



# OSAM-O-GRAM

DATE: January 2008

DATELINE: Ohio

Wright State University &amp; the University of Akron

## Increasing Ecstasy Availability and Reports of Diversifying Users across the State

In 2003, OSAM Network registered significant declines in Ecstasy (MDMA) availability and abuse across Ohio. In June 2005, new increases were noted in Athens, Akron, and Cleveland, and by January 2006, Ecstasy was reported as moderately available in most regions of the state with increases noted in Columbus and Toledo. In January 2008, OSAM Regional Epidemiologists reported a consistent trend of increasing Ecstasy availability in all OSAM Network areas. Drug users and crime lab professionals across the state indicated moderate to high availability of the drug. For example, an African-American female user in Toledo commented on Ecstasy availability, "that's the most recent drug, the most popular right now... the younger generation's crack." The Columbus crime lab saw a 55% increase in Ecstasy cases from 2006 (69 cases) to 2007 (107 cases).

According to crime lab professionals in Bowling Green, Columbus, and Canton, besides MDMA, Ecstasy tablets frequently contain a host of other substances, such as methamphetamine, ketamine, 3-trifluoromethylphenylpiperazine (TFMPP), and benzylpiperazine (BZP). The latter two compounds are known as piperazines and, when combined, produce effects similar to those of MDMA.

Consistent with the increasing availability of the drug, OSAM Network reports registered a continuing decline in Ecstasy prices. In early 2005, Ecstasy sold for \$20-\$25 per tablet in most OSAM regions. In January 2006, decreased prices of \$10-\$15 per tablet were reported by users in some areas of the state. In January 2008, prices as low as \$5-\$7 per tablet were reported by users in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, and Toledo.

Although Ecstasy use has been traditionally associated with young (16-25-year-olds), white users involved in the rave and dance club scenes, increases in Ecstasy use were also noted among African Americans in Toledo, Dayton, and Columbus. Users in Toledo reported increasing popularity of Ecstasy among older crack-cocaine users and noted its reputation as a "sex drug." For example, a 57 year-old African-American man from Toledo explained:

**Participant:** Ecstasy is...most of them with the X...they can get their groove on...Yeah, the world isn't messing with them Viagra, it's much better than Viagra, you know, you're the freak of the week. You know what I'm saying?

**Interviewer:** Can you get it from the same person that you buy crack from or you buy heroin from?

**Participant:** Uh huh, I can get it, I, I can go outside and walk out to the parking lot and stand there for like 5 minutes, no 2 minutes...Uh huh. Some dealers sell you the ball of crack, then they sell you the X, and then they give you a rubber [condom] free.

OSAM Network data indicate increases in Ecstasy availability and abuse in Ohio, a trend that has been observed across the nation. Ecstasy use continues to pose public health risks as its use is expanding into new types of recreational situations and among increasingly diverse 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 2008 OSAM Network meeting.

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