LAW, POLICY, AND SUBSTANCE USE IN MIAMI'S DANCE CLUB CULTURE

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There are no conflicts to report.
BACKGROUND – THE CLUB SCENE

• Club drugs include:
  • Ecstasy
  • Cocaine
  • Methamphetamine
  • LSD
  • GHB

• Common in nightclubs and parties, especially in Miami.
Florida was at the center of the nation’s prescription painkiller epidemic.

Two new regulations in 2010 and 2011:
1) regulation of pain clinics
2) implementation of a prescription drug monitoring program
Marijuana is illegal in Florida

Medical Marijuana ballot initiative failed in November 2014

Synthetic substances, such as Spice, were banned from sale, distribution, and possession in 2012.
From a user’s perspective:

How do Florida’s new laws influence the (mis)use of prescription painkillers and synthetic cannabinoids?
THE SOUTH BEACH STUDY

• Randomized clinical trial to reduce substance use and HIV transmission risk among young adults.

• Eligibility – past 90 days:
  • 1) Heterosexual sex
  • 2) Club drug use ≥ 3 times
  • 3) Prescription drug misuse ≥ 1 time
  • 4) 18-39

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## DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Characteristics (N=498)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>64.3</td>
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<td>White</td>
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<td>12.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Age (mean; SD)</td>
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<td>(5.41)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>44.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>High school completion</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>84.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOCUS GROUPS

- Data are drawn from 3 focus groups (N=17)
  - 11 female
  - 10 Hispanic
  - 5 African American/Black
  - 2 White
RESULTS

• Participants have experienced the effects of Florida’s new legislation:

  • “180 is the magic number, and you can’t even cash those scripts. You’ve got to get 150 or 140.” – White male, 30

  • “It used to be 220. I was getting 220, then 196, then down to 180 was the max.” – White female, 36

  • “They could look you up in the system and see...Like, if you’re supposed to have a 30-day supply and you come back in 20 days, they won’t let you get it.” – African American female, 26
RESULTS

• Pill are still obtained through dealers, but it’s “who you know” that counts:

  • “I’ve got a hook-up at a pharmacy, and I can call her. Nobody tells you [what pills they have in stock] over the phone, but she would talk to me. She’s like, ‘I only have 15 mg right now, so you’d have to go change your script.’ So I went and change my script and got 15s.” – White male, 30

  • “My friends are techs, like pharmacy techs. I have like four of them, and they hook it up. You can get lean, or like, anything.” – Hispanic female, 23
RESULTS

• With prescription pills harder to obtain, fake pills are becoming more abundant:

  • “You’ve got to lick them or take a little nibble out of it. If it doesn’t taste sour, it’s fake.” – Hispanic male, 27

  • “This lady gave me a pill. It was different writing on the pill, and I’m looking at it, and it looks like a blue, and I’m like, ‘No, I’ve never see this before in my life,’ and I pull out my phone and I went on drugs.com.” – White male, 30

  • “I always have my pill identifier on me, because [dealers will say], “This is the new blue or whatever,” so I’m always always looking the numbers up and making sure. I know they have fake ones that look the same, but I’ve had people sell me stuff that ended up being something it wasn’t….like heart medication.” – White female, 36
A popular reason for using Spice was to be able to get high and still pass a drug test:

- “I was trying to stop marijuana, and I had a drug test, and I wasn’t working, and I was trying to get unemployment.” – Hispanic male, 26

- “I feel like it’s just for people who are, like, on probation...seriously fiending, and they’ll do anything to get high.” – White male, 30

- “They make weed illegal, so then people go on to other drugs because they get caught with weed....So they go on and they smoke synthetic marijuana.”
All discussions of Spice also included mentions of negative consequences of use:

- “You’re not supposed to smoke that like you smoke weed. I was tripping really bad for like 30 minutes. I never touched that [stuff] again. It was really bad.” – Hispanic male, 20

- “I took a bong hit once, and after that I thought I was gonna die. It makes your skin feel weird. It’s horrible. I hate it.” – African American female, 27
CONCLUSIONS

- Prescription painkillers are harder to find, but still available.

- Counterfeit pills are becoming more common, and can be potentially dangerous.

- Synthetic cannabinoids are used to circumvent drug testing.

- Spice and similar drugs are generally described to cause negative consequences.
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- These preliminary findings warrant more investigation.

- In-depth understandings of substance users experiences:
  - Illustrate the modification of behavior and environment
  - Inform future drug prevention efforts