

Methamphetamine user groups in Germany: results of a nationwide study.

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Sascha Milin, Annett Lotzin, Peter Degkwitz, Uwe Verthein, Ingo Schäfer

Background: Germany faces an increase of methamphetamine abuse, predominantly perceived in areas near the Czech Republic. Preliminary to the development of specific prevention programmes, a study on potential target groups was commissioned. **Objective:** We sought to determine specific types of people in Germany, who abuse "crystal", and to describe their characteristics. **Methods:** Participants were recruited through counseling centres, prevention projects, specialized inpatient facilities, and over the internet. We employed a mixed methods approach in which we used an electronic assessment tool that could be administered both online and in face-to-face interviews. To explore user types, inductive content analysis was conducted. **Results:** A total of 187 participants who used methamphetamine were included. For 16% it was their first illicit drug, 22%, had started using it at an age of 15 or younger, and 23% reported methamphetamine injection. Identified subgroups included club drug users, specific gay subcultures, occupational users, parents, injecting and heavy users, and people with mental health issues or trauma (fig.1). **Conclusion:** Methamphetamine abuse in Germany had not received much attention until recently. Further research is recommended to gain a better understanding of different subgroups, and to design and evaluate tailored therapeutic and preventive programmes.

- Exclusive "recreational" users (club drug context)
- Specific gay subcultures
- Users in the context of parenthood
- Users in occupational contexts
- Users in the context of school / education
- Comorbid / "self medicating" users
- Injecting and heavy drug users

Fig. 1: Seven Methamphetamine user groups in Germany