

Molly overtakes weed in music culture

Contributor [Lauren Carter](#)

Move aside Mary Jane, and make way for Molly.

Once associated primarily with weed, hip hop has cozied up to a party drug with a cute name, a mysterious identity and a potentially lethal set of side effects.

Artists such as Kanye West, Juicy J and Trinidad James have all name-dropped Molly, and Rick Ross' Molly-laced date rape lyrics (*"Put Molly all in her champagne, she ain't even know it/I took her home and I enjoyed that, she ain't even know it"*) caused an uproar and got the rotund rapper [dropped from Reebok](#).

Some emcees have dedicated whole songs to rap's new designer drug — take, for example, Tyga's "[Molly](#)," which has racked up over 7 million views on YouTube and features Tyga-as-cyborg rapping *"I show up in that party like where the f*ck that Molly?"* A robotic female voice chants "Molly" during the chorus, and Wiz Khalifa offers up more drug references during a guest verse — *"Got champagne and we pourin it/she poppin it and she snortin it"* — while images of pills flash onscreen.

Hip hop's fixation with Molly has even spawned parodies, including "[Ratchet, Turnup, Molly](#)" from the Turnup Twinz, which seems one 2 Chainz verse short of being a legitimate song.

In the video, characters such as "Lil' YOLO" and "Swag Snacks" congregate at a poolside party and chant "ratchet, turnup, Molly" and "YOLO, turnup, Molly" at regular intervals. The rest of the lyrics are equally asinine and Molly-focused:

"She twerkin in the ride/them doors are suicide/she pop another Molly and it work like Astroglide."

*"I'm poppin all these bands/these b*tches use no hands/I pop a few more Mollies and I give some to her man."*

*"Molly we love to pop/You know we never stop/I pop Molly in the sauna/I pop Molly in the drop/I pop Molly when I swim/Start to touch my best friend Tim/Sh*t Molly even with me when I'm shooting in the gym."*

Like weed and [syrup](#), Molly has become another go-to chemical accessory in rap music, even to the point of parody. Whether reflecting real-life habits or jumping on the latest trend to stay relevant, rappers shout out Molly like paid drug reps.

The problem is, no one seems to know who Molly really is.

Getting to know Molly

Short for “molecule,” Molly is the powder or crystal form of MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine), the chemical found in Ecstasy. While Ecstasy is often laced with ingredients such as caffeine or methamphetamine, Molly is thought to be pure MDMA.

According to the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#), MDMA has both stimulant and psychedelic properties, creating a sense of euphoria and emotional warmth in users while enhancing tactile sensations and sexual arousal, usually lasting for about three to six hours.

The Drug Enforcement Administration categorizes MDMA as a [Schedule I Controlled Substance](#), meaning that it has no accepted medical use in the U.S. and a high potential for abuse. Other drugs in Schedule I include heroin and LSD.

Before it became illegal in 1985, MDMA was used in psychotherapy, and clinical trials are currently testing MDMA’s potential to treat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Along with its temporary mood-boosting properties, MDMA brings a host of negative effects that can include confusion, anxiety, depression and paranoia as well as tremors, involuntary teeth clenching, muscle cramps and blurred vision. High doses of MDMA can interfere with the ability to regulate body temperature, which can lead to liver, kidney and cardiovascular failure, and drug-related deaths have been reported due to dehydration, hyperthermia and seizures.

The Molly Mystery

Though Molly is marketed as pure MDMA, many say that’s simply false advertising.

“Nothing’s changed — it’s still Ecstasy under a different name,” said Jon Daily, LCSW, clinical director of [Recovery Happens Counseling Services](#).

In fact, what users think is pure MDMA may not even contain MDMA at all. According to [Ecstasydata.org](#), an independent laboratory program that tests Ecstasy in pill and powdered form, only 24.1 percent of samples tested in 2013 contained pure MDMA, while 34.2 percent contained no MDMA at all and 27.8 percent contained stimulants such as caffeine, cocaine and methamphetamine.

“If you’re buying it from a guy on a street corner or at a club, it’s not clear what you’re going to get,” said Dr. John Kelly, associate director at the Massachusetts General Hospital-Harvard Center for Addiction Medicine and associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. “You don’t know what it’s been mixed with, you don’t know what the side effects are, you don’t know how it may interact with other drugs that you might be taking.”

Kelly noted that interactions with antidepressants can be especially dangerous.

“[MDMA] is a drug that can kill you if you take enough of it, or you take it and it interacts with a medication,” said Kelly. “For example, it can produce a big deficit in serotonin, especially if

you mix it with an antidepressant affecting the serotonin system, and that can produce what's called serotonin syndrome. That can be lethal.”

Studies suggest that chronic use of MDMA can produce brain damage in humans and problems with memory and learning, though experts say the drug's long-term effects are not fully understood.

“It's a fairly new drug in terms of being misused and used heavily, and so we don't really know what the long-term effects are of using it, either cognitive or mood effects,” said Dr. Kelly. “But if you're using high amounts over a long period, you're going to do yourself some damage.”

As is often the case when drugs and pop culture mix, though, that damage is seldom spotlighted in songs or videos that promote the drug.

Instead, Molly appears harmless and alluring, a party accessory for a young, sexually-charged culture seeking an escape from the stress of daily life.

“The thing about Molly is it gives you the drug experience without having you go through the drug mechanics,” said G. Valentino Ball, editor and co-founder of urban blogazine KillerBoomBox.com. “You don't have to sniff. You don't have to inject. You just put it on your tongue like candy. I think the other part of it is the connection with sex. It's the euphoric-type vibe that you're supposed to get from the drug. People use it to enhance their sex lives. So when you've got a hypersexualized society where people are thinking about doing it all the time, this is the drug for that society.”

The role of rap

Rap isn't singlehandedly responsible for ushering Molly from the underground rave scene to mainstream pop culture, and rappers aren't the only stars promoting the drug. Even pop icon Madonna gave Molly a shout-out at a Miami festival last March when she asked “How many people in this crowd have seen Molly?”

But there's no denying that Molly seems to have gone viral in mainstream rap.

“There may be somebody who had a legitimate experience with it ... and they talk about it on a hit record, and then here come the 20 other people behind it trying to emulate that person,” said Ball. “That's why it has this pervasive feel throughout the culture. I do think that if it's something that's being discussed on a continual basis, that may pique some curiosity.”

It's safe to say that curiosity has been piqued. Floods of Molly-related news reports and user forums over the past couple of years serve as proof, not to mention a new crop of Molly users who found out about the drug from their favorite rapper. Trinidad James, for example, admitted that his line “popped a Molly, I'm sweatin” from “All Gold Everything” has encouraged listeners to give Molly a chance.

“All the people are like, ‘I don’t know what it is, but every time I hear the song, I just wanna do it,’” [James told MTVNews](#).

But Daily, who sees about 70 clients a week at Recovery Happens, notes that most people who use Molly after hearing about it in a song were already using other drugs.

“If you really look at the [Molly] issue, I think hip hop has accelerated it, but if you take a step back, it’s people who’ve already had a relationship to intoxication and drug culture,” said Daily.

Some rappers are taking a different route and pushing back against the Molly trend. Joe Budden, for one, has detailed his own struggles with the drug on record and in interviews, painting a darker picture of Molly than rap listeners might typically hear.

“I didn’t see a problem with the fact that maybe five days would go by without sleeping,” Budden told [Fox5NY](#) about his Molly binges. “I didn’t see a problem with the fact that I was maybe hallucinating at times.”

“Now, everyone is speaking about Molly like it’s the ‘it’ thing to do,” he said. “I thought it was important for somebody, anybody to stand up and say, ‘You know, I did that, and it’s corny.’”

Though Molly seems to be on every rapper’s mind, some say rap’s wave of pill-popping will pass as more artists like Budden begin to expose Molly’s dark side and the focus shifts from the party to the hangover.

“I think hip hop always has its way of self-correcting,” said Ball. “Because we’ve had this wave of all this conversation about Molly, drugs and whatever, I think the next wave of what you’re going to see is people going against it ... It’s all cute the first couple weeks. But when you see that Molly is really sometimes meth, coke and all those other things that are mixed together, and you don’t really know what you’re taking, and you start to see the effects of people who are taking that, then it’s going to go the other way.”

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