

CHEM 4292      Recreational Drugs

While most people may associate illegal drugs with substances such as marijuana, cocaine, heroin or refined narcotics (oxycontin, etc.), a number of other substances fall into the FDA's "controlled" classification, meaning that their sale and distribution are heavily restricted, if not banned outright. "Recreational" or "Party" drugs are quaint, if naïve, terms frequently used to describe these substances. As chemists, we probably understand more than the average person the effect that chemicals can have on a person's health and behavior, both in the short and long-term. Use this knowledge and the information in the accompanying articles to compose an essay on the use and effects of recreational drugs.

1. What are the major recreational/party drugs and what types of physiological and behavioral changes do they incur?
2. How and where does Ecstasy (3,4-methylene-doxymethamphetamine, MDMA) act at the cellular and molecular level?
3. Can you overdose on most of these drugs? What are some of the more common toxic effects?
4. Are there any legitimate uses for these drugs?
5. What are some of the proposed, long-term effects of party drug use? How strong is the evidence regarding the certainty of these effects?