

# MDPV (Methylenedioxypropylamphetamine)

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Methylenedioxypropylamphetamine (MDPV) belongs to the class of psychoactive compounds that have been used in some European countries (e.g. Germany and France) as stimulants or weight-loss aids. Some of these substances have even been available over the counter. Their use started to decline, however, and they were withdrawn from the market after the danger of their misuse and dependency became known. Several years ago, substances from this class began to appear on the street, and the first seizures of MDPV were made in Finland in 2008.

As of September 2009, MDPV was not included in official lists of banned substances in the EU, with the exception of Denmark. It is not detectable in 'instant' drug tests, but it can be measured in analyses.

In Finland, MDPV is classified as a pharmaceutical, so its importation and distribution is banned. It is sold as an analytical research chemical, but the MDPV that ends up on the street in Finland probably originates in secret laboratories in Europe. MDPV is a typical 'designer drug' that can be purchased via the internet. In English-speaking countries its street names include 'monkey dust'. It has recently been called 'aakkoset' (ABCs) in Finland.

MDPV is a yellowish-white powder, and it can be taken in various ways, such as orally, by snorting, smoking or injecting. Its effects are similar to those of stimulants like cocaine and amphetamine, and it has some similar molecular structures to those substances. Its effects are short-term, lasting around 3–6 hours, which can easily lead to the user taking another dose.

There are few research findings on the effects of MDPV on humans. The majority of published information seems to be based on information found on internet discussion forums where users have reported their own experiences. The effects of MDPV are similar to those of amphetamine. They include heart palpitations, increased blood pressure, sleeplessness, anxiety and constricted blood vessels, which last for several hours. Users' negative experiences of MDPV seem to increase as the substance's stimulant effect wears off. Users have reported unpleasant hangover-like symptoms, which seem to be linked particularly to a severe headache. Contrary to what has been published, the effects of MDPV on human sexual practices do not differ from those of other stimulants, according to the experiences of users. MDPV's reputation as a sex drug may therefore be an urban myth.

Because of the brief history of MDPV, there simply is no information on the problems caused by long-term use. Judging by the chemical's pharmacological effect mechanism (prevention of pre-synaptic take-up of dopamine and noradrenalin) and the consequences of long-term use of similar substances, one may suspect that MDPV leads to dependence. Psychotic symptoms may also arise with long-term use or with high doses.

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