sleep problems, although these were reported by small numbers (n≤5). Data collection for 2022 is underway and will be completed in June.

Discussions and Conclusions: Although few participants reported negative effects, reported patterns of use suggest that some participants are macro- rather than microdosing. Frequent use of larger doses is likely to be associated with adverse events; this warrants both further monitoring and dissemination of harm reduction messages in the case of adverse experiences.

Implications for Translational Research (optional): Regular and rapid data collection that allows monitoring of emerging practices around substance use must be coupled with rapid dissemination of findings through accessible and recognized sources to ensure timely translation into harm reduction practices.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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