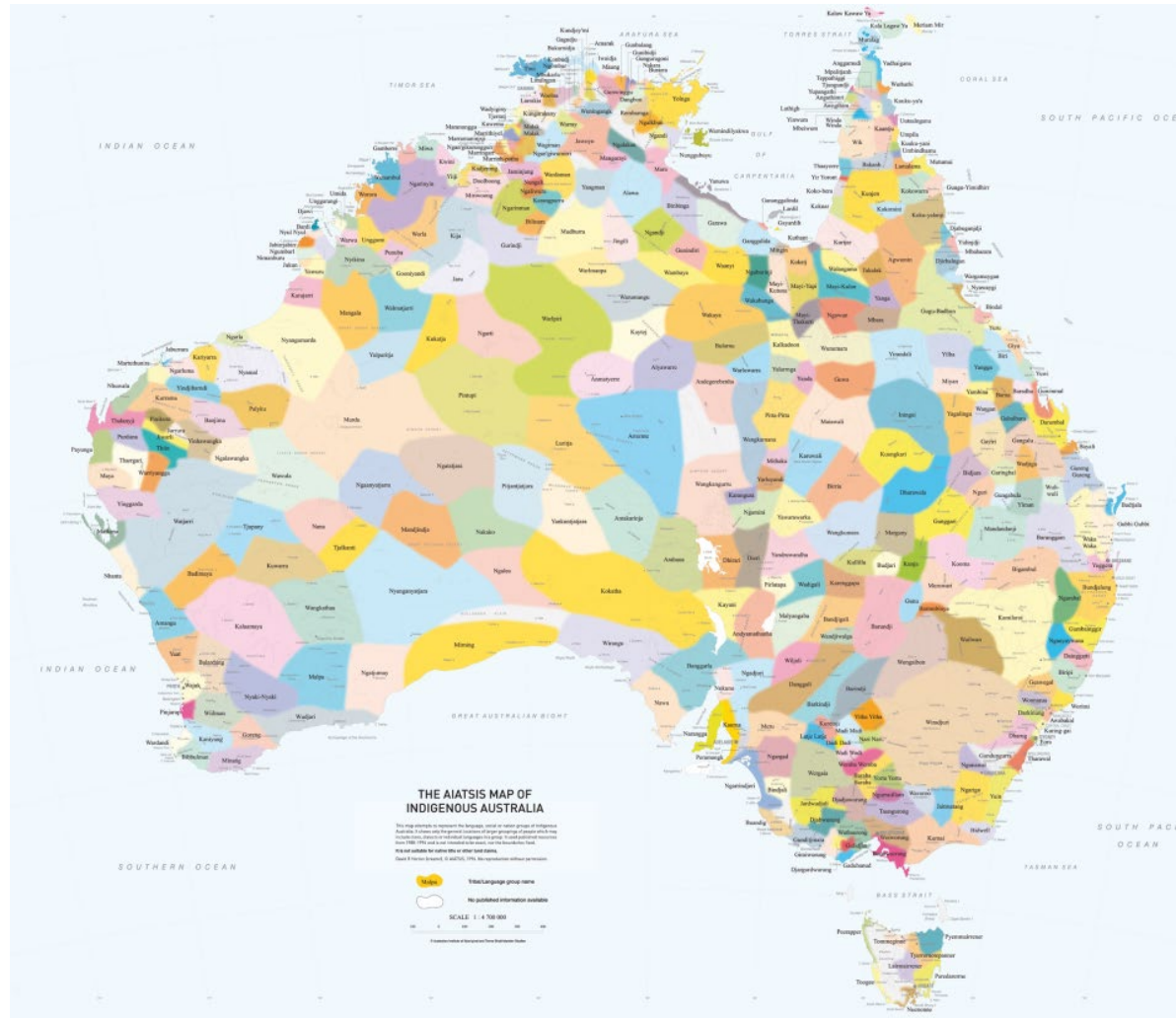


Welcome to today's Insight APSAD webinar.

We'll be starting a little after 10am (QLD time).

- Use the chat icon for all questions and comments – *select All panelists and attendees.*
- If you are on a computer and Zoom enters full screen mode – you can press the escape button or visit “View Options” at the top of the screen to change the layout.
- If you are experiencing other problems or require further technical assistance call Zoom on **1800 768 027** – the webinar ID is **973-118-396-68**.
- A pdf version of today's presentation will be available soon in the chat window.
- A recording of this webinar will be available on our YouTube channel in the coming weeks.





We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which this event takes place and pay respect to Elders past and present.

This map attempts to represent the language, social or nation groups of Aboriginal Australia. It shows only the general locations of larger groupings of people which may include clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. It used published resources from 1988-1994 and is not intended to be exact, nor the boundaries fixed. It is not suitable for native title or other land claims. David R Horton (creator), © AIATSIS, 1996. No reproduction without permission. To purchase a print version visit: www.aiatsis.ashop.com.au/

GHB (gamma hydroxybutyrate) and its use as a recreational substance

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Services Research
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Presented to Insight, 2 September 2020

Acknowledgements: Steffi Cook, Dr Jeremy Hayllar, Jim Hunt



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GHB-related deaths and overdoses

What is GHB?: Dangerous party drug linked to multiple overdose deaths

10:44am Dec 9, 2019



GHB-related deaths and overdoses

GOLDCOASTBULLETIN.COM.AU

PALM BEACH CURRUMBIN STATE HIGH V WAVELL

KEEBRA PARK V MARSDEN

Defending champs Palm Beach Currumbin (red) hosted Ipswich State High in the Langer Cup opening round at Pizzey Park. PBC's Tom Weaver is tackled by Dejiun Leugaimafa. Picture: JERAD WILLIAMS

SPECIAL REPORT COAST'S SURGING NEW DRUG THREAT

FANTASY LAND

- GHB - aka 'coma in a bottle' - rivals rise of ice
- Kids, teenagers make up nearly a quarter of addicts seeking treatment

KIRSTIN PAYNE & JACOB MILEY

POLICE and the legal fraternity are becoming increasingly concerned about soaring use of deadly party drug fantasy - dubbed coma in a bottle - with more than two people busted in possession of it every day on average.

One leading criminal lawyer Michael Gatenby called it "the new ice" and said it was on the same "trajectory" for usage as the danger drug.

Mr Gatenby said fantasy, or GHB, was cheaper, falsely considered safe despite several fatal Coast overdoses and had become a popular party drug.

"I've had a couple of (clients) where we've got the footage and showed them and they've been massively surprised by how bad they are, their behaviour."

His comments come as it can be revealed climbing numbers of Gold Coasters - including a large proportion of kids and teenagers - are seeking help for addiction to dangerous drugs and alcohol.

Almost a quarter of the 5296 "clinical episodes" for voluntary drug treatment on the Gold Coast in the 2018-19 financial year were aged from 10 to 19 years old.

REPORT P4-5

URBAN CREEP THREAT

SPECIES AT RISK P3


SCHOOLIE SHOCK - 'THEY'RE COMING'

SCHOOLIES are booking for Gold Coast graduation partying in November. But the Surfers Paradise MP is part of a chorus calling for its axing, say it's not appropriate. **LUKE MOR-TIMER REPORTS P19**

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GHB-related deaths and overdoses

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You can count on Windows 10 wherever you are.  

 **NEWS** BREAKING NEWS GOLD COAST TRAFFIC REPORTS COUNCIL POLICE & COURTS COMMUNITY NATIONAL TRUE CRIME WORLD  

GOLD COAST

Police figures reveal how the drug ‘fantasy’ has become increasingly popular over time

The deadly drug fantasy is on the same trajectory as ice use, a Gold Coast lawyer says, as new figures show two people are being busted with the ‘grossly addictive’ substance every day.

JACOB MILEY, Gold Coast Bulletin

 Subscriber only | August 4, 2020 10:00pm

Michael Gatenby, of Gatenby Criminal Lawyers, said: “Fantasy is the new ice. It’s on the same trajectory as ice use.”

The “grossly addictive” drug was falsely perceived as safe and had become a popular drug among revellers, he said.

Fast facts: Fantasy on the Gold Coast

- In 2015 police made 174 seizures of GHB or fantasy on the Gold Coast.
- In 2019, police seizures of GHB or fantasy shot up to 917.
- In 2015, fantasy was found 68 times on people busted for drug possession.
- By 2019, fantasy was found 380 times on people busted for drug possession.
- The price point for fantasy is \$10-\$15 for two millilitres.
- The price point for ice is \$50-\$100 for “one point”.

GHB-related deaths and overdoses

Herald Sun

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Leader

LEADER

Olinda arrest: Yarra Ranges police arrest Kalorama man on charges of trafficking 6 litres of GHB

A random call by a member of the public reporting a strange man in a Dandenong Ranges park in the middle of the night led police to an allegedly interesting discovery.

Laura Armitage, Free Press Leader

Subscriber only | July 21, 2020 12:00am

Gold Coast Bulletin

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NSW

Auburn father Halil Delialioglu charged over major GBL bust

A suburban Sydney dad has been arrested over one of the state's biggest seizures of the deadly drug "fantasy", with police expecting more arrests.

NICK HANSEN, The Daily Telegraph

Subscriber only | May 20, 2020 5:40pm

What is GHB?

- GHB (gamma hydroxybutyrate) is a depressant
- GBL (gamma butyrolactone) and 1,4-BD (1,4-butanediol): chemicals that are closely related to GHB.
 - 1960s- anaesthetic
 - 1980s- bodybuilding
 - Date rape drug
 - Now: used recreationally



What is GHB?

- Colourless, odourless, bitter or salty liquid, usually sold in small bottles or vials
- Typically swallowed but can also be injected or inserted anally
- Other names: G, fantasy, grievous bodily harm (GBH), juice, liquid ecstasy, liquid E, liquid X, Georgia Home Boy, soap, scoop, cherry meth, blue nitro, fishies, gina, juice



Effects and use of GHB

- Common in dance/party/chemsex settings
- Common effects:
 - feelings of euphoria
 - increased confidence
 - relaxation
 - socialability
 - increased sex drive
 - lowered inhibitions
 - drowsiness



- [illegible]

Harms associated with GHB

- GHB affects everyone differently, based on:
 - amount
 - strength
 - person's size, weight and health
 - whether the person is used to taking it
 - polydrug use
- High risk of overdose
- Very little difference: amount for 'high' vs amount for overdose
- Regular use can lead to tolerance and dependence

Harms associated with GHB

- Overdose symptoms:
 - vomiting (risk of aspiration and death)
 - irregular or shallow breathing
 - confusion, irritation and agitation
 - hallucinations
 - blackouts and memory loss
 - unconsciousness that can last for 3 to 4 hours
 - death
- Risk of overdose increased with concurrent use of other depressants or stimulants

GHB-related deaths

- A study by Darke et al (2020) investigated all GHB-related deaths in Australia recorded in the National Coronial Information System between 2001 and 2019 (n=74).
 - Typical case: young male, who swallowed GHB and used it with other substances, most commonly at home.
 - The majority died due to accidental drug toxicity (79.7%), trauma (12.2%) and suicide (8.2%).
 - The fatal incident overwhelmingly occurred in a home environment (82.4%)
 - In all cases, GHB was consumed orally.
 - 92.2% of cases had other substances present, including psychostimulants (64.1%), hypnosedatives (28.2%) and alcohol (20.3%).

Darke, S., Peacock, A., Duflou, J., Farrell, M., & Lappin, J. (2020). Characteristics and circumstances of death related to gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB). *Clinical toxicology*, 1-6.

GHB-related withdrawal

- Important to speak to a health professional
- Withdrawal symptoms can include:
 - confusion and agitation
 - anxiety and panic
 - feelings of doom and paranoia
 - restless sleep
 - muscle cramps and tremors
 - sweating
 - hallucinations
 - fast heartbeat
- Sudden withdrawal from high doses - bowel and bladder incontinence, blackouts

GHB-related harm reduction

- There is no safe level of drug use, but people who choose to use GHB should:
 - never use GHB alone
 - take smaller test doses first
 - always measure doses
 - set limits on quantity used in a session
 - never drink straight out of a bottle or pour a dose straight out of a bottle
 - avoid mixing with other drugs
- If overdose is suspected: call 000, place person in the recovery position

Stigma/ implications for GHB treatment

- GHB/GBL use is common in the chemsex scene
- GHB/GBL use is common (but not limited to) men who have sex with men (MSM).
- European ChemSex Forum 2019 discussion themes:
 - Pleasure
 - Many MSM experience high rates of stigma, and GHB facilitates sexual confidence/ disinhibition/ escape
 - “The disinhibition allows me to forget for a moment my body that I find hard to accept, and particularly the way other people look at me and their hurtful comments.”

Stigma/ implications for GHB treatment

- Awareness of these issues may facilitate treatment
- Chemsex users may feel that traditional drug services are not appropriate
- Clinicians in this setting may lack confidence/ be unfamiliar with managing the harms associated with chemsex use
- It is recommended that GPs:
 - Include a (sensitive) risk assessment for alcohol and drug use, STIs and blood borne viruses,
 - Assess appropriateness of referral to drug services for harm minimisation.
- Treatment typically includes learning to avoid social groups/ locations where GHB use occurred

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/nov-2019/why-do-gay-men-do-chemsex>

Ma, R., & Perera, S. (2016). Safer 'chemsex': GPs' role in harm reduction for emerging forms of recreational drug use. *British Journal of General Practice*, 66, 4-5.

Trends in GHB use among Australians

- National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019: **0.1%** of Australians aged 14+ have used GHB in their lifetime.
- Victoria: number of calls received annually by Alcohol and Drug Information Service (Directline) regarding GHB **increased from 31 in 2009 to 176 in 2018** (Alcohol and Drug Foundation, 2020).
- A study using data from the Ecstasy and Related Drugs Monitoring System (EDRS) found that **recent use of GHB increased from 1% in 2000 to 21% in 2006** among regular ecstasy users from Sydney. Shift from GHB use in dance venues and at events to private homes and parties (Dunn et al 2009).
- Retrospective analysis of data on all GHB-related ambulance attendances in Victoria over seven years found **147% increase** in the prevalence of GHB-related ambulance attendances in Victoria between 2012 and 2019 (Arunogiri et al 2019).

Trends in GHB use among Australians (cont.)

- Study of 15,000 blood specimens from motor vehicle drivers in Queensland, Australia (2011–2018) identified GHB in **1.1%** of samples. GHB was very commonly **co-consumed** with amphetamine type substances (91%). GHB use predominantly identified in drivers from **city areas** with a geographical localisation in the **Gold Coast region**. (Griffiths & Hadley, 2019).
- Study of impurities detected in illicit drugs between 2015-2016 using data from Queensland Health's Forensic and Scientific Services found that GHB was more frequently adulterated with other substances, with **purity averaging 30%** (Peck et al., 2019).

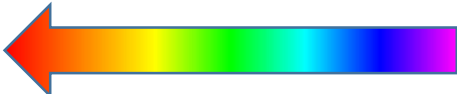
Arunogiri, S., Moayeri, F., Crossin, R., Killian, J. J., Smith, K., Scott, D., & Lubman, D. I. (2020). Trends in gamma-hydroxybutyrate-related harms based on ambulance attendances from 2012 to 2018 in Victoria, Australia. *Addiction*, 115(3), 473-479.

Dunn, M., Topp, L., & Degenhardt, L. (2009). GHB in Sydney, Australia, 2000–2006: a case study of the EDRS as a strategic early warning system. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 20(5), 413-417.

Griffiths, A., & Hadley, L. (2019). The prevalence of gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB) in motor vehicle drivers and its co-administration with amphetamine type substances (ATS) in Queensland, Australia (2011–2018). *Forensic science international*, 303, 109958.

Peck, Y., Clough, A. R., Culshaw, P. N., & Liddell, M. J. (2019). Multi-drug cocktails: Impurities in commonly used illicit drugs seized by police in Queensland, Australia. *Drug and alcohol dependence*, 201, 49-57.

Findings from the Global Drug Survey 2019

- World's largest online anonymous drug survey <https://www.globaldrugsurvey.com/>
- A sneak peek of trends in GHB use among Australian GDS 2019 respondents
- Limitations of GDS: non-representative sample, questions are optional
- Embargoed! 



GLOBAL DRUG SURVEY

Australians who used GHB in the past year

- 62% male
- Median age of 38 (range 31-78)
- 66% heterosexual, 18% bisexual, 10% homosexual
- 81% white, 2% Aboriginal/Indigenous, 14.5% “other”
- 79% lived in a city/urban area
- 83% had at least completed high school, 27% had a tertiary qualification
- 47% had ever been diagnosed with a mental illness



GLOBAL DRUG SURVEY

Australians who used GHB in the past year

- 66% had been clubbing or attended a festival in the past year
- 21% went clubbing once a week or more
- 12% had attended 6 or more festivals in the past year
- 21% drank alcohol at least 2-3 times per week
- 22% reported drinking 10 or more standard drinks on the days when they drink



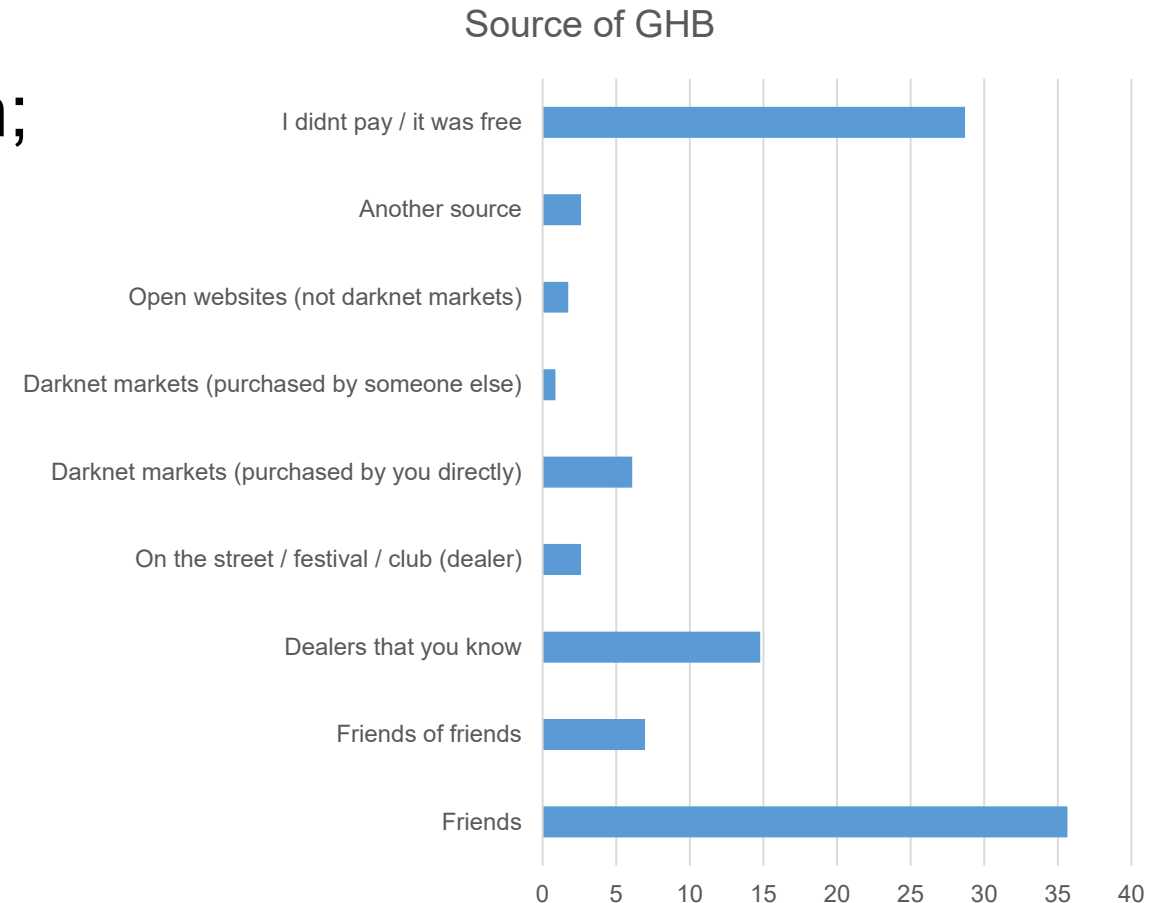
GLOBAL DRUG SURVEY

Australians who used GHB in the past year

- Used GHB/GBL/14B on a median of 3 days in the past year (range 1-280)
- On average day of use, used median of 6ml (13 people reported using more than 10ml on one night)
- Respondents used GHB/GBL 14B a median of every 2 hours
- Respondents bought a median of 20ml each time they usually bought it (range 0.1-200ml)

Australians who used GHB in the past year

- 96% reported oral use as most common route of administration; 2% snorted; 1% smoked
- 40% reported it as 10/10 in terms of excellent value for money




Australians who used GHB in the past year

- 30% would like to use less
- No people planned to seek help to support using less
- 31% reported passing out or losing consciousness while using GHB/GBL in the past year, median of 3 times
- 2 people reported passing out more than 20 times in the past year
- 7 people reported seeking emergency medical treatment following their GHB/GBL use




GLOBAL DRUG SURVEY

GHB/GBL resources from the Global Drug Survey




Global Drug Survey
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GHB Early Warning Signs
Global Drug Survey • 10K views • 7 years ago
When the G drops stop dripping, drugs meter chats to David Stuart to find out how stopping the drip drip drip of G drops can lead to dangerous withdrawal.



GHB Overdose
Global Drug Survey • 9.7K views • 7 years ago
drip drip drip n drop, drugs meter chats to David Stuart to find out how to spot an imminent drop (OD) in yourself or a mate on G.



GHB Golden Rules
Global Drug Survey • 16K views • 7 years ago
drugs meter talks to David Stuart for tips on how to stop the odd drop of G turning into a tidal wave of Oh F!



GHB/GBL - every drop counts
Global Drug Survey • 150K views • 7 years ago
Every drop counts. Whether it's GHB or GBL there are no other drugs where dosing is so important and where tolerance does not protect you against overdose. We talk to a forensic toxicologist on G d...

GHB/GBL resources from the Global Drug Survey



Further information and resources

- Project GHB. Information about GHB and resources to help those experiencing GHB addiction. (<http://www.projectghb.org/>)
- Alcohol and Drug Foundation (adf.org.au)
- DrugInfo:1300 85 85 84 / Free confidential information and advice about alcohol and other drugs (9am - 5pm, Mon-Fri)
- Family Drug Help: 1300 660 068 (www.familydrughelp.com.au) (Victorian-based).
- Family Drug Support: 1300 368 186 (www.fds.org.au) (Australia-wide)
- YouTube: The Recovery Position training by St John Ambulance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmqXqwSV3bo&feature=youtu.be>



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Thank you!

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<https://chsr.centre.uq.edu.au/research/substance-use-and-mental-health>



Thanks for joining us today!

Next Week.... **Wednesday 9th September 2020**

SCOT Project: establishing a sustainable model of
shared care for opioid treatment

Tracey Veitch and Peter Cochrane

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