

## **Motivational Characteristics and Initiation of Emerging Adults Participating in Recreational Drug Use**

Alicja Lojszczyk<sup>1</sup>, Rhonda Wilson<sup>1,2</sup>, Alison Hutton<sup>1,3,4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Newcastle, Australia*, <sup>2</sup> *School of Nursing, Massey University, New Zealand*, <sup>3</sup> *School of Nursing and Midwifery, Flinders University, Australia*, <sup>4</sup> *School of Nursing, John Hopkins, United States*

Presenter's email: [c3205806@uon.edu.au](mailto:c3205806@uon.edu.au)

**Background:** Recreational drug use has become a normative behaviour amongst emerging adults when attending social settings and events. Emerging adults are motivated to use drugs in a recreational capacity to improve and enhance personal experiences. Motivational factors that reinforce emerging adult recreational drug use correlate with the desire to break away from the mundane by seeking pleasure and using drugs for the opportunity to create novel experiences.

**Method:** Emerging adults (aged 18-30) were recruited using purposive and subsequent snowballing recruitment via social media platforms was utilised. Using a cross sectional survey 357 emerging adults who self-identify using recreational drugs were recruited. The survey was derived from the current validated tool NIDA-Modified ASSIST (2010) to evaluate participant patterns and initiation to recreational drugs.

**Key Findings:** The majority of participants identified as he/him (50.6%) and were Australian residents (67.8%). Initiation to most substances commonly resided between 14-23 years of age. Initiation driven by personal-curiosity for participants began to emerge from the age of 12 and increased from 15+. Cannabis was the most commonly used drug by participants (96.6%) and had the earliest age of initiation (mean 16.3). Use of all recreational drugs predominantly occurred socially in a private home environment rather than solitary use.

**Discussion and Conclusions:** The findings support the notion that cannabis is likely to precede the use of other licit and illicit drugs. Recreational use however does not result in the development of addiction. Participant's patterns of use predominantly had little impact on their activities on daily living or result in health, social or financial concerns.