Alcohol Use and gbMSM

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About the Presenter

Kiffer G. Card, PhD, is a social scientist and behavioral epidemiologist specializing in substance use, health policy, and the structural drivers of health inequity. He works in close collaboration with the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research and the Community-based Research Centre for Gay Men’s Health.
55.5% of Canadian gbMSM have binge drank in the past 6 months.

Source: OurStats.ca, Sex Now 2019, N = 7,010 gbMSM recruited online
### Patterns of Substance Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Names</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>Conventional</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Club</th>
<th>Street</th>
<th>Assorted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distribution</strong></td>
<td>296 (36.7)</td>
<td>203 (25.9)</td>
<td>90 (11.4)</td>
<td>69 (9.5)</td>
<td>82 (12.1)</td>
<td>34 (4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alcohol</strong></td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marijuana</strong></td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>93.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tobacco</strong></td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>84.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDD</strong></td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>66.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poppers</strong></td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crystal</strong></td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cocaine</strong></td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>96.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GHB</strong></td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ecstasy</strong></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ketamine</strong></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mushrooms</strong></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LSD</strong></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heroin</strong></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oxycodone</strong></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crack</strong></td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>58.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Momentum Study, N = 774 gbMSM recruited using RDS*
Early life is a critical period for substance use initiation of socially acceptable drugs.
Patterns for Substance Use

Number who used prior to or during sex

- Alcohol
- Cannabis
- Poppers
- Viagra
- Tobacco
- Ecstasy
- GHB
- Cocaine
- Crystal Meth
- Ketamine
- Psychedelics
- Crack
- Other Opioids
- Heroin

Source: Sex Now 2019, N = 7,010 gbMSM recruited online
Proportion of gbMSM who use each drug during sex if they use it at all.

Among gbMSM who use drugs *

51.7% used drugs during sex. *

Of men who binge drank, 38.6% Binge drank prior to or during sex.

*Includes legal drugs, such as alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana.

Source: Sex Now 2019, N = 7,010 gbMSM recruited online
Motives for Substance Use

- To feel good / have a good time
- To connect with others socially
- To connect with others sexually
- To have more energy to party
- To feel better about bad things that happen to me
- To make sex more intense or pleasurable
- Because other people offer them
- To increase motivation for sex
- To make sex last longer
- Because of stress about my sexuality
- Because I am addicted (for example, to avoid withdrawal)
- Because of stress about my gender identity/expression
- Other

Source: Sex Now 2019, N = 7,010 gbMSM recruited online
Key Messages

• Alcohol consumption generally and binge drinking specifically is common among gbMSM – both those who engaged in polysubstance use as well as those engaged in conventional patterns of use.
• Binge drinking is the most common form of substance use among gbMSM throughout the life course, and is the drug most often initiated early in the life course.
• Binge drinking has been linked to risky sexual behaviour in gbMSM, is the most commonly used drug prior to or during sex.
• Binge drinking occurs outside of the context of sex too, but about half of those who binge drink do so prior to or during sex.
• Facilitating good experiences – as well as social and sexual connections – are the primary motives for substance use generally.
Thanks!