

Concurrent Use and Transition to Methamphetamine among Persons at Risk of Overdose: Findings on Party-n-Play in BC

Background

Through qualitative interviews, the study revealed three patterns of methamphetamine (MA) use, including individuals who:

1. Primarily used MA to moderate opioid (heroin/fentanyl) use
2. Primarily use MA concurrently with alcohol and cannabis and have transitioned from crack cocaine to MA
3. Often use MA concurrently with GHB, ketamine, MDMA, and alcohol to enhance sexual activity

In the third pattern of those who often use MA concurrently with GHB, ketamine, MDMA, and alcohol to enhance sexual activity, men who have sex with men (MSM) engaged in 'party and play' (PnP) activity emerged as a theme; concurrent MA use before or during sexual and social activities.

Demographics of 6 Qualitative Interviewees (MSM/PnP)

- 5 identified as gay, 1 as bisexual; age range 19-50 years; half identified as Indigenous (First Nations and Métis)
- 5 preferred smoking or inhaling, 1 preferred snorting

'Party and Play' Culture and MSM

- Grindr & other online platforms were often used to meet-up; or PnP activities with romantic/sexual partners
- Concurrent MA use occurred with cannabis GHB, ketamine, MDMA, and 'poppers'
- Noted to reduce inhibitions, lessen mental health challenges/feelings of loneliness and social anxiety
- A "social lubricant," fosters a sense of belonging within the LGBTQ2S+ community, increases pleasure, and enhances sexual/social activities
- For many reasons, this group did not access harm reduction services to obtain harm reduction supplies (i.e., due to not wanting to, location, lack of appropriate resources, etc.)

Implications for Service Providers

Participants identified numerous challenges they faced in their experience with MA use and noted many services they felt were needed for individuals using MA.

Challenges

- Mental health concerns, including PTSD, depression, anxiety, and ADHD
- Poorer performance in the workplace
- Fear of stigma
- Poor sleep quality
- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms
- Tension in relationships

"How are we actually supporting folks to either make a different choice in using substances at the beginning of their substance use? Or, what are some other ways that we can help people gain the things that they think they need or get from drug use in other healthier ways, right? So, is it anxiety relief? Is it social lubricant? Is it feeling sexual and healthy and wanted? Is it the sense of belonging?"

Opportunities

- Online environment for peer-to-peer support
- Increased awareness of PnP and the impacts of substance use
- Health promotion initiatives and activities (i.e., combined harm reduction and sexual health services)
- Safe inhalation spaces
- Counselling, and expanded mental health supports

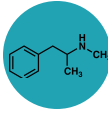


'Party-n-Play' in BC: Let's Talk

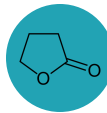
What is 'Party-n-Play' or 'PnP'?

- It is sometimes called 'chemsex', PnP is the use of substances with sex.
- It is used to facilitate/enhance sexual activity, foster a sense of belonging, and reduce anxiety.
- It is especially common among members of the 2SGBTQ community and those using online dating sites/hook-up apps (e.g., Grindr)
- Research shows it is associated with a greater risk of acquiring sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections, including HIV, during condomless sex.
- Stigma and discrimination often prevent people from reaching out for help if needed.
- Meeting the needs of people who PnP is a public health priority.

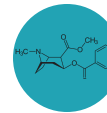
What Substances are Often Used During PnP?



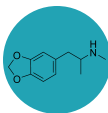
Crystal Meth (aka 'Tina'/'T')



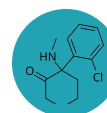
GHB or GBL (aka 'G')



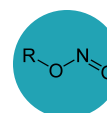
Cocaine



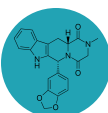
MDMA (aka ecstasy/molly/'M')



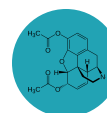
Ketamine (aka 'K')



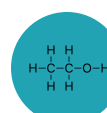
Poppers



Erectile Drugs (aka Cialis/Viagra)



Heroin or Fentanyl



Alcohol

Tips for Safer Sex and Drug Use



If possible, don't use alone, and party with people you know and trust



Set your limits and stay aware. Carry a Naloxone kit and know how to administer Naloxone



Get your drugs checked. Visit <https://getyourdrugstested.com/>



If you inject, use new needles every time and don't share your gear. Rotate your injection sites and let your veins heal



Know your status and ask your healthcare provider about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)



Pack some protection. Use condoms and/or plenty of lube when possible

Supports and Resources



Health Initiative for Men - wtpo@checkhimout.ca or 1-604-488-1001, ext. 224. Visit <https://whenthepartyisover.ca/>



AIDS Network Kootenay Outreach and Support Society (ANKORS) - information@ankors.bc.ca or 1-250-505-5506. Visit <https://ankors.bc.ca/>



Get Checked Online. For info on STI testing, visit <https://getcheckedonline.com/Pages/default.aspx>



To access Naloxone and harm reduction supply sites, visit Towards the Heart at <https://towardtheheart.com/site-finder>



Toronto Vibe provides safer drug use info for people partying in Toronto's 2SGBTQ party scenes, but it may be useful for everyone. Visit <http://torontovibe.com/>



Visit <https://checkhimout.ca/highlife/resources/> for more supports and resources

Crystal Meth and Sex: Some Questions to Ask Yourself

If you 'Party-n-Play', the Health Initiative for Men (HiM) suggests asking yourself these 4 questions to help reflect on your relationship with crystal and sex:

- 1 Are you happy with how you use crystal, and how often
- 2 When was the last time you had sober sex (sex without using crystal)?
- 3 Do you feel like your crystal use has negatively impacted your physical, sexual, or mental health?
- 4 Do you feel like your crystal use has negatively impacted your relationships or ability to manage your day-to-day life?

Sources:

- 1 Knowles, Z. (2019). Party and play in Canada: What is its impact on gay men's health? CATIE. <https://www.catie.ca/en/pif/spring-2019/party-and-play-canada-what-its-impact-gay-men-s-health>.
- 2 AIDS Committee of Toronto. (2017). Party Safer. Toronto Vibe. <http://torontovibe.com/>
- 3 Health Initiative for Men. (2021). How do you feel? When The Party Is Over. <https://whenthepartyisover.ca/project/how-do-you-feel/>