

ER cases higher among Ecstasy users

By ACSH Staff — March 28, 2011

Known to invoke feelings of ecstasy, the eponymous illicit party drug, also known as MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine), is the cause of an [increasing](#) ^[1] number of medical emergencies, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). In 2008, 17,865 patients were treated for problems related to Ecstasy, a figure that spiked by 75 percent compared to 10,220 cases treated in 2004. Over two-thirds of Ecstasy-related emergency room trips involved patients aged 18 to 29, but almost one-fifth occurred in teens between 12 and 17.

ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom notes that Ecstasy is a derivative of methamphetamine (crystal meth), having both hallucinogenic and stimulant properties. He says, "this is why it's so dangerous. People will take it and dance all night without being aware that some bad things are happening in their bodies. The most common problem is thermogenesis, or generation of heat. It is not uncommon to see patients with a 105 degree fever in the ER." Worse still, Ecstasy is widely viewed as safe and natural — it is neither. It is a synthetic chemical discovered 100 years ago at Merck as a possible therapy to stop bleeding.

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