

# Review of: "Exploring the Experiences and Perceptions of Young People's Recreational Nitrous Oxide Use"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

Exploring the reasons why young people use nitrous oxide is important for the development of prevention programs. Overall, the manuscript contains interesting information and is clearly written, making it easy to read and understand. However, there are some issues that need attention before it is acceptable for publication. These issues concern:

- Apparently, it has been extremely difficult to find participants for the study. During the period from April to August 2023 (approximately 5 months), only 7 participants were recruited. According to page 3, a snowball procedure has been used to recruit participants outside the university community. In this, the researchers did not succeed: According to Table 1 on page 4, all participants are Bachelor or Master students. It seems strange that so few people wanted to participate, and the researchers do not address that in their discussion. So I wonder whether the 7 people who eventually wanted to participate might be acquaintances of the researcher (a fellow student, see page 3) who wanted to do this student a favor. That would further limit the representativeness of the respondents.
- In the Discussion, the authors should elaborate on the limitations of the representativeness of their research: after all, the study comprises only 7 students from 1 university in 1 city in 1 country. They should also compare the available characteristics of the 7 students with general information about nitrous oxide users in Australia. Six of the 7 students were male: is there also an overrepresentation of men among nitrous oxide users in general? All 7 respondents are students: How is the use of nitrous oxide by other, less educated youth in Australia?
- The authors should compare the reasons for using nitrous oxide with other studies about the reasons for using other types of drugs. This is interesting anyway, but especially important because the respondents in the present survey indicated that they use not only nitrous oxide but also other drugs.
- I also miss in the Discussion a comparison of the reasons why this small group of students in Australia use nitrous oxide with studies in other countries of nitrous oxide. Availability of nitrous oxide, cultural aspects, and differences in legislation could result in different reasons why people use nitrous oxide. I think the manuscript will increase in value if the authors also address this in the Discussion.
- In the second line of the Methods section, the authors refer to Appendix 1. This reviewer has not received Appendix 1.
- On page 2, the authors mention that 63 fatal road accidents in the Netherlands have been linked to the use of nitrous oxide. As most readers of the manuscript will not be familiar with the total number of fatal road accidents in the Netherlands during this time, I suggest that the authors also express this number as a percentage of the total number of fatal road accidents.
- Throughout the manuscript, nitrous oxide is written as N<sub>2</sub>O, N2O, and N<sup>2</sup>O. Please use the correct chemical notation.

- The reference list should be carefully checked, as I noticed that it contains several references with incomplete or incorrect information. Just a few random examples:
  - ref 12: year of publication is incorrect, page numbers are missing
  - ref 34: page numbers are incorrect
  - ref 36: page numbers are incorrect
  - What do the superscripts at the beginning of the references mean?

So please check all references carefully,