

A pair of hands, one with light skin and the other with darker skin, are shown holding a small, realistic globe of the Earth. The globe is centered in the frame, showing blue oceans, white clouds, and brown landmasses. The hands are positioned as if cradling the globe gently. The background is plain white.

**GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SIMULTANEOUS
POLY DRUG CONSUMPTION AMONG
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF ONE
UNIVERSITY, KINGSTON, JAMAICA**

Presented by: Patrice Whitehorne-Smith, MSc. Clinical Psychology

INTRODUCTION



- Historically substance abuse research has shown a significant gap between male and female substance use and abuse.
- Over the last decade research has been showing a narrowing of that gap
- This narrowing gap is especially noticeable among adolescents and young adults.

INTRODUCTION



- Numerous studies point out that university life tends to be a time of experimentation
- This results in drug use patterns either beginning or increasing among young people
- During this time the use of more than one drug is often common.

INTRODUCTION



- There are two distinct types of poly drug use patterns
- Simultaneous poly drug use refers to the ingestion of more than one drug on a single occasion of drug use.
- Concurrent poly drug use refers to ingestion of different drugs on separate occasions.

INTRODUCTION



- Simultaneous poly drug is more serious than concurrent
- It can create a combination or interaction of the effect of both drugs.
- This may result in greater intoxication, increased risk of injury and a heightened risk of lethality than if drugs were taken separately

INTRODUCTION



- The present research focused on students from the medical/health science field
- This population because:
 - research has shown that many persons from this field are drug users/abusers.
- Implication for the care of patients if students in this field have already started a drug use/abuse

Method



- Multicentric study involving universities from the countries of Brazil, Colombia, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica and Nicaragua
- Exploratory in nature
- However the data in this study was taken only from Jamaica.
- Cross-sectional study using survey design.

Method



Inclusion Criteria:

- Focus on 1st and 2nd year undergraduate medical students and students from health related disciplines

Method



- A cluster sampling technique of data collection was used in this study
- Sourced the university's list of compulsory courses for 1st and 2nd year students for each program in the Medical/Health Sciences..

Method



- Researchers randomly selected one or more compulsory class as necessary to meet the sample size
- The data was collected in lecture settings across compulsory classes in the Medical Sciences faculty

Method



- Questionnaires and informed consent forms were then distributed to students by research assistants and a 15 minute collection time allowed before collecting questionnaires
- Data was analyzed using SPSS and descriptive and inferential statistics performed on key variables

Results



Table 1- Description of study participants, University of Kingston, Jamaica, 2009

Variables	N	%
Sex		
Male	58	19.7%
Female	237	80.3%
University Major		
Medicine	42	14.2%
Basic Medicine	71	24.1%
Nursing	111	37.6%
Pharmacy	8	2.7%
Psychology	62	21.0%
No response	1	0.3%
Current year in University		
1 st year	208	70.5%
2 nd year	86	29.2%
No response	1	0.3%

Source: Study Questionnaire

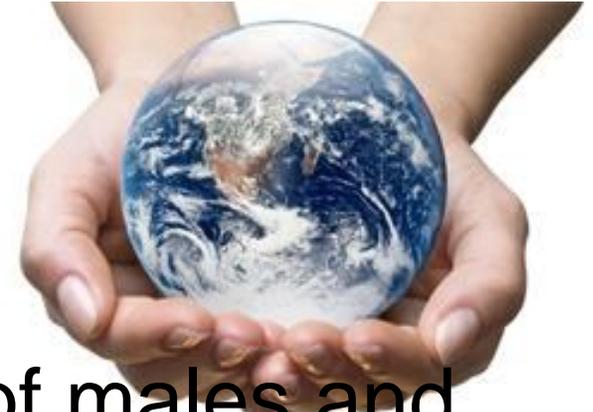
Total N=295

Results



- Males reported higher rates of drug use in their lifetime than females (m= 46.6%, f=31.2%)
- This difference was significant ($p=0.020$)
- Approximately 41% of males and 14% of females reported simultaneous poly drug use in the last 12 months.
- This difference was significant ($p=0.009$)

Results



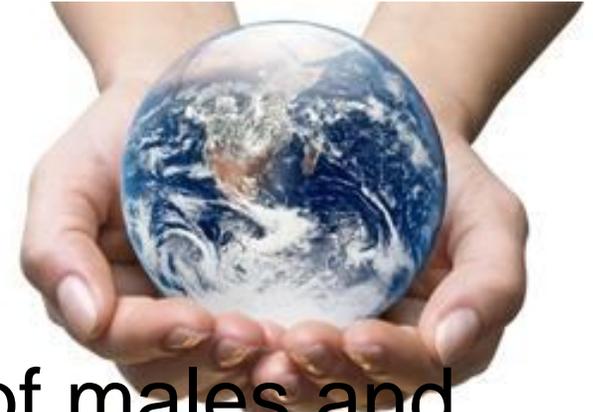
- Within the last 30 days 8.6% of males and 1.7% of females reported simultaneous polydrug use.
- This too was a significant difference ($p=0.014$)

Results

- The drug combination of alcohol and cannabis was most commonly used by both genders (m=6.9%, f=2.5%) followed by alcohol, tobacco and cannabis (m=3.4%, f=1.3%).



Results



- Within the last 30 days 8.6% of males and 1.7% of females reported simultaneous polydrug use.
- This too was a significant difference ($p=0.014$)
- The drug combination of alcohol and cannabis was most commonly used by both genders followed by alcohol, tobacco and cannabis.

DISCUSSION



- There was a still a significant difference seen between male and female drug use patterns
- However, there were no significant differences seen in drug combinations used by males and females
- It is likely that results may not truly reflect the extent of drug use among population sampled



DISCUSSION

- Female respondents may have under reported drug use behaviour
- Culturally it is possible that drug use behaviours may still be seen as more acceptable for males than females especially in the university setting.



Recommendations

- This study was exploratory in nature. It would be important to examine drug use patterns and simultaneous polydrug use throughout a university population
- Given persons apprehension to speak openly about drugs even on questionnaires other research methodologies should be considered to gather the data.

Thank you!

