

Hip-hop music influencing more African-Americans to try 'Molly'

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More rap artists are talking about molly, which is the powder or crystal form of ecstasy, and that's having a big impact on Black listeners. Molly is a synthetic drug that acts as a stimulant and hallucinogenic. While research has shown messages in hip-hop music can influence the use of marijuana and alcohol, no research has looked specifically at whether hip-hop is actually influencing some to try molly.

In a study published in the *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse*, researchers surveyed African American young adults who've tried molly, and found 82% said hip-hop [music](#) influenced their decision to try it. There is an abundance of song lyrics that glorify the drug, describing it as a way to party and lower sexual inhibitions.

"Molly, although not as dangerous as opioids, has been linked to psychiatric problems, sexual risk taking and adverse health outcomes like seizures, irregular heartbeat, hyperthermia and even death," said lead author Khary Rigg, PhD, professor of mental health law and policy at the University of South Florida.

Study participants said they felt comfortable trying the drug only after trendsetting rappers like Kanye West and French Montana mentioned it in their lyrics, depicting molly as the new "it" drug that has benign consequences, unlike heroin or crack.

"I'm just trying to party like a rock star, not get strung out," said one study participant. "Whenever they (rappers) mentioned it (molly), they

are either partying, drinking (alcohol), smoking (weed), or having sex. All of the things I love to do most. I never heard about anyone getting addicted or dying. That made me feel better about trying it."

"The behaviors of millennial African-Americans are probably the most likely to be influenced by hip-hop music as the artists themselves are typically from that demographic," said Dr. Rigg. "This suggests that rappers may be effective sources for prevention, health promotion, and harm reduction messages aimed at African-Americans."

Previous molly studies mostly focus on populations that are white, European, and regular listeners of electronic dance music involved in the rave scene. This new study is one of the few to focus on African-American molly use and gives us a greater understanding of how hip-hop music influences patterns of molly use among Black users.

Provided by University of South Florida

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