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# Email Alert

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Updating you about current events in the battle against addictions

## Salvia - Not just a harmless herb

Salvia divinorum is a hallucinogenic herb native to the Sierra Mazateca region of Mexico. It is used by native Mazatec tribes as a healing and divining tool. It is generally abused in the United States because of its ability to cause hallucinations. The component in Salvia which is responsible for its hallucinogenic effects is Salvinorin A which is active at the brain's kappa opioid receptors.

Neither Salvia Divinorum nor Salvinorin A is listed as a controlled substance under the US Federal Controlled Substances Act. Salvia extracts are available locally and can be ordered online. At this point, 12 states prohibit salvia growth or sales of the plant and/or extracts. Legislation is pending in an additional 13 states. Earlier this year SERAC provided information about Salvia to the General Law Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly.

Salvia is traditionally ingested by chewing fresh leaves or by drinking tea made from the leaves. However, the dried leaves can also be smoked. The effects of salvia usually begin within minutes and can include sensations of traveling through time and space, floating flying; twisting or spinning. Visual hallucinations of patterns and shapes also reportedly occur when the eyes are closed. Physical effects of salvia ingestion include dizziness, nausea, lack of coordination, slurred speech and decreased heart rate. Data regarding the long term effects of salvia use are not available.

According to National Survey on Drug Use and Health 2006 estimates:

- 1.8 million people 12 and older had used Salvia at least once in their lives
- 750,000 individuals had used it within the past year.

Due to increasing coverage of Salvia in the media and increasing discussion and video sharing on sites like YouTube the National Institute on Drug Abuse stresses the possibility of an increase in the level of Salvia abuse in the United States and Europe.

Source: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/Infofacts/salvia.html>  
<http://www.cesar.umd.edu/cesar/drugs/salvia.as>  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/pdf/monographs/71.pdf>

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