

3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine use in Aotearoa: A quantitative survey exploration

Jai Whelan¹, Geoff Noller², Ryan Ward¹

¹*Department of Psychology, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand*, ²*Bioethics Centre, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand*

Presenter's email: jai.whelan@postgrad.otago.ac.nz

Introduction: 3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) is a drug of high prevalence in Aotearoa, yet little research has investigated MDMA use and users. Therefore, we aimed to examine patterns of consumption, motivations, harm, disordered drug use behaviour, consequences, and attitudes and perceptions associated with MDMA.

Method: Using an online survey platform, 1180 respondents (60.3% female, 15% Māori, aged 18-65, Median = 23.5) partially completed the survey, whilst 784 completed the survey. All included respondents had used MDMA in the last 5 years.

Results: The median reported use per session was 151-200mg, with 8.7% of users reporting more than 500mg per session. 88.9% reported use in the last year, with use most commonly at house parties. Monthly or more frequent use was reported by 32.5%, and ~50% reported 21 or more use occasions. Enhancement was the primary motivation for MDMA use, followed by social motivations. MDMA harm was reported by 14.4% of the sample, whilst harm from consumption of substances mistaken for MDMA was more common. Potential MDMA dependence was apparent in 6.9% of the sample, with mean drug and alcohol disorder scores of 8.8 and 11.2, respectively. Long-term consequences of MDMA use were mainly positive whilst MDMA-associated attitudes and perceptions were favourable.

Conclusions: The findings suggest most MDMA users perceive their use to be positive and beneficial. However, some users reported high consumption, harmful experiences or showed evidence of MDMA dependence. Monitoring of MDMA use should continue to ensure tailored harm reduction education and interventions can be implemented when necessary.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: JW is supported by a University of Otago PhD Scholarship.