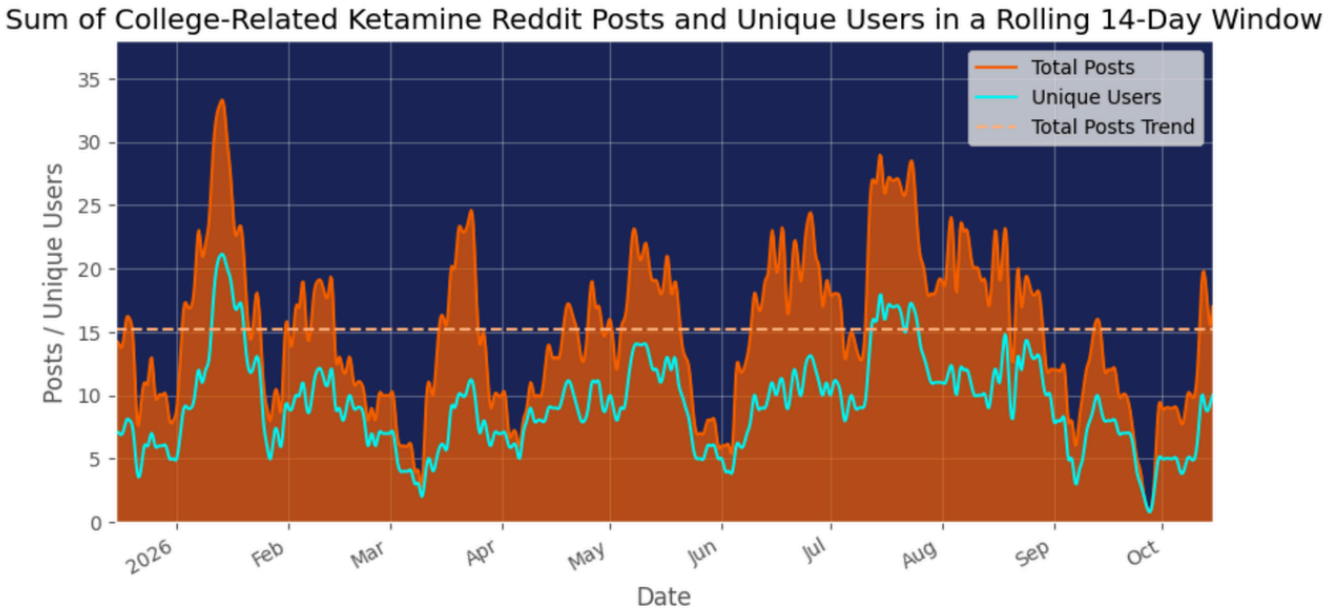
N·DEWS | NATIONAL DRUG EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Alert from the NDEWS Web Monitoring Team
Reddit mentions of ketamine



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Published in NDEWS Weekly Briefing Issue 307: October 16, 2026

What is Ketamine? Ketamine is a dissociative anesthetic used in human and veterinary medicine. Nonmedical use most often involves snorting powder typically called “bumps” or “lines,” and higher doses can produce an intense dissociative state known as a “k-hole”; common slang terms include “K,” “ket,” and “special K.”

Why are we reporting on this? Ketamine has received elevated media attention and public interest regarding substance use trends within higher education, accompanied by sustained online discussions concerning its consumption among college-aged populations and young adults. On Reddit, ketamine use in collegiate settings is frequently discussed as part of broader polysubstance patterns at parties, gatherings with friends, and events involving fraternity and sorority crowds. Commenters detail hazardous practices such as frequent or daily consumption, co-ingestion with alcohol, prescription stimulants, cocaine, psychedelics, opioids, and benzodiazepines, as well as adverse outcomes including acute panic, extreme dissociation, paranoia, disruptions to academic responsibilities, and seek or require medical care to treat symptoms. In addition, these discussions highlight ongoing concerns regarding family reactions and institutional responses from universities following substance-related incidents.

Previous NDEWS Web Monitoring Reports on ketamine:

- 07/17/2026
- 10/03/2025
- 07/11/2025
- 12/09/2022

NDEWS is funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse to the University of Florida (MPI: Cottler (contact), Co-Is: Goldberger, Nixon, Striley), NYU Langone Health (MPI: Palamar), and Florida Atlantic University (Co-I: Barenholtz). (2026). Alert from the NDEWS Web Monitoring Team Reddit mentions of ketamine (October 16, 2026). Retrieved from ndews.org.

Public Health Impacts: Discussants describe frequent or daily ketamine use, relapse, and difficulty stopping, often alongside dependence on other substances such as benzodiazepines. Commenters report extreme dissociation, paranoia, and feeling overwhelmed after use, and a few describe bladder problems linked to frequent ketamine or other dissociative use. A few commenters who are college or university students and describe using ketamine also describe hospital or emergency care after polysubstance use or overdose. In addition, commenters frequently report functional setbacks, including neglected coursework, missed examinations, academic suspension, and challenges managing comorbid psychological conditions like attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression, and polysubstance dependence.

How is it Being Discussed? Reddit commenters describe ketamine use in a range of contexts, including recreational nightlife, attempts to manage pain or mental health symptoms, coping with academic stress, and offsetting the effects of cocaine, LSD, or prescription stimulants. Discussions frequently describe ketamine as part of polysubstance use rather than as a standalone substance, with mentions of combinations involving psychedelics, stimulants, cannabis, alcohol, benzodiazepines, opioids, pregabalin, and other substances. Posts describe use at parties, fraternity and sorority events, and gatherings with friends, most commonly through intranasal administration, including “bumps” or “lines,” with some reports of intramuscular or intravenous injection. Commenters also discuss dissociative experiences, including “k-holes,” describing a range of subjective effects such as relaxation, introspection, disorientation, panic, and detachment from their surroundings. Some individuals with ADHD describe using ketamine alongside prescribed stimulants, including in the context of studying, while others discuss maintaining academic responsibilities despite frequent substance use or expressing difficulty controlling their consumption. Discussions also address the perceived prevalence of drug use in college social circles, its compatibility with academic demands, and concerns about how universities and families respond to substance-related incidents, including campus security involvement, university-arranged hospital care, and concealing substance use from parents. Public health discussions include concerns about dosing, reagent testing for potential adulterants, and the effects of habitual use.

Drug Terms: Ketamine, Ket, Special K, and K-hole, each combined with college, university, undergrad, undergraduate, campus, dorm, fraternity, frat, sorority, student, higher education, freshman, and sophomore.

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