

New Drugs - Same Old Problems

Crystal Meth and GHB

Recent issues and approaches to use of Crystal Meth and GHB among same sex attracted men in Sydney.

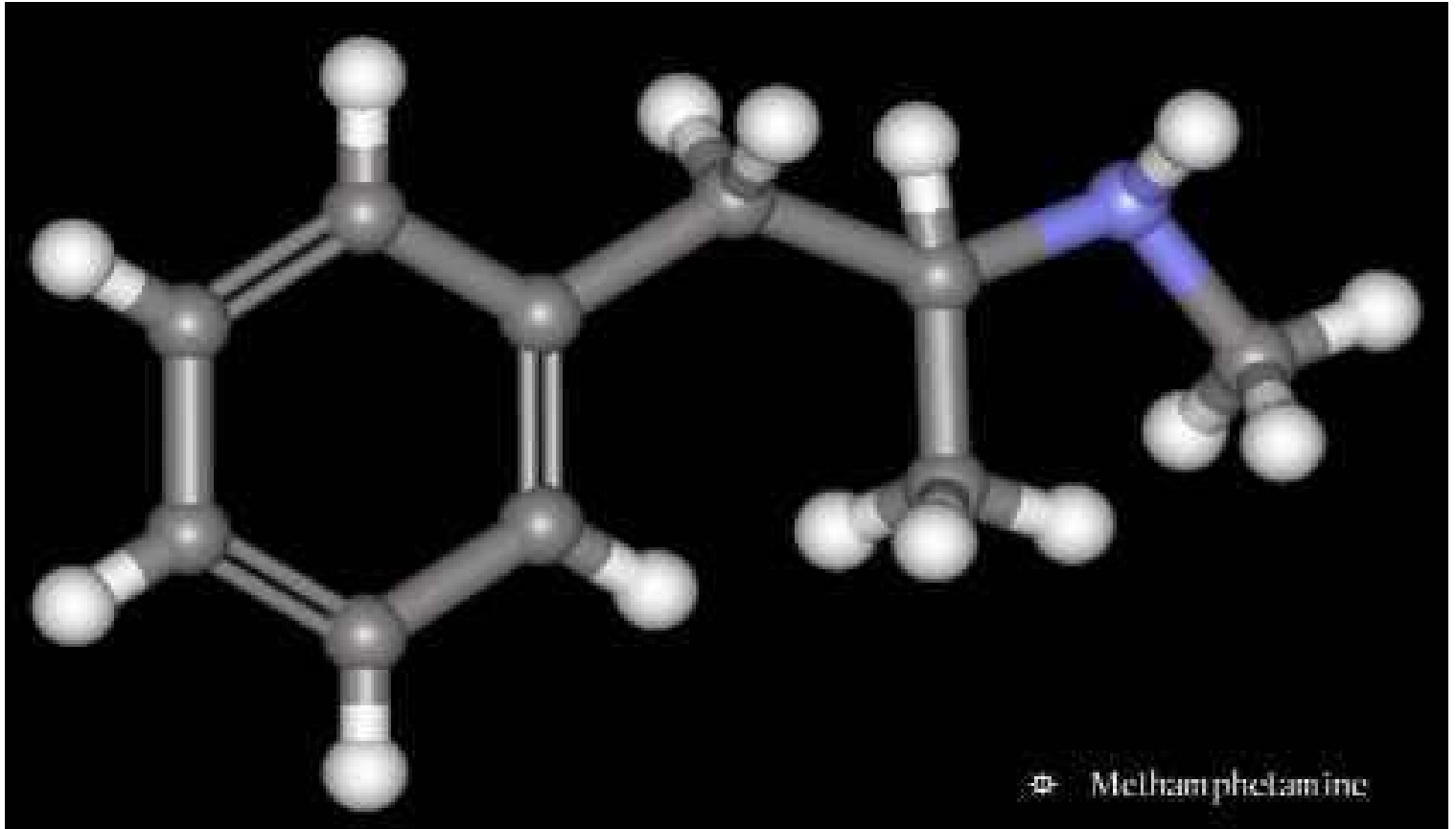


**Detlev Jackson, Senior Health Education Officer,
Injecting & Other Drug Use Project, ACON**

Crystal Meth and GHB - Overview

- Crystal Meth is a potent form of speed (amphetamines).
- Speed has been in use in the GLBT community for a long time.
- GHB is a recent drug, formerly used as an anaesthetic.
- GHB has become prevalent at GLBT venues and events.

Methamphetamine molecule



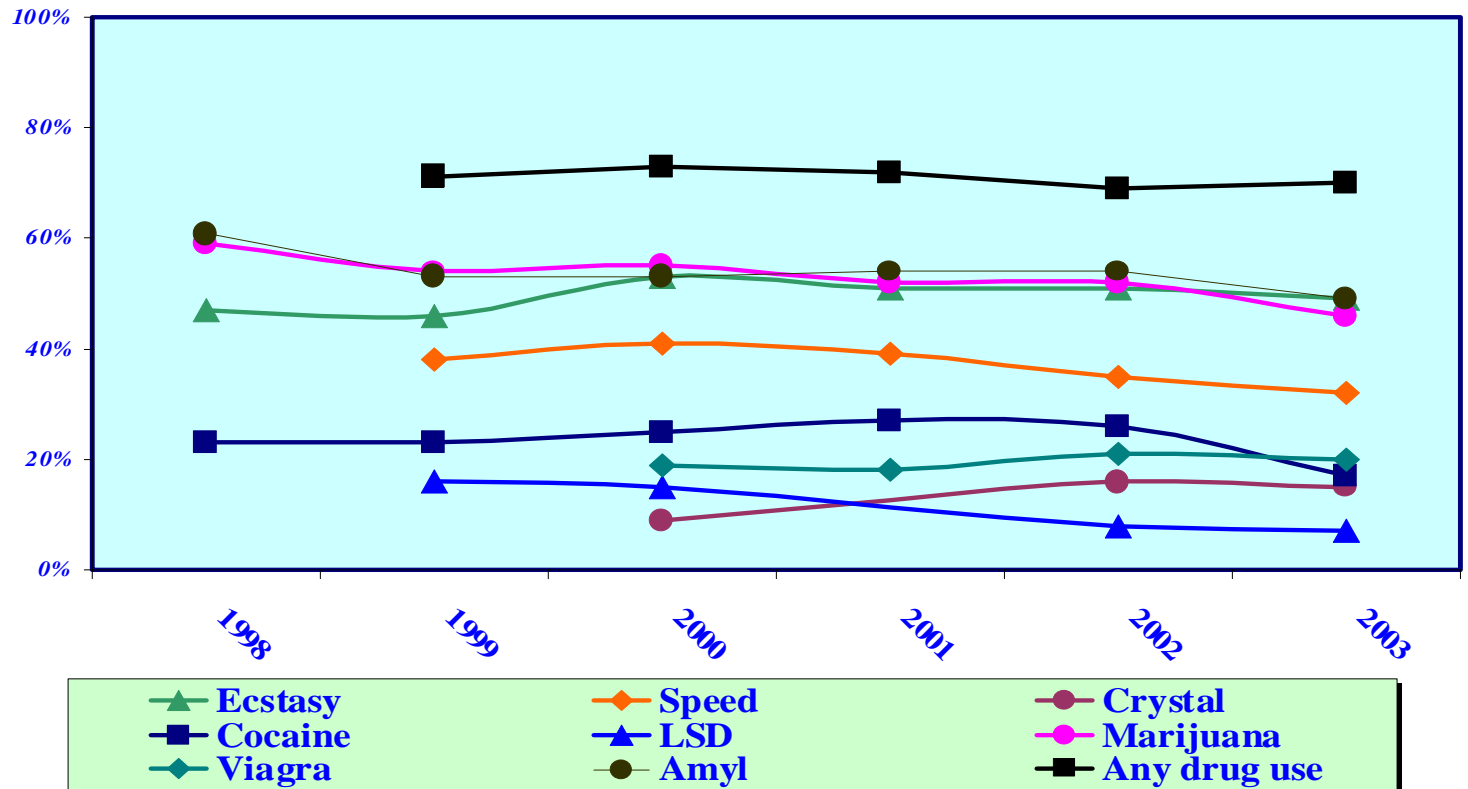
Crystal Meth and GHB use among Gay men in Sydney

- Use of GHB increasing
- Greater complexity in polydrug use, with a greater range of substances being used
- Some limited evidence of an increase in crystal use
- Some limited evidence of a slight decline in injecting

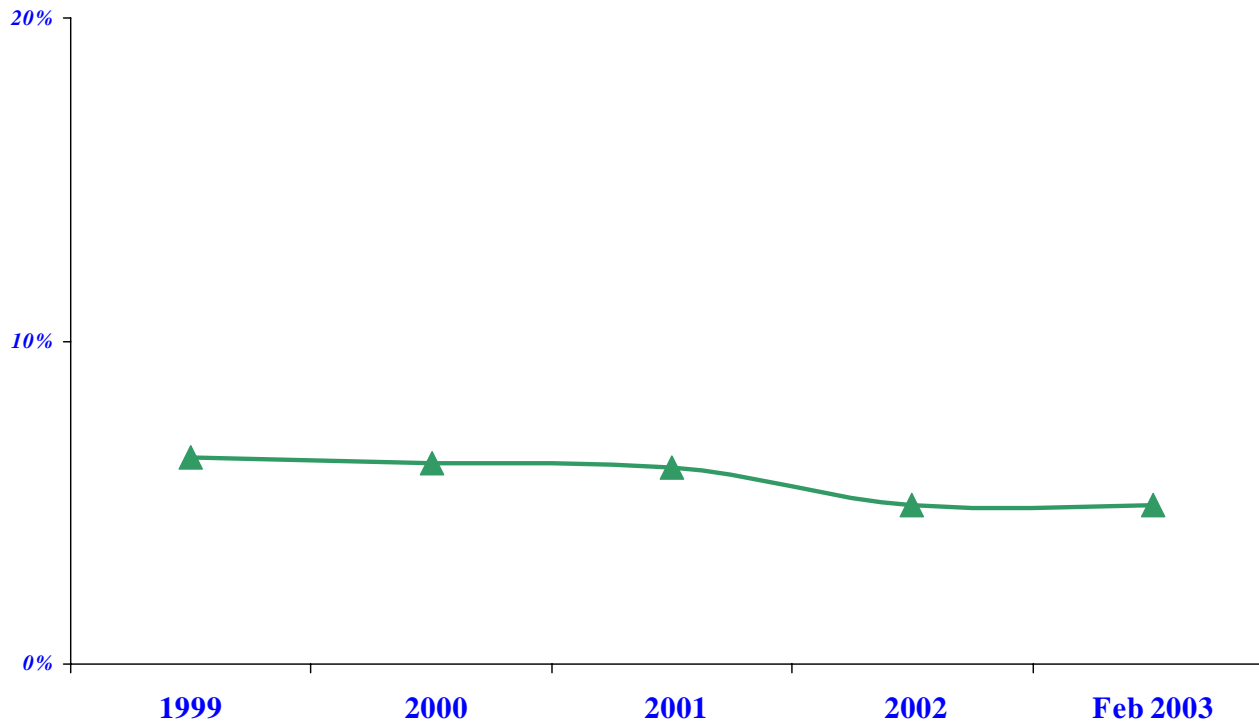


Methamphetamine Crystals

Recreational drug use among Sydney gay men 1998 to feb 2003



Injecting Drug Use among Sydney Gay Men in Previous Six Months 1999- Feb 2003 (Source: Periodic Survey)



What's different about Crystal and GHB?

Background Social Issues:

- Changes in social patterns among gay men: Venues and on-line cruising.
- Development of HIV treatment regimes.
- Emergence of 'barebacking'.
- Effect of policing on drug use patterns in inner Sydney.

What's different about Crystal and GHB?

Background Drug Issues:

- Intravenous use of Crystal Meth prevalent.
- GHB overdose requiring hospitalisation is not uncommon.
- Use of Crystal Meth during sex.
- Support services geared towards opiates and alcohol.

ACON Resource 1992



Crystal Meth: same old problems?

- 1980's: Amyl nitrate is associated with unsafe sexual practices and damage to the immune system.
- 1990's: Ecstasy "The Hug Drug" is thought to contribute to episodes of sexual risk taking.
- 2004: Crystal Meth is associated with unprotected anal intercourse and is linked to recent HIV sero-conversions in Australia.

Crystal Meth and sexual risk taking

- Risk taking frequently linked to drug use (especially sexual risk taking)
- Social research in Australia has demonstrated little evidence of causality between drug taking and sexual risk taking
- Factors motivating use of drugs as a dis-inhibitor need to be examined

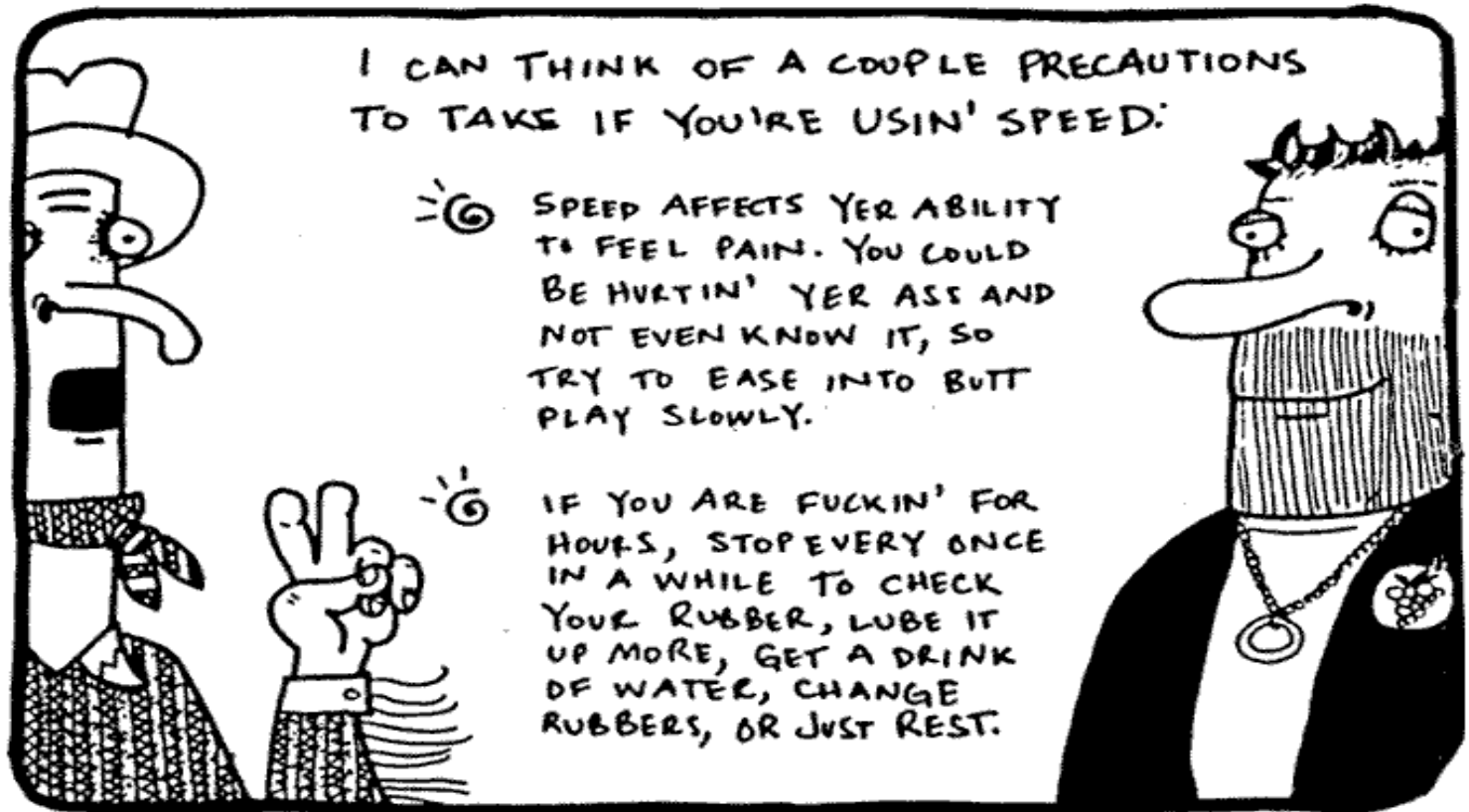
Some approaches to Crystal use:



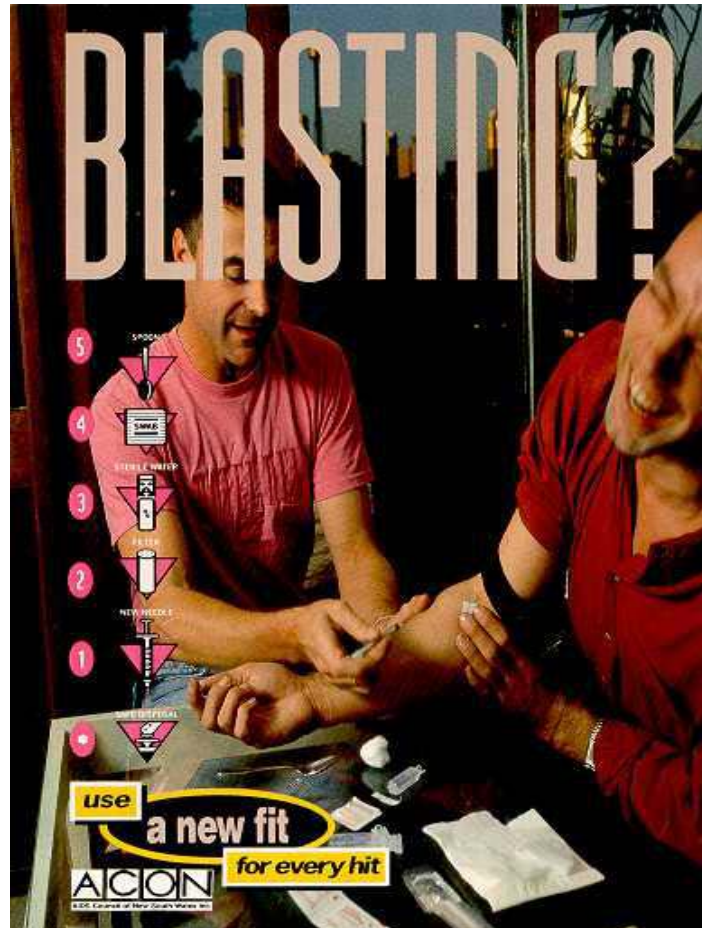
Some approaches to Crystal use:

- SMART groups run by St Vincents Hospital Drug and Alcohol Unit
- ACON Enhanced Primary Care
- Information resources: PLWHA completing qualitative research for PLWHA resource. ACON working on resource for same sex attracted men.

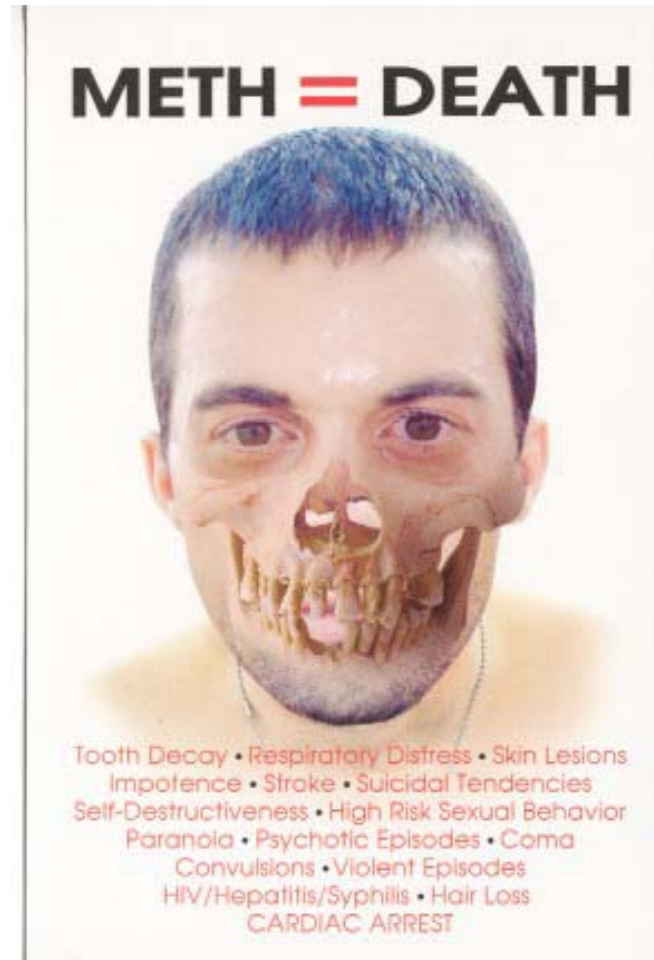
Some approaches to Crystal use: www.crystalneon.org - Seattle



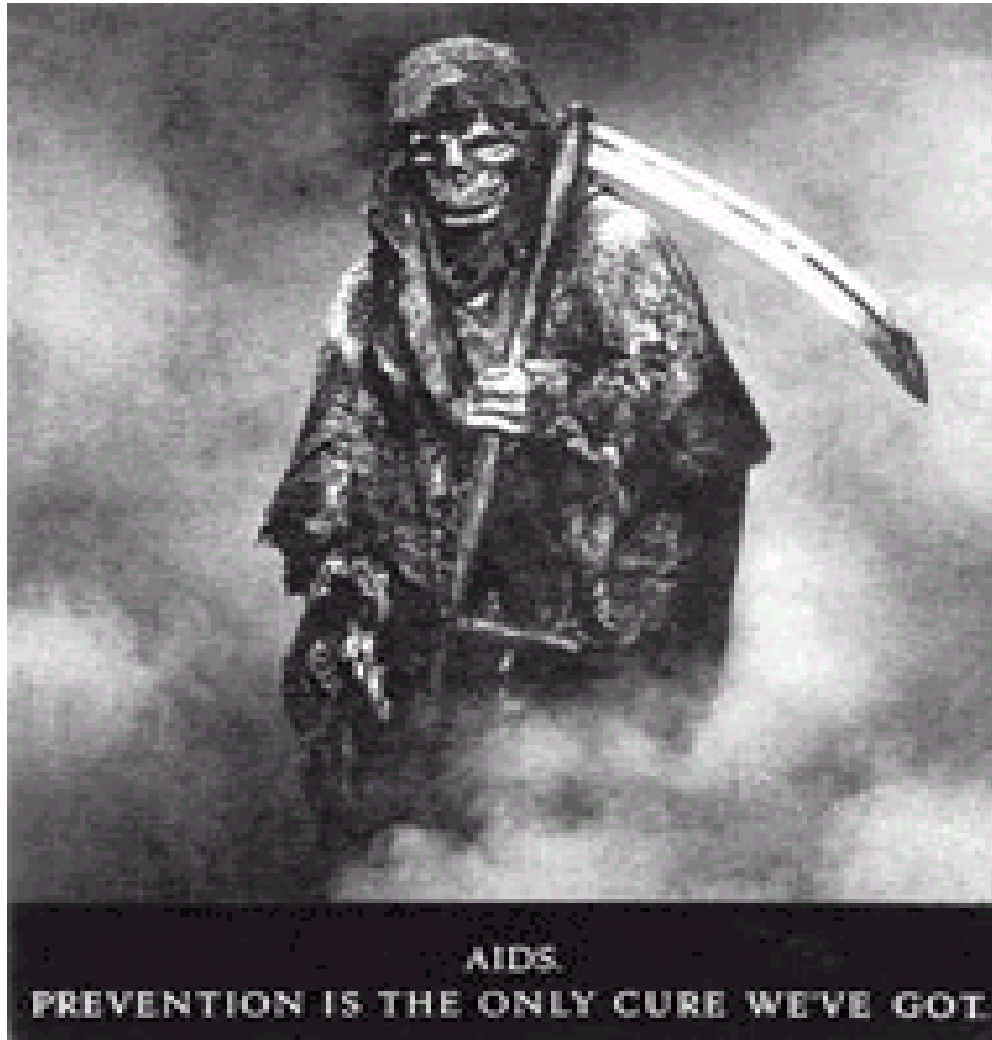
Some approaches to Speed use: ACON Resource 1993



Some approaches to Crystal use: New York City Campaign, 2004



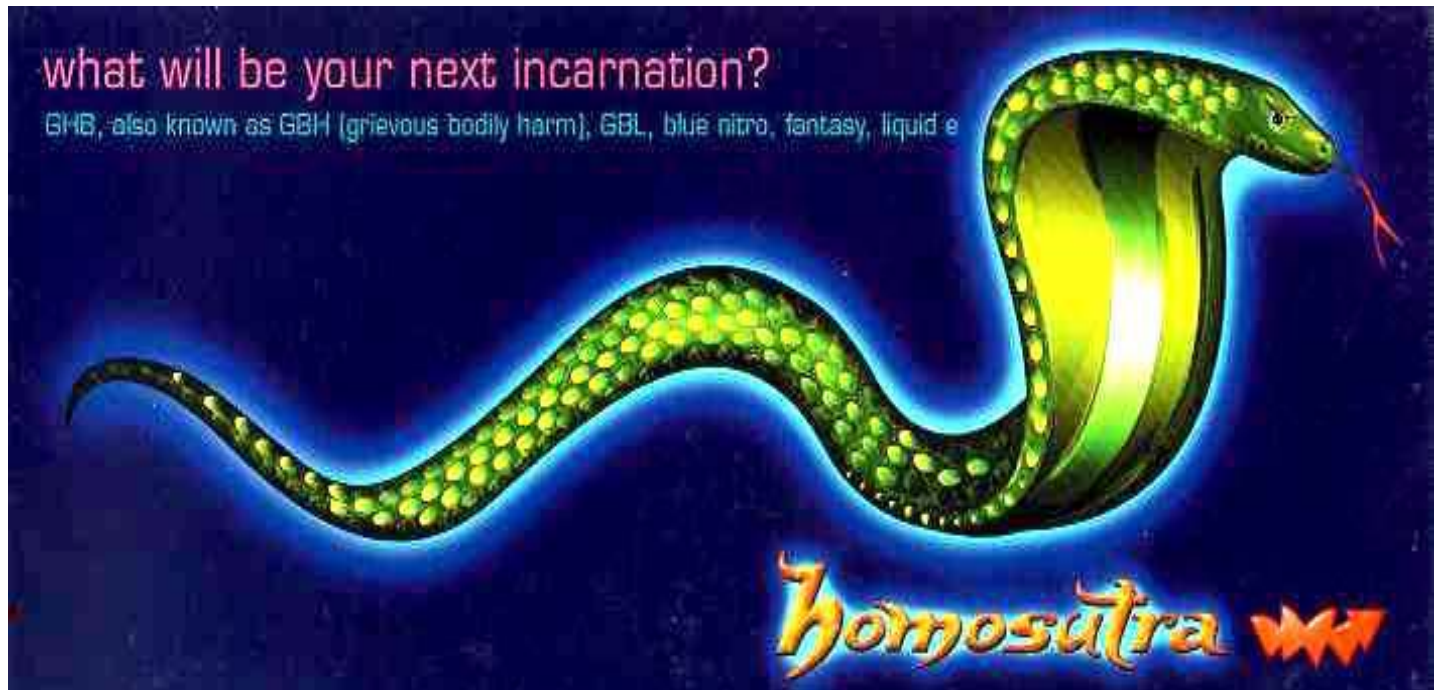
HIV Campaign, Australia 1987



GHB - What is it?

- It is an odourless, colourless, salty-tasting liquid.
- Effects may become apparent after 5-15 minutes, and come up strongly after 20-30 minutes, lasting for up to 2 - 4 hours.
- Has depressant effects but used for the associated feeling of euphoria.
- Overdose can be fatal, medical attention is required in case of overdose.

ACON GHB Resource 1999



GHB & Drink-spiking

- GHB has also been implicated in drink-spiking.
- Drink-spiking is most often intended to facilitate either sexual assault or robbery.
- GHB has a very short half-life, and is difficult to trace after an incident.
- Some drink spiking claims may be self-administered overdoses or not the result of GHB.

Some approaches to GHB use: ACON GHB Project

- To address harms arising from use of GHB in the GLBT communities in licensed and sex on premises venues.
- To be integrated with Oxford Street Licensing Accord.
- Safety self audit form for venues.
- GHB Information Print Campaign
- Training for venues staff
- Training for GLBT community members

Some approaches to GHB use: ACON GHB Project messages

- Mixing with other drugs
- Before you take more
- Is there a correct dose?
- Feeling strange?
- If you see someone in trouble
- Driving after taking GHB
- Remember HIV

New Mardi Gras & ACON GHB campaign 2004



Partying safe at Mardi Gras

The use of GHB in our community has seen an increase in the number of serious overdoses at gay and lesbian venues and events.

If you are planning a big night out here are some things to consider if you are going to use GHB:

- Unlike other drugs, the difference between a dose that works and one that will cause unconsciousness, send you to hospital, or kill you, is very small. A dose that works for others may be too much for you.
- If you are feeling unwell, tell a friend or a friendly face. Seek medical assistance immediately from medical, security, or ravers.
- Someone who displays uncontrolled body movements, who cannot be woken, or who is incoherent needs immediate medical attention. Attract the attention of medical or security staff, or ravers identified by leaflets.
- Mixing GHB with other drugs, particularly alcohol can lead to unconsciousness, coma or even death!
- Remember that GHB and other drugs including alcohol can bring down barriers and affect your decisions about your health and wellbeing, or that of others. Be prepared with condoms and lube.

The only way to avoid experiencing any drug's negative effects is not to take it.

Supported by:
DJs

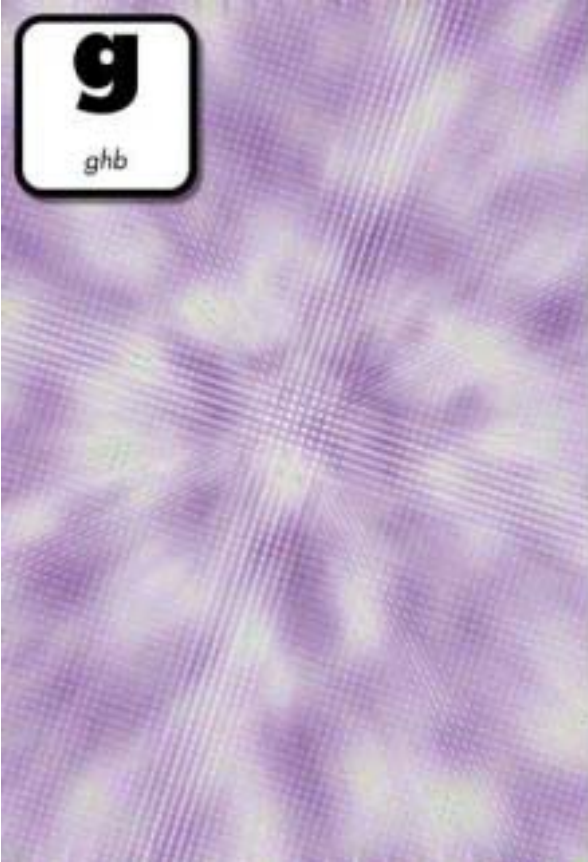
Alan Taylor, Bill Morley, Chris, Dan Murphy, Frank, Greg Brinkley, Jake Mills, Jimmy Gae, DJ Jack, Justin Scott, Kate Monroe, Kelly Lynch, Kyle Ross, Lisa Gannon, Luke Lee, Mardi Rollins, Mark Wilson, Mike Kelly, Paul Diamond, Paul Gandyman, Peter Davis, Richard Webb, Rob, Ryan Murphy, Sarah Roberts, Seymour Butt, Shigeki, Stephen Goodfield, Susie

Venues and Party Promoters

ACON, A&D Sydney, Sydney, C.A.V., Ken's at Kensington, Marabelle, New Mardi Gras, The Malmesbury Staff Hotel, Queen's House at Home, Ruby, The Columbian Hotel, Pico, Universal Hotel, Topkoo, VST Sydney City Steam



Some approaches to GHB use: Positive Health Project Resource (US)



GHB (*gamma-hydroxybutyrate*) is a drug that depresses the central nervous system. It is a combination of gamma-butyrolactone (**GBL**), an industrial solvent used in making paints and other products, and sodium hydroxide (**lye**). GHB usually comes as a clear, odorless, nearly tasteless liquid or sometimes as a powder that is mixed with water. Because GHB has been linked to many deaths, overdoses and sexual assaults it's now illegal in most states.

Body builders started taking GHB because it is said to help increase muscle-mass, but the quick, euphoric high makes it a popular club and party drug. Because the drug slows down your body it can make you vulnerable and defenseless against attack. It can also cause memory loss— you don't remember what happened while you were on it. Some people slip GHB into other people's drinks and then rape them, which is why it is often called the "date rape drug." When you're out, keep an eye on your drink and be careful about drinking from other people's glasses and bottles.

GHB is a powerful and unpredictable drug. Some people have used it one time without a problem and then the next time they have died or gone into a coma. Because of the way it is made, the strength is always different. Most people only need a few drops to get high, so it's best to be very careful about how much you take and to wait at least 30 minutes before considering taking any more. Remember, the difference between having a good time and killing yourself can be a very small amount of the drug.

Mixing GHB with alcohol, laughing gas (nitrous oxide), Special K, sleeping pills or other downers can easily lead to death.

For more information about GHB, questions about using other drugs, or questions about HIV, please give us a call. We can also tell you how "street drugs" affect people who are taking medication for HIV.

POSITIVE Health PROJECT
1 (888) 465-8304

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This booklet is the educational card provided to an educational panel from Applied Pharmaceutical, Inc. and is

Crystal Meth and GHB: where to from here?

- More research on factors motivating use of drugs as a dis-inhibitor.
- Assess impact of changes in social patterns among same sex attracted men on drug use.
- Monitor the effect of policing on drug use patterns in inner Sydney.
- Continued adherence to Harm Reduction approaches to drug use issues

Crystal Meth and GHB: where to from here?

- Increased expansion of treatment options for people using Crystal Meth.
- Innovative and collaborative approaches to use of Crystal and GHB in licensed and Sex on Premises Venues
- Development of a range of information resources on Crystal and GHB



Meth = Death

Tooth Decay Respiratory Distress Skin Lesions Impotence
 Stroke Suicidal Tendencies Self-Destructiveness
 High Risk Sexual Behavior Psychotic Episodes
 Coma Convulsions Violent Episodes
 HIV/Hepatitis/Syphilis
 Cardiac Arrest
 Coma Psychotic
 Behavior Self-Destructive
 Suicidal Tendencies
 Tooth Decay Skin Lesions
 Impotence Lesions
 Respiratory Distress
 Stroke Paranoia
 Suicidal Tendencies
 Self-Destructive
 High Risk Sexual
 Psychotic Episodes
 Coma Convulsions
 Violent Episodes
 HIV/Hepatitis/Syphilis
 Hair Loss Cardiac Arrest
 Convulsions Coma
 High Risk Sexual Behavior
 Stroke Impotence Skin