



OSAM-O-GRAM



DATE: January 2006

DATELINE: Dayton, Ohio

Wright State University & the University of Akron

New Increases in Ecstasy Abuse Reported in Several Areas of the State

In June 2005, new increases in MDMA/ecstasy abuse were reported by Regional Epidemiologists (REPIs) in the Athens, Akron, and Cleveland areas. In January 2006, REPIs in the Columbus and Toledo areas also indicated increases in ecstasy abuse. According to crime lab data obtained in January 2006, ecstasy availability was moderate in most areas of the state, except Cincinnati where it was low, and Columbus and suburban Toledo areas where ecstasy availability was described as high. In June 2005 and January 2006, some ecstasy users noted that ecstasy prices decreased from \$20-\$25 to \$10-\$15 per tablet, which suggested increasing availability of the drug. For example, a 23-year-old white man from Columbus commented: *"It [ecstasy] increased in availability.... More people are having it, and it's coming down in price."*

Historically, the first OSAM Network reports about increases in ecstasy abuse were obtained between 2000 and 2002. In 2003, however, Regional Epidemiologists in most areas of the state reported decreases in ecstasy availability and abuse. Some users believed that the popularity of ecstasy diminished because of the decreasing quality of ecstasy tablets and negative publicity about the drug. Many felt that ecstasy tablets may contain heroin, a belief which has not been supported by crime lab data. For example, a 21-year-old white woman from Dayton commented: *"Some ecstasy is cut with heroin, and if there's too much heroin in the ecstasy, you can OD from it. So I'd say ecstasy is one of the more dangerous drugs."*

New increases in ecstasy abuse reported at the January 2006 statewide meeting are associated with different patterns and settings of use. Between 2000 and 2003, ecstasy use was primarily found among young (16-25 years old), white users involved in the rave and dance club scenes. Current reports suggest that ecstasy is being used more frequently outside of "traditional venues." For example, a 24-year-old white man from Columbus said, *"I like to be out in public when I do it. I don't like to sit at home. I definitely go out. I don't go to raves. I go to the pool hall or to a bar or just go out and ride around, see all my friends...."* Regional Epidemiologists from Akron also noted more frequent reports about ecstasy use among young (16-25 years old) and middle-aged (35-45 years old) African Americans.

In summary, OSAM Network data from the June 2005 and January 2006 reports suggest new increases in the availability and use of ecstasy in several areas of the state. Although the popularity of raves has decreased substantially in Ohio, ecstasy is now used increasingly in new types of settings and continues to carry significant health risks to users. Prevention efforts should include peer-education strategies and reinforce negative views about ecstasy shared by some user groups.

OSAM-O-GRAMS report key findings of the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring (OSAM) Network. Informants located throughout the state use qualitative and quantitative data to provide semiannual monitoring of substance abuse trends. The OSAM Network is funded by the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services by contract to Wright State University and by subcontract to the University of Akron. This OSAM-O-GRAM is based on the January 2005 OSAM Network meeting.

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