

Victimization, Substance Use, Sex Risk and Serious Mental Illness Among Young Adult Women in Miami's Club Scene

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Background

- The modern all-night dance club culture is found in nearly all major cities, but is especially popular in tourist destinations. Since the 1990s Miami has become an international destination for parties, sexual tourism and club drug use. Miami's South Beach has become a center for club culture, setting trends that are emulated and replicated in the U.S., Europe, and Latin America.
- Club drugs are common in these settings, with substances varying over time, but generally include MDMA (ecstasy), powder cocaine, ketamine, methamphetamine, gamma-hydroxybutyric acid (GHB), and LSD. The attraction to these substances is the increased stamina which enables participants to dance all night, in addition to the intoxicating, euphoric, disinhibiting and sometimes hallucinogenic effects that are said to enhance the nightclub experience (see Kurtz et al. 2012).
- The tendency to mix numerous substances puts these nightclub participants at high risk for health problems, HIV transmission risk, and mental distress, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.



Purpose and Methods

Educational Objectives: At the conclusion of this presentation participants should be able to identify the associations between victimization, substance use, sexual risk behaviors and mental health functioning among young women who regularly attend nightclubs.

Purpose: This study examines the contribution of lifetime victimization history to serious mental illness (SMI), and the strong associations between current SMI and both substance use and sexual risk behaviors among a sample of young women who use club and prescription drugs in the context of Miami's club scene.

Methods: Using respondent driven sampling we recruited 78 sexually active women ages 18 to 39 who use club drugs (e.g., cocaine, ecstasy, LSD) and misuse Rx drugs (e.g., opioids, benzodiazepines). Participants also reported regular and frequent attendance at well known dance clubs. The study is a 3-armed intervention trial designed to examine differences in behavior change by type of assessment modality (self- vs. interviewer-administered) and compared to a waitlist control. Data were collected in the two assessment arms using identical standardized instrumentation.

Instrumentation: Participants were interviewed using a modified version of the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (Dennis et al. 2002) structured interview, which includes measures of demographics/environment, victimization history, substance use and dependence, mental health functioning, and sexual risk behaviors.

Analysis

- All analyses were conducted with SPSS version 20.
- Variables measuring satisfaction with emotional support from family, and friends were dichotomized as 1=very or somewhat satisfied vs. 0=very or somewhat dissatisfied.
- The mental health measure consists of 24 items inquiring about past year anxiety, depression and somatic symptoms; clinical SMI is defined as 7 or more symptoms.
- Variables significant in bivariate regression models were entered into a multivariate model, excluding overlapping items (e.g., substance use measures).

Sample Characteristics

Baseline characteristics young women multidrug users in Miami (N=78)			
	N	%	
Demographics			
Race/ethnicity			
Caucasian or White	16	20.5%	
African American or Black	17	21.8%	
Hispanic	42	53.8%	
Other race/ethnicity	3	3.9%	
Age (mean; SD)	24.8	(5.2)	
High school education	68	87.2%	
History of Arrest	42	53.8%	
Sex Risk (Past 90 Days)			
Unprotected Sex	72	92.3%	
Multiple partners	46	59.0%	
Severe Mental Distress	43	55.1%	
	N	%	
Lifetime Victimization			
Physical Abuse	36	46.2%	
Sexual Abuse	27	34.6%	
Substance Use (Past 90 Days)			
DSM-IV Substance Dependent	51	65.4%	
Days High/Drunk (mean; SD)	48.3	(32.5)	
Number of Substances Used (mean; SD)	7.1	(1.6)	
Emotional Support Satisfaction			
From Family	59	75.6%	
From Friends	63	80.8%	

Results

	Bivariate Models			Multivariate Model		
	P	OR	95% CI	P	OR	95% CI
Demographics						
Age	0.865	0.992	0.910, 1.083			
Hispanic	0.598	0.786	0.320, 1.928			
Sex Risk (Past 90 Days)						
Unprotected Sex	0.279	2.645	0.455, 15.380			
Multiple Partners	0.003	4.364	1.666, 11.426			
Lifetime Victimization						
Physical Abuse	0.000	11.154	3.736, 33.299	0.075	4.065	0.867, 19.053
Sexual Abuse	0.001	6.286	2.051, 19.260	0.039	15.728	1.155, 214.124
Substance Use (Past 90 Days)						
DSM-IV Substance Dependent	0.000	29.091	7.368, 114.855	0.000	70.092	6.683, 735.165
Days Drunk/High	0.001	1.027	1.011, 1.043			
Number of Substances Used	0.016	1.479	1.077, 2.030			
Emotional Support Satisfaction						
From Family	0.022	0.241	0.071, 0.812	0.195	0.188	0.015, 2.346
From Friends	0.321	0.550	0.169, 1.793			



Conclusions

The high levels of interconnected victimization, mental health, substance use and sexual risk factors observed among this sample are underreported in the literature, as young women club scene participants appear to be more similar to other marginalized drug-involved populations than previously considered. Explanatory research designs are needed to more fully understand these interrelationships; nevertheless, these young women are in great need of outreach for mental health and substance abuse treatment services, as well as appropriate HIV and sexually transmitted disease prevention interventions.

References

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