

## University in cocaine denial

Nouse finds drug traces across both campuses

Tuesday 4 December 2012

A drug investigation carried out by *Nouse* has shown that numerous sites across both the Heslington West and East campuses have tested positive for cocaine. The University has rejected the results.

In 2008, Nouse found cocaine across campus in a similar investigation. In response to this report, the University said it would take “urgent action.”

In this instance, the University gave this as their full response: “The University takes drug abuse seriously and will not tolerate drug peddling on the campus. However, past experience suggests that swab tests such as these are very unreliable, and often produce false positive results due to the chemicals used in various cleaning materials. We would urge you not to draw conclusions from such data.”

However, David Rigg, Founder-Director of Crackdown Drugs Testing, the company used to conduct the investigation, has put the accuracy of the results at 95 per cent, adding, “Virtually every police force in the country uses us. We’ve had positive results from Parliament, courts, police headquarters all over.”

Rigg revealed the University management itself used the same swab company four years ago, “I think they wanted it more, not as an intelligence gathering sort of thing, they were trying to identify areas in the University where drugs were being abused.”

The swab test operates on the principle that when cocaine comes into contact with Cobalt Thiocyanate, a reaction occurs and a blue colour is generated. This indicates that cocaine has been on that surface.

Areas testing positive for cocaine included the basement male and female toilets in Heslington Hall, the toilet in between YourSpace and the offices of the sabbatical officers, and in the male toilets of the new Law and Management School.

Positive results for the drug were also found in the Vanbrugh Stalls female toilet, as well as toilets in the JB Morrell library on two floors, Wentworth male and female toilets, the Sports Centre, the Roger Kirk Centre, the Physics Department, Derwent JCRC and bar, and B-Henry’s.

Commenting on both the survey and swab results, Kallum Taylor, YUSU President, told Nouse, “I think the findings here show that we really shouldn’t be naive about drug usage, of all kinds, all around us. We should look to become much more informed about drugs and their varying effects and risks.”

He added that: “We expect the University to do what it can to inform students about the effects of drug use and support those affected by it.”

Nearly half of students at the University said, in a survey carried out by Nouse, that they are taking illegal recreational drugs, while 54 per cent said they have taken Class B or higher. Notably, 16 per cent of students surveyed admitted to having taken Class A drugs such as MDMA or cocaine.

The poll was carried out on 283 students. The majority, 86 per cent, of the sample, did not know the full consequences of being caught with possession of Class A, B, or C drugs while 11 per cent knew nothing of

the consequences.

*Nouse* tested for cocaine at locations across campus, including all colleges, and various departments and buildings. Whilst cocaine was found across campus, it should be noted many samples came up negative.

Swabs tested positive for cocaine in the male and female toilets in Heslington Hall basement.

The findings do not necessarily mean students have been taking the Class A drug in the toilets, but strongly indicate the drug's presence in the swabbed areas.

However, according to Rigg, some cleaning fluids can have an effect on the test. He said, "if you've got a fine base cleaner, and you're using it neat, rather than dissolving it in water first, and then swab it straight after, you'll get a bluey-green colour." He added that this false-positive result does not occur with diluted cleaner, nor after the fluid has been left for a short period of time.

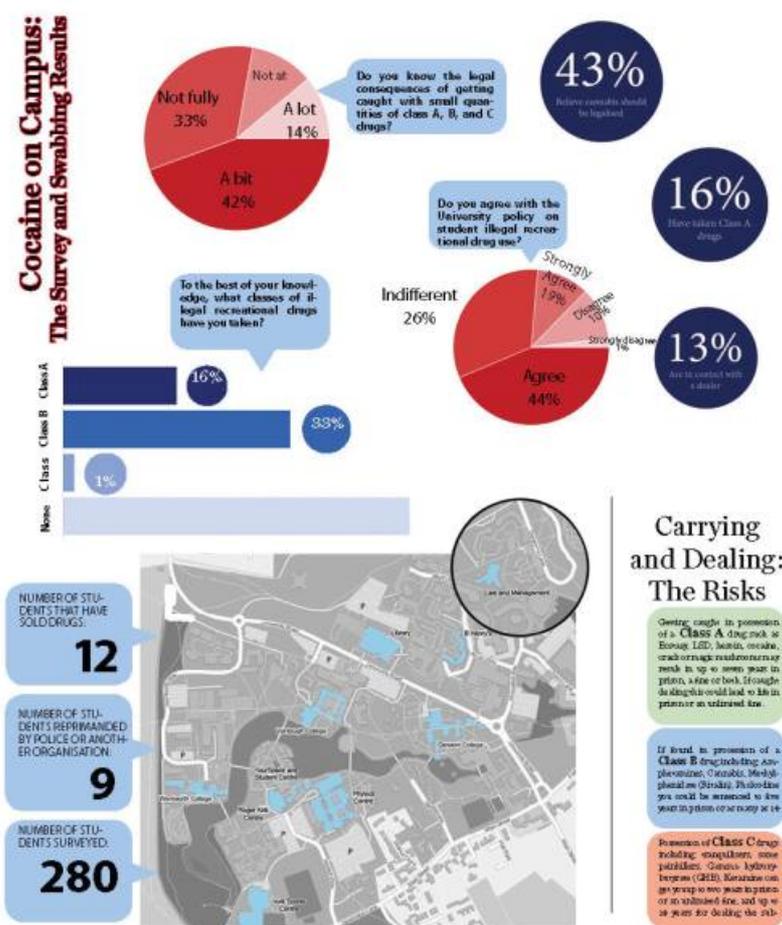
*Nouse* reporters ensured the tests were carried out with accuracy, and many of the swabs only turned blue when wiped over cracks or areas that cleaning products couldn't reach but particles of cocaine could. The area around James College seems to be a hotspot with positive tests in YourSpace, the Sports Centre, and the Roger Kirk Centre.

In the *Nouse* poll 43 per cent of students said they would support the legalisation of cannabis. If this policy were to be implemented in government this could potentially lead to the decriminalisation of other drugs.

*Reporting by: Josh Boswell, Laura Hughes and Neil Johnston*

*Additional reporting by: Anwen Baker, Gary Holland, Harry Gallivan, Sofia Geraghty, Amy Blumsom, James Cameron, Nikki Farthing, Mary O'Connor and Rosie Shields*

*Josh Boswell talks to a student drug dealer: full interview [here](#)*



Cocaine on Campus: The Survey and Swab Results



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## 9 comments

Moustapha

4 Dec '12 at 12:55 pm

When will Nouse cover other ground breaking stories, such as the fact that apparently bears defecate in the woods?

[Report](#)

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Colin

4 Dec '12 at 6:25 pm

Scrap bears defecating in the woods, apparently DFS has a sale on.

[Report](#)

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Peter Marshall

4 Dec '12 at 6:43 pm

The other day I found out that in order for a baby to be born a man and woman have to have penetrative sex! I'm learning every day.

[Report](#)

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Nathan Barley

4 Dec '12 at 8:47 pm

Massive troll. As if anyone in B-Henry's has snorted a fat line in the toilets.

It's in Alcuin. Alcuin.

[Report](#)

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Lalila

5 Dec '12 at 9:12 pm

During freshers week I was told that if I wanted drugs a friend could get them for me by the afternoon. I was a naive fresher and very shocked as I had never seen a drug in my life! Drugs are out there, why wouldn't students take them?

[Report](#)

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Matt Cooke

6 Dec '12 at 12:12 am

The thing about testing for trace amounts of cocaine is that a large number of places will have been in either direct or indirect contact with cocaine at some point. I think that the Nouse editorial team should offer up their purses and wallets to be tested for cocaine, as there is a strong chance that at one point they have all owned a £20 note that was once used to snort cocaine, then we can see them try to deny the existence a cocaine culture at Grimston House.

On a more serious note, trace amounts mean next to nothing. What would be more useful is to study sewerage water for the metabolites of cocaine, and compare the concentration of these across campus and also over time. This will give a much more extensive picture of cocaine (ab)use across campus.

[Report](#)

Lord Levy's son

6 Dec '12 at 2:35 am

We need to stage an intervention for these gentlemen pretty rapidly.

Also, they're not doing it right. Up the nose, not on the face.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/4360760/Blue-Man-Group-the-whole-world-gets-the-blue.html>

 Report

Anonymous

7 Dec '12 at 12:03 am

If there really are huge numbers of people using university facilities to take cocaine then perhaps the university should consider fitting its toilets with convenient surfaces and/or pre-rolled paper tubes in order to effectively keep up with the changing needs of their students.

 Report

Eve

28 Mar '18 at 2:31 am

You really saved my skin with this inotomafirn. Thanks!

 Report

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