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**Daniela Xuereb  
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## Ecstasy

MDMA, better known as 'Ecstasy', is a synthetic, mind-altering substance, derived from amphetamines. Thus, like all drugs, it has negative physical and psychological effects. Tolerance to the effects of Ecstasy develops with continued use and dependence occurs. Since the addictive properties of the drug are constantly being investigated, its unpredictable effects, which are increasingly proving to be fatal, are the main causes of concern, together with the fact that it is widely available.

The feelings generated by Ecstasy pills are usually described as those of well-being and confidence. However, whilst under the influence of ecstasy, the individual may experience confusion, disorientation, anxiety, panic attacks, depression, paranoia and rare psychotic phenomena. Yet, little is thought is given to the disastrous consequences, including dehydration, high blood pressure, increased respiratory rate and blood sugar level, blurred vision, liver inflammation and bone marrow problems, among others. Most fatalities are related to over-heating and exhaustion as a result of excessive dancing and uncontrollable fluctuations in body temperature. Drinking excessive amounts of water to prevent dehydration can also lead to other complications.

However, many users do not report negative experiences. What is more worrying is the fact that since ecstasy is referred to as a recreational drug, and primarily psychologically addictive, users do not perceive its use as problematic. Thus, ecstasy users rarely seek assistance in relation to their drug abuse.

Here, it is important to highlight that it would not be correct to say that one can overdose on Ecstasy. When fatalities occur, it is because there would be

a negative reaction to the properties used to create the drug and therefore one or two tablets could prove lethal.

Another factor to take in consideration is the fact that this drug can inadvertently be taken with alcohol. The consequences can be disastrous. In open-bar parties or in places where alcohol is sold at cheap prices, such mixing is encouraged.

What *sedqa* has been trying to do during the past 9 years, and promises to continue doing, is to instigate in children and young people a positive attitude towards life. Creating a society where information, prevention and health are the priorities, a safe, healthy culture would prevail. The emphasis should be on healthy lifestyle. Life should be enjoyed to the full but without harming ourselves or others.