

Expert outlines the hazards of "club drugs"

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Do you know what "booty-bumping" is? In her presentation on club drugs, Faith Erb-Elliott acquainted students and faculty with the seamier side of clubbing. She discussed rave drugs and their effects, street names, sources, and methods of concealment. She had a display table of rave accessories and containers used for hiding drugs. The drugs she focused on were LSD, GHB, DXM, Ecstasy, and Ketamine, which have achieved prominence lately for their increasing appearance in rave and large club venues.

The presentation was held in the Gallery Lounge on April 1, from 7 - 8:30 p.m. There was a good turnout; the lounge was packed. Ms. Erb-Elliott currently works with the Bureau of Narcotics Investigation and Drug Control, Drug Demand Reduction Unit. She has been with the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General for 28 years and has a degree in Criminology.

"Our society is very addictive, period," she said, "Everything has to be bigger, better, and faster." This corresponds to our instant gratification cultural expectations. We take pills every day. She pointed out the statistic that over 78 million prescriptions are filled annually in the United States. One major difference between club drugs and prescription drugs is that prescription medications are produced by experts in a controlled environment; with illegal drugs you really have no idea what you're putting into your body.

She also commented on the decreasing age of drug users. She partially attributed this to the fact that kids are becoming stressed-out earlier in life. Most club drug users abuse multiple drugs and are between

the ages of 18 and 24, but club drug use in high school is on the rise. The euphoria and distance from reality these drugs provide is very appealing to kids. She feels these drugs are also becoming more sophisticated; the market now involves guns. She discussed the effects and dangers of several drugs that are becoming more popular.

Most people have a general idea of what Ecstasy is. A German pharmaceutical company first manufactured it. A hallucinogenic stimulant, it was prescribed as a "marital aid" in the '70's for its supposed blocking of sexual inhibition. It became a Scheduled Drug in 1984, having no legitimate medical use. It can be cut with mescaline or heroin. The side effects are not pretty. A few are; nausea, vomiting, elevated blood pressure, dehydration, teeth grinding, anxiety, paranoia, coma, and death. Teeth grinding is the reason pacifiers are common rave accessories. Prices of Ecstasy are dropping which signifies a growing availability.

LSD has been around for a while. It was first produced in Switzerland in 1938 to be a circulatory and respiratory stimulant. It is distributed in liquid form or can be dropped onto paper, sugar cubes, or gel tabs. You can now buy LSD over the Internet according to the Pa. Office of the Attorney General information sheet. Some side effects include: disorientation, memory loss, psychosis, paranoia, neurological disorders (twitching), coma, and death.

GHB, gamma hydroxybutyric acid, has achieved fame as an up-and-coming date-rape drug, the new "roofie". In its natural state, it is a fatty acid that secretes small amounts of hormones in the body. Bodybuilders combined cleaning solvent and caustic soda to produce it in the '70's and '80's. It also acts as a tranquilizer, which relieved some side effects of steroids. Two of the chemicals in GHB are also found in floor-strippers and degreasers. It is used at raves to intensify other drugs or to sedate other people. It is distributed in either powder or liquid form. When mixed with alcohol it can cause respiratory depression and inhibit the gag-reflex, which could allow the user to drink to death. The physical effects

are: drowsiness, unconsciousness, loss of sexual inhibitions, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, tremors, and respiratory arrest. Ms. Erb-Elliott cautioned people to keep their drinks with them in public places, as GHB is hard to detect in most beverages. She then related several sudden death stories, saying, "I'm not trying to scare you. It's just what is."

Ketamine, or Special K, was synthesized as an anesthetic in the '60's and discontinued for human use in the 70's. It is used now for animals and small children for some surgeries. It is often obtained by hospital and veterinarian clinic burglaries. The form used for children is called Ketalar. According to the Pa. Office of Attorney General, it is also available on

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the Internet. It can cause paralysis from the neck down for up to the first 15 minutes of use. It can also cause hallucinations, confusion, out of body experiences, depression, respiratory arrest, brain hemorrhage, coma, and death.

What used to be called "Robe-in" has been perfected. DXM is a drug, which is found in Robitussin and other extra strength cough syrups. It is available as a pill, capsule, or powder. Its effects are: dissociative behavior, dizziness, nausea, itchy skin, rash, hallucinations, loss of motor control, heatstroke, dehydration, coma and death. There are four plateaus, which categorize the intensity of the dosage. They progress from slight intoxication through strobe effect vision, increasing levels of hallucinations, and memory loss, eventually arriving at dissociation of mind and body at the fourth plateau. This level is physically and psychologically dangerous. DXM is not classified as a controlled substance.

Erb-Elliott did not attempt to demonize the scene. She even admitted to enjoying some techno music. Her presentation was geared towards awareness. She educated the audience about some drugs they weren't familiar with and about their encroachment on younger people closer to home. They are not just out there in big cities; they're here. Her table of drug-toting props covered with inconspicuous things like M&M's, deodorant containers, bubble rings, gum wrappers, and the notorious film canister showed how insidious these drugs are and reminded the audience that these things pass us by every day without suspicion. It was very informative and paranoia inspiring.

The Partnership for Prevention Committee sponsored the event. It's a co-op of the University and the Pa. Liquor Control Board. Members of the Committee are Sam Monismith, Mary Lou Martz, Janet Whitoff, and George Young.

The answer to the question is: booty-bumping is anally ingesting drugs.



Faith Erb-Elliott discusses common containers for concealing club drugs with PSH Partnership for Prevention member Sam Monismith.