



A new landscape

Emerging drug trends in Ireland and concerns for health

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A NEW LANDSCAPE

Evolving Markets



- Production and supply
- Contents and purity
- Technological advances

Socio-Cultural



- New media
- Proliferation of nightlife

New User Groups



- Across society
- New subcultures
- Young females

Harms



- Polydrug
- Stimulant deaths
- Unknown market contents

DRUG USE POPULATIONS CAN NO LONGER BE EASILY DEFINED



Prevention challenges – the media and new trends

- “*Everyone is doing it*”
- Over estimation of knowledge and use
- New means of communications – navigating factual information
- Beliefs within peer groups
- Managing media reporting of new drug trends
- Information alone ineffective

The Case of Nitrous Oxide in Ireland

‘Drug craze’: Use of laughing gas by under-18s should be banned – FG TD

Call For Awareness Campaign In Dublin On Nitrous Oxide Dangers

Nitrus oxide: Kids being introduced to hard drugs through laughing gas epidemic

‘Laughing gas’ added to HSE’s dangerous drugs list as TD begs kids not to play ‘Russian roulette’ with their lives

Deadly new ‘drug of choice’ known as ‘hippy crack’ taking over Dublin as parents make shock discovery of bullet cylinders on ground

As nitrous oxide becomes the gateway drug of the summer, it’s time for fast action to restrict sales

Use of nitrous oxide or ‘hippie crack’ on the rise during pandemic

DEADLY ‘HIPPIE CRACK’ DRUG DISCOVERED IN JOHNSTOWN

Current landscape

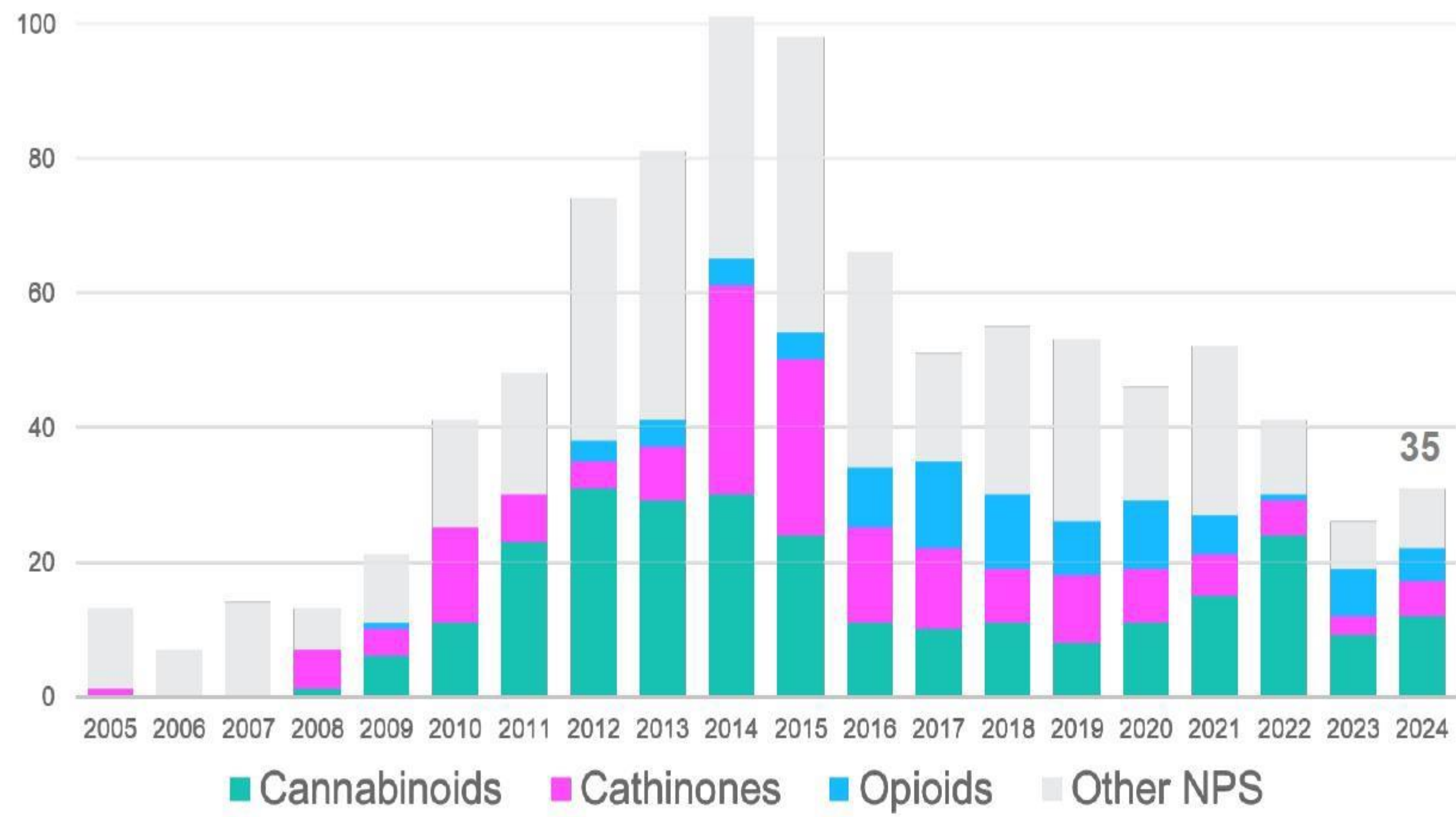
- Cannabis –u18 and mental health, evolving market
- Cocaine/Crack – sustained period, increases in treatment presentations and deaths, injecting
- Aging opioid users: New healthcare needs
- Counterfeit tablet market
- Benzodiazepines – Across markets
- MDMA – mainstream at a time of increased risk
- Ketamine – limited information despite high levels of use in nightlife
- Psychedelics – foresee further increases
- Evolution of high street shops

New trends

- Newly developed – little is known in terms of health harms and who uses
- May not be 'new' but re-emerging
- New user groups / using in new ways
- New harms presenting



Number of NPS formally notified for the first time by year, 2005 – 2024



European Drug Report 2024
NPS

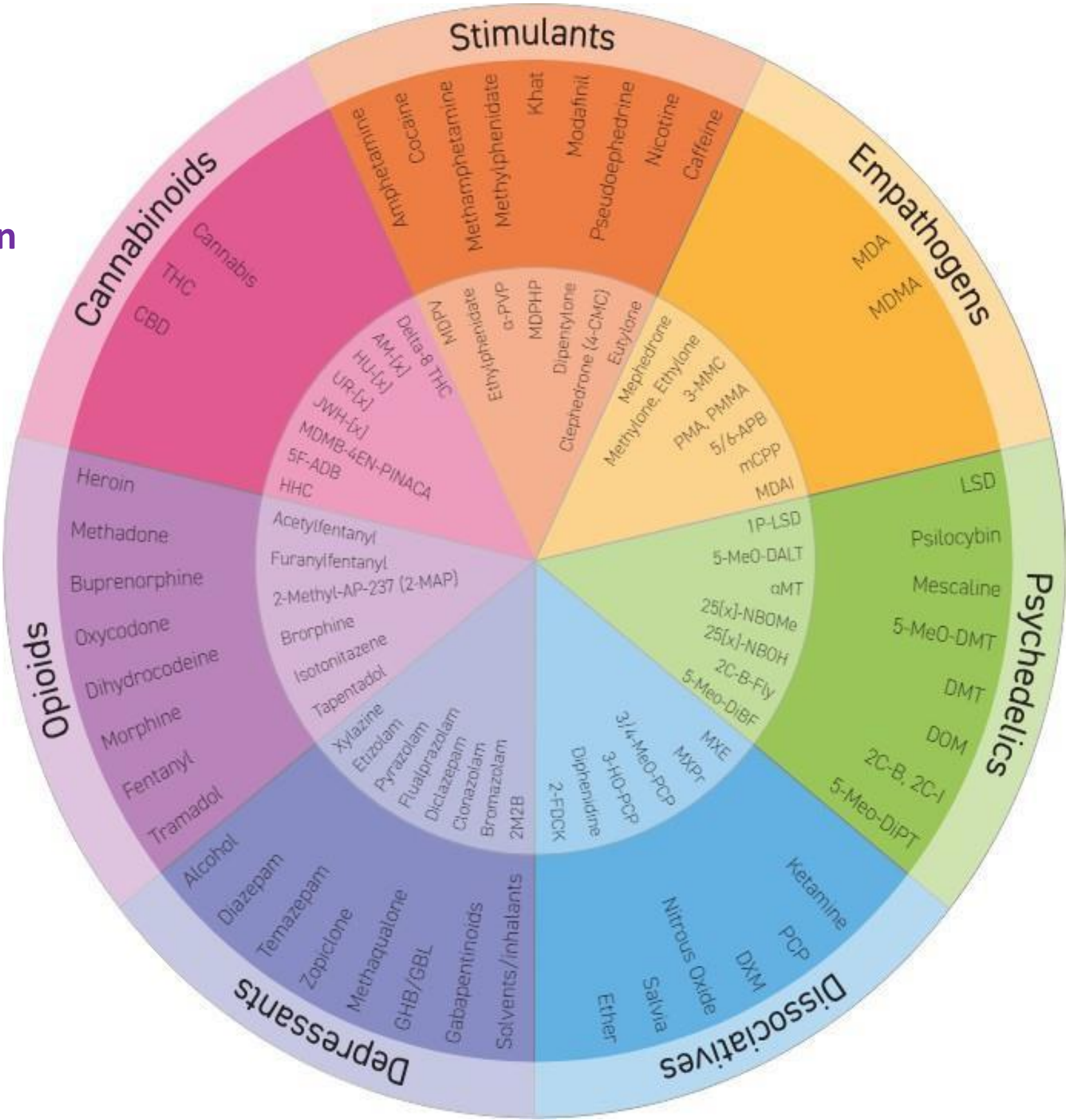


EU Drug Market:
New psychoactive
substances

Slide: Rachel Christie, EUDA, 2024

980 substances currently under
monitoring

The Drug Wheel
A new way to deliver drug education



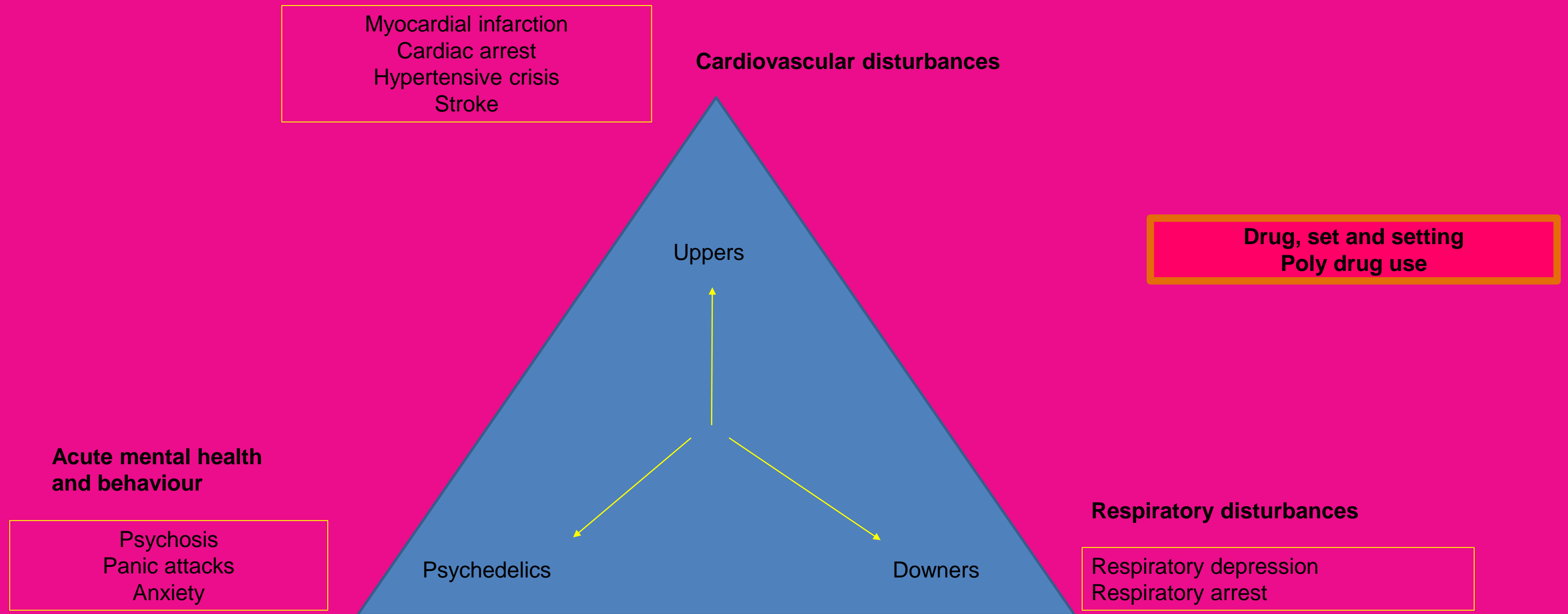
- Challenges:
- Effects can span headings
 - The actual contents
 - Individual factors/reactions

Drugs.ie interactive drug wheel

- Test knowledge on trends and consumption patterns
- Identify knowledge on new psychoactive substances (NPS)

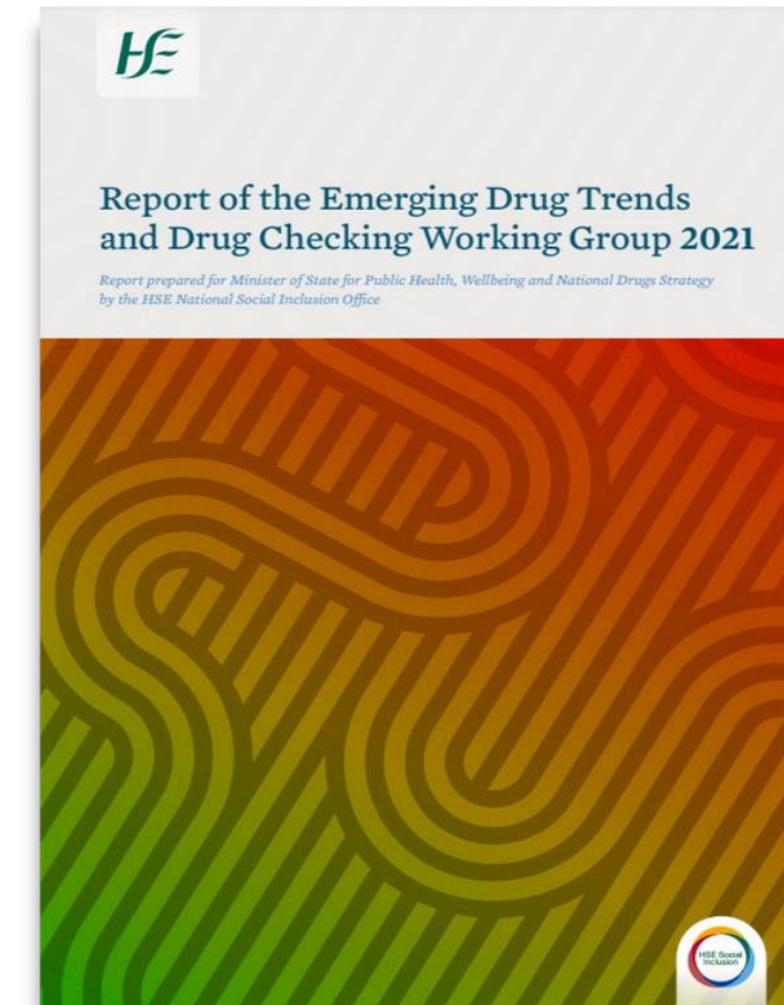


Triangle of health impairments



Responding to a new landscape: Policy developments

- Working Group and EU experts
- First recognition of nightlife use in terms of research, policy and practice in Ireland
- Need to adapt approaches
- Extensive evidence review and web survey with TCD
- Series of recommendations



Who?

- Students, the dance community, festival organisers, safety controllers
- Department of Justice, Department of Health, Psychiatrists, Emergency Management, Laboratories, academics, communications, law enforcement

Irish Journal of Medical Science (1971 -) (2022) 191:1701–1710
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11845-021-02765-2>

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Drug use, harm-reduction practices and attitudes toward the utilisation of drug safety testing services in an Irish cohort of festival-goers

Jo-Hanna Ivers¹ · Nicki Killeen² · Eamon Keenan^{1,2}



Monitoring ‘Surveillance’

Monitoring: The systematic and on-going collection, collation, analysis, and assessment of data and the timely dissemination of the resulting information for the purposes of early warning, initial report, and/or risk assessment procedures as laid down in Article 5 of Regulation (EC) No 1920/2006 (as amended).

Traditional tools

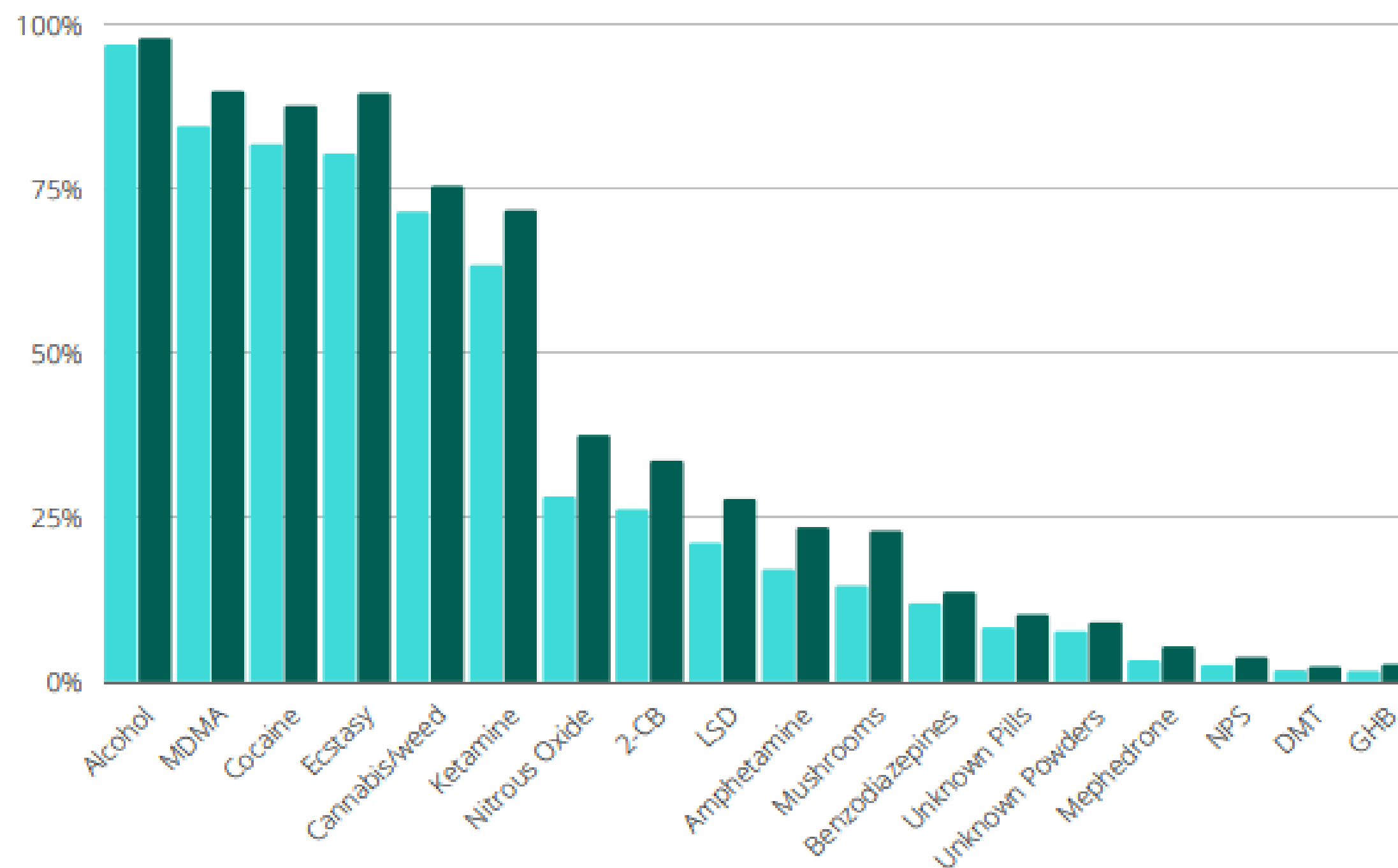
- Prevalence data
- Drug-related deaths
- Treatment
- Law enforcement seizures
- Hospital data – Euro-DEN Network



Ways to quickly identify ‘signals of change’

Signal: The information arising from one or more sources that suggests a potential public health or social threat of relevance associated with a new psychoactive substance or other substance of interest, and is judged to be of sufficient likelihood to justify verification, and, where necessary, a response.

WHAT ARE YOU TAKING? – USE WITHIN A FESTIVAL SETTING '19



Data Source: IJMS, Ivers, Killeen & Keenan 2021



HSE Pilot Safer Nightlife Programme 2022-2024

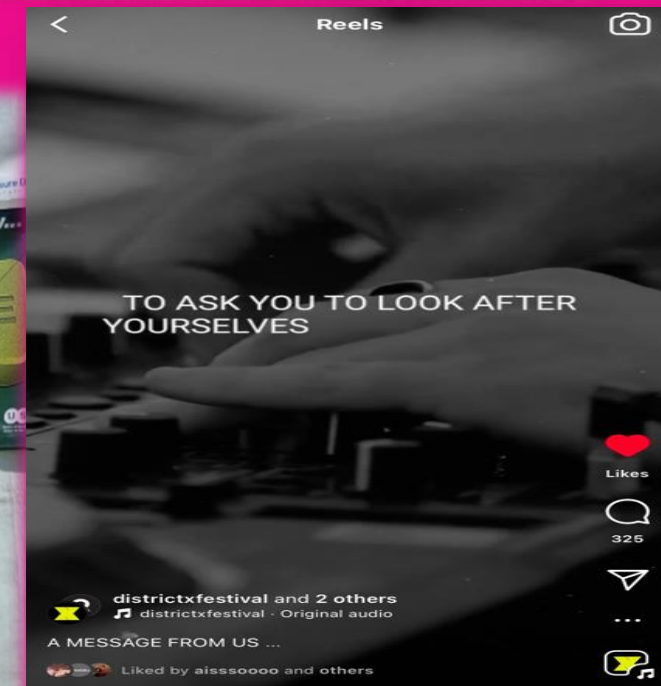
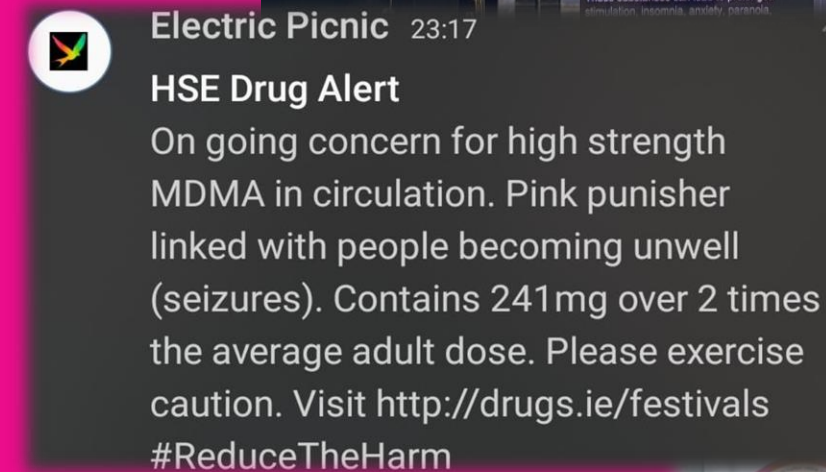
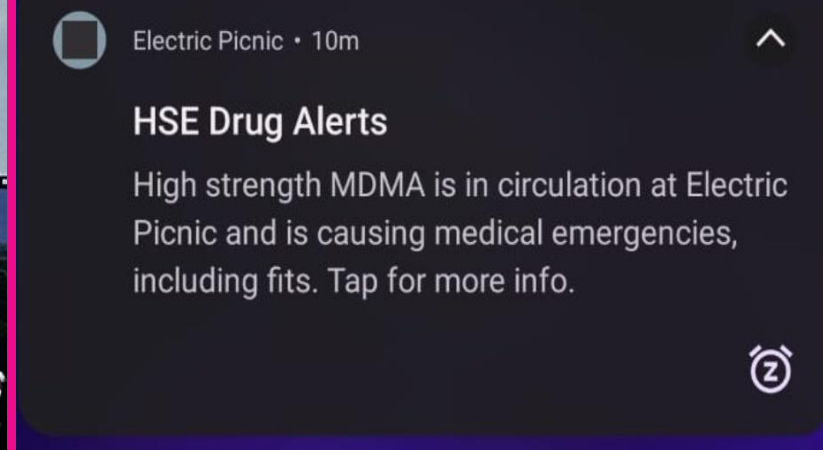
1. Volunteer recruitment and training
2. Outreach
3. Festival harm reduction and communication policies
4. 'Back of house' drug analysis pilot



Delivery

- Detect, identify & support
- Early engagement
- Prevent harm
- Health promotion and awareness raising
- Stigma reduction
- Increase uptake in onsite services
- Sign post
- Multi-stakeholder response to acute situations

Two tents & lab
5-10 hours of outreach



Adapting ‘Back of house’/’Half way house’ analysis

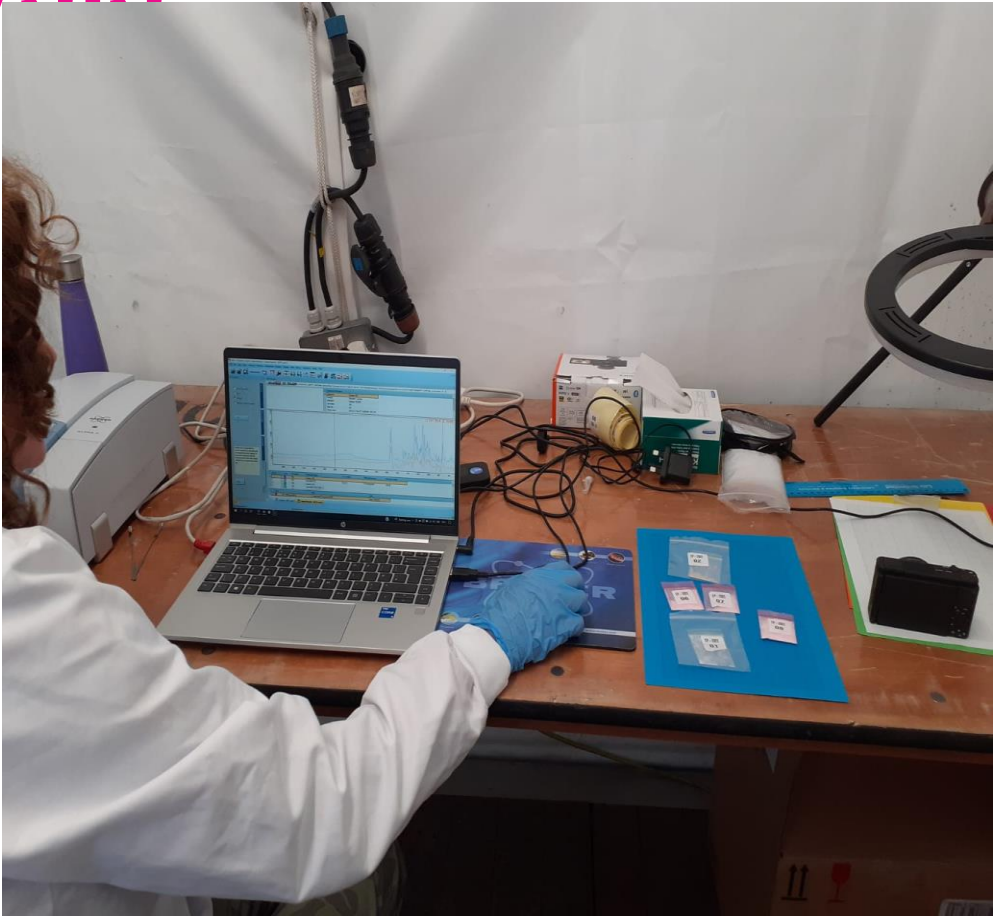


HSE
surrender
bin



Information
obtained

- Type of drug
- Source/location
- Negative health effects



Rapid review onsite



Festival goes
drug bin/
Not the HSE bin

! HSE festival update !

Higher strength MDMA can increase risks for people at events this weekend

MDMA has changed, there are bigger pills containing from 143mg to 222mg of MDMA. This is double an average dose.

Appearance
Purple, pink, blue, and green MDMA (ecstasy) pills

Recommendation
It's safer not to use drugs at all. All MDMA has risk, you can't be sure of the contents or purity.
Treat MDMA pills, powders and crystals with caution, start low, go slow.

Don't be afraid to get medical help if you or a friend feels unwell after using drugs.

#ReduceTheHarms DRUGS.ie



Benefits

- Being the public health service
- Health-led stakeholder partnership
- Embedding harm reduction strategies across festival responses
- Building rapport, evidence and experience
- Supporting acute responses
- Foresight planning



"I had several people approach us to inform us of someone potentially feeling unwell that they did not know. They knew they could come to us and because of this we were able to provide a more safe environment. We were able to efficiently check in with the attendees to make sure they were okay, some of them were by themselves having a lie down in the middle of the campsite" **Harm reduction Volunteer**

"People told us that they felt more safe that we were there and understood that the safest route is not taking drugs at all. However, you cannot stop people from consuming substances and everyone had a story about someone they loved being harmed from dodgy gear or not having harm reduction services at these events" **HSE Harm Reduction Volunteer**

Increased engagement with HSE and medical teams, increased level of samples submitted following adverse mental health reactions

HSE drug warning

Treat all pills, powders, and crystals with caution

High strength MDMA in circulation at Electric Picnic

MDMA is causing medical emergencies, including fits.

Don't be afraid to get medical help if you or a friend feels unwell after using drugs.

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DRUGS.ie

Medics reported decrease in presentations and seizure activity

HSE Drug Risk

High strength cocaine concerns at Life

Higher strength cocaine causing aggression with mental and physical health problems.

Appearance
White powder.

Recommendation
It is always safer not to use. Remember HSE advice, start very low, go slow and avoid mixing.

Don't be afraid to get medical help if you or a friend feels unwell after using drugs.

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MDMA – pills, powders and crystals

2022

Min MDMA: 50mg
Max MDMA: 235mg

2023

Min MDMA: 63mg
Max MDMA: 246mg

2024

Min MDMA: 117mg
Max MDMA: 267mg

Issues with powder consumption throughout summer 2024

Unpublished data,
HSE National Drug Treatment
Centre
Emerging Drug Trends
Laboratory, 2025



Ketamine

- European Web Survey for Drugs 2021 ($n = 5796$) where 23% of respondents reporting use. The result for ketamine use in Ireland was considerably higher than the overall proportion of ketamine use reported from the other 30 participating countries in the web survey which was 13%.
- Lack of knowledge on effects – acute mental health situations
- Poly use – MDMA and ‘CK’
- Seizure activity
- More frequent use – long term bladder concern
- Anecdotal reports on current contents

‘K culture’, ketamine’s prominent yet overlooked role on the Irish drug scene and implications for health

Nicki Killeen¹ · Sinéad Mc Namara² · Eamon Keenan^{1,3}

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Dear Editor,

The Irish drug landscape has been significantly changing for some time with many new user groups now existing from a range of social demographics across Irish society. We are currently observing a situation where new drug trends are often not represented in our traditional general population surveys, youth surveys or within our addiction service data. One trend identified through the application of new approaches such as targeted nightlife outreach and local web surveys among people who use drugs [1–3] is the use of ketamine which has become a prominent feature of ‘recreational’ drug repertoires in Ireland, often used in combination with other ‘club drugs’ for stimulant and euphoric effects when socialising.

While not a new trend and a drug that has been prominent in nightlife culture in Europe for some time [4, 5], it is a drug that appears to have relevance to youth cultures at various different periods. More recently, there has been a notable increase in popularity, with ketamine following a similar trajectory to other ‘club drugs’ moving from the margins to more mainstream use.

While use was not documented in a number of national studies, in 2019, a review of festival drug use identified that 63% of 1093 respondents to a web survey had used ketamine at an event in Ireland within the last year [1]. Through this research, the use of ‘CK’ or ‘Calvin Klein’ was identified which is the intentional mixing and subsequent ingestion of cocaine and ketamine. Ketamine was confirmed as a common trend among third-level students in the 2021 Drug Use in Higher Education in Ireland (DUHEI) survey. Of the

11,592 respondents, ketamine was the fourth most common drug used with 16% of students reporting that they have ever used ketamine in their lifetime, and 46.7% ($n = 1032$) of those considered ‘current substance users’ reported engaging in ketamine use [6]. Recent use was further identified in the Irish results from the European Web Survey for Drugs 2021 ($n = 5796$) where 23% of respondents reporting use, which positioned it as the fourth highest drug used among participants following cannabis, cocaine and MDMA [2]. The result for ketamine use in Ireland was considerably higher than the overall proportion of ketamine use reported from the other 30 participating countries in the web survey which was 13%. Use in this survey was recorded as higher among the younger age cohort which is reflective of where this trend is now presenting [2]. The quantity of ketamine seized and reported to the EU Early Warning System on New Psychoactive Substances has varied over time, but has remained at relatively high levels in recent years [7]. Local law enforcement data indicates an upward trend in ketamine seizures over recent years in Ireland. Ketamine was the most prominent drug classed as a ‘hallucinogen’ by law enforcement seized in 2019 ($n = 240$), indicating a fivefold increase on ketamine seizures since 2018 ($n = 48$) [7].

Findings from HSE ‘Safer Nightlife Programme’ harm reduction outreach and ‘back of house’ drug checking in 2022–2023 position ketamine as a significant nightlife trend, second to the use of MDMA pills and powders. Across four events, 266 substances were surrendered to the HSE, of which 117 were MDMA, 40 were ketamine and 34 were cocaine. Of concern was the noted lack of knowledge often expressed by festival attendees on the effects of ketamine [3] and medical concerns observed across events related to ketamine this summer, in particular ketamine-related seizure activity. A total of 65% of the ketamine samples received over all four festivals had no other detectable substances present by Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR). While FTIR has limitations in detecting substances that may present at low concentrations, for harm reduction purposes,


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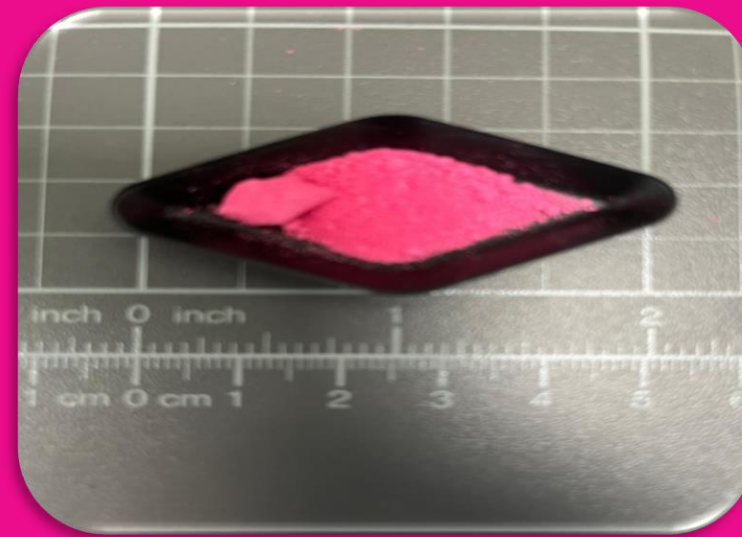
 Springer

The evolution of ketamine analogues 'Tuci' 'Pink cocaine'

- Marketed as 'Pink cocaine' or 'Pink Champaign'
- Example of current market, rapid globalisation of trends
- Openness to consumption /poly consumption

Cork sample, April 2025

3-MMC, caffeine, MDMA, ketamine, 2-CB



TUSIBÍ

ENERGY CONTROL

Financiado por:

MINISTERIO DE SANIDAD

SECRETARÍA DE ESTADO DE SANIDAD

ELABORACIÓN DEL GOBIERNO PARA EL PLAN NACIONAL SOBRE DROGAS

KETAMINA + MDMA + CAFEÍNA

#TusiSabesLoQueTeMetes

Other stimulants: Cathinones

- 2004: first synthetic cathinone on the EU market (methylone)
- 2007: 4-MMC is trending on EU market (meow meow)
- 2009: media attention on head shops
- 2010: progression to service users, move to ban head shops
- 2015: HIV outbreak 'snow blow'
- 2021: ban of 3-MMC on EU level
- 2021: 3-MMC identified in syringe analysis in Dublin and Midwest
- 2022: HSE identify 3-CMC for first time at festivals
- 2022: Cathinones 'blow cocaine' in South East
- 2023 onwards: increase in intentional use in EU subcultures
- 2025: Identified in pink cocaine sample from Cork

*Query the position cathinones will establish on market

Drug Trend Update 3-CMC sold as cocaine

These substances can produce strong stimulant effects which can make people feel unwell, particularly causing mental health concerns.



These substances can lead to prolonged stimulation, insomnia, anxiety, paranoia, suicidal feelings, psychosis with negative come downs and after effects.

Don't be afraid to get medical help if you or a friend feels unwell after using drugs.

It's safer not to use at all. If you do, get information to help you reduce the harms on **Drugs.ie**



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HSE Caution: 3-CMC found in white crystals



We have identified 3-CMC a 'synthetic cathinone' substance as large white crystals in our lab onsite at Electric Picnic.

What is 3-CMC?

3-CMC is a potent stimulant-type drug.

We are aware of similar 'cathinone' type substances being found in the UK this summer sold as MDMA pills, powders and crystals.

You can never be fully sure of the contents of pills, powders or crystals.



Don't be afraid to get medical help if you or a friend feels unwell or suicidal after using drugs.

These substances can produce strong stimulant effects which can make people feel unwell.

They can lead to prolonged stimulation, insomnia, anxiety, paranoia, suicidal feelings, psychosis with negative come downs and after effects. They can also cause cravings which could lead to overconsumption/overdose.

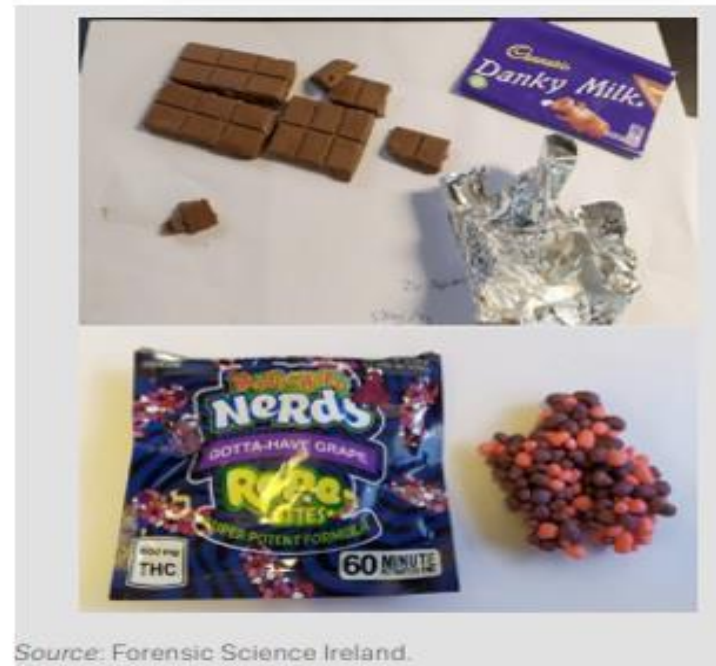
It's safer not to use at all, if you do, get information to help you reduce the harms on **Drugs.ie**



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The changing cannabis market



Source: Forensic Science Ireland



The effects of ingesting cannabis (eating or drinking)

When eaten, cannabis first travels to the stomach and then to the liver before the bloodstream and the brain. Eating can cause more potent effects compared to smoking due to how the liver processes edibles.

Effects of ingesting

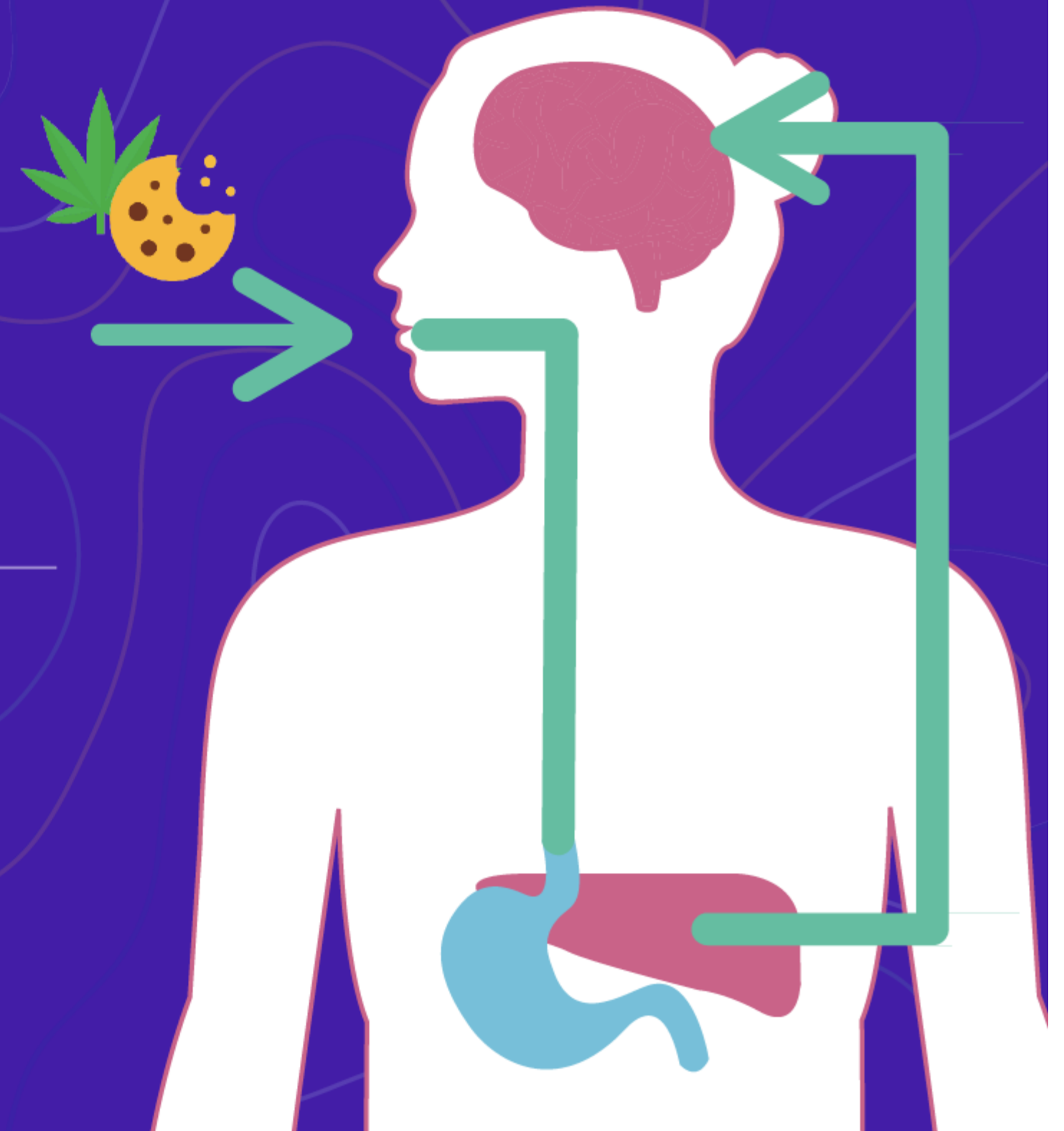
The effects will be felt anything from **30 minutes to 2 hours** after ingesting. This can vary from person to person.

Peak effects

Full effects can peak within **4 hours**.

Length of effects

Effects can last up to **12 hours** after use.



Synthetic cannabinoids

Synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists (SCRAs) are a large group of drugs, which have a strong effect on the **endocannabinoid system**. With some functional similarity to cannabis, the chief psychoactive constituent of which is delta9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), as well as to other phytocannabinoids.

However, many of the SCRAs are not structurally related to cannabinoids or THC. Both SCRAs and cannabis (THC) bind to the CB1 and CB2 receptors in the brain. The greater the affinity to the CB1 receptor, the higher is the psycho-pharmacological activity of the agonist compound.

SCRAs usually have a much higher affinity for those receptors than cannabis. As a result, SCRAs can produce stronger effects, especially those that act as full agonists on the CB1 receptor

Challenges

Identification and assessment of acute harms in acute care settings
SCRAs cannot be detected by the routine screening tests for THC, the active ingredient in cannabis.

Clinicians working in emergency care should be vigilant for SCRA-induced toxicity despite negative drug-screening results.

Base your diagnosis of acute SCRA intoxication on clinical assessment and recognition of symptoms of toxicity. Do not depend on urinalysis unless conducted within a laboratory



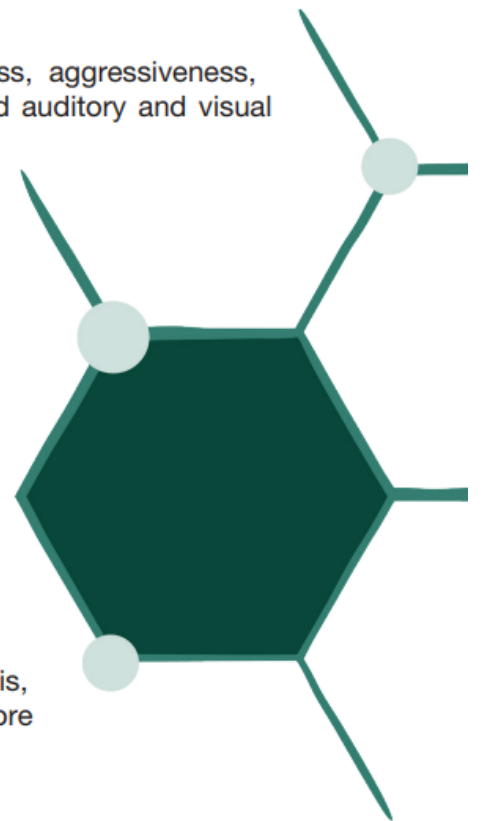
Symptoms of acute toxicity

Neurological, cognitive and psychiatric effects

- Anxiety, irritability and psychosis-like effects
- Depression and suicidal thoughts, excitability, agitation, combativeness, aggressiveness, thought disorganisation, panic attacks, paranoid thinking, delusions and auditory and visual hallucinations, changes in perception
- Reduced levels of consciousness and coma
- Numbness, tingling, light-headedness, dizziness, pallor, tinnitus, diaphoresis, tremor, somnolence, syncope, unresponsiveness, nystagmus and convulsions
- Short-term memory and cognitive deficits, confusion
- There are reports of SCRA-associated acute transient psychosis, as well as reports that some individuals may experience psychosis that persists for weeks after the acute intoxication, or even longer.
- Psychosis has been reported in otherwise healthy people; however, there is particular concern about the risk of SCRAs precipitating psychosis in vulnerable individuals, including those with a current or previous history of psychosis.
- In comparison with psychotic episodes associated with the use of cannabis, psychotic episodes associated with SCRAs occur more frequently, are more severe and are linked to greater agitation.

Cardiovascular effects

- Tachycardia, hypertension, hypotension, hypokalaemia, chest pain and palpitations, myocardial ischaemia, myocardial infarction, ischaemic strokes
- Neuromuscular and musculoskeletal effects
- Hypertonia, myoclonus, myalgia, rhabdomyolysis



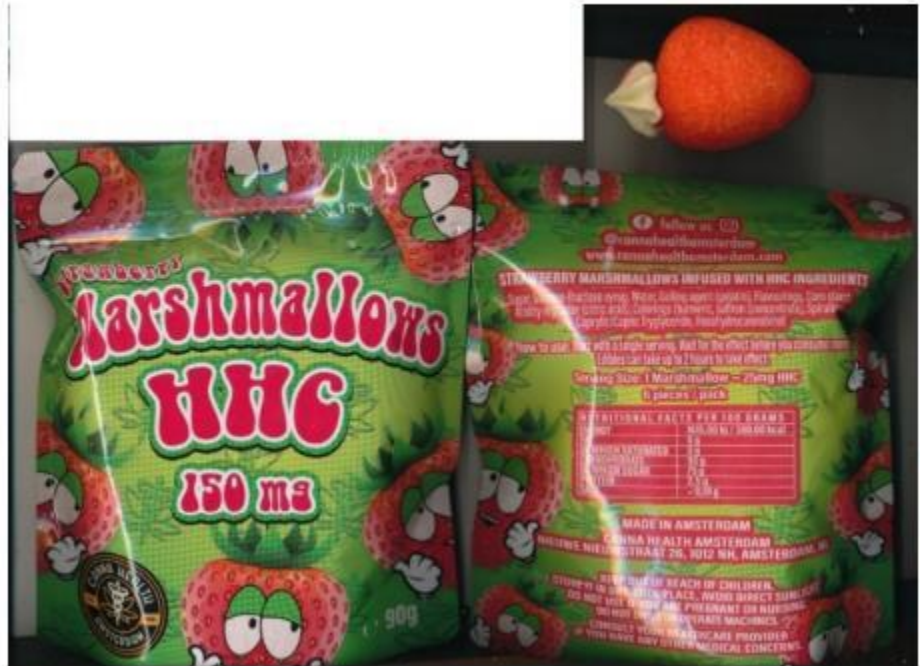
HHC - Hexahydrocannabinol

- Semi-synthetic cannabinoid - CBD
- Very limited information on short and long-term effects
- Recently scheduled under UN Conventions
- Under intensive monitoring by EU as NPS
- Available in shops – vapes, herbs, edibles and oils
- 2021 first emerged in US, Identified in May 2022 in EU
- Contaminations either with extraction residues or synthetic by-products could pose unforeseen risks
- Adolescence – balance between communicating warning and creating arousal
- Initial reports of young people engaged addiction service aware of trend, report stronger effects and loss of consciousness after use





Source: State Criminal Police Office Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany.
 ‘Strawberry Marshmallows HHC’ containing strawberry-shaped HHC-infused sweets.
 Seized by Swedish Customs in 2022



Source: Christian Bissig, Zurich Forensic Science Institute, Switzerland.



ACAN HHC Mixed Berries Gummies



€30.00 – €160.00



ens



ies 200mg



Nurture Nugz ALIEN HHC FLOWER



€29.90 – €1,250.00

SELECT OPTIONS



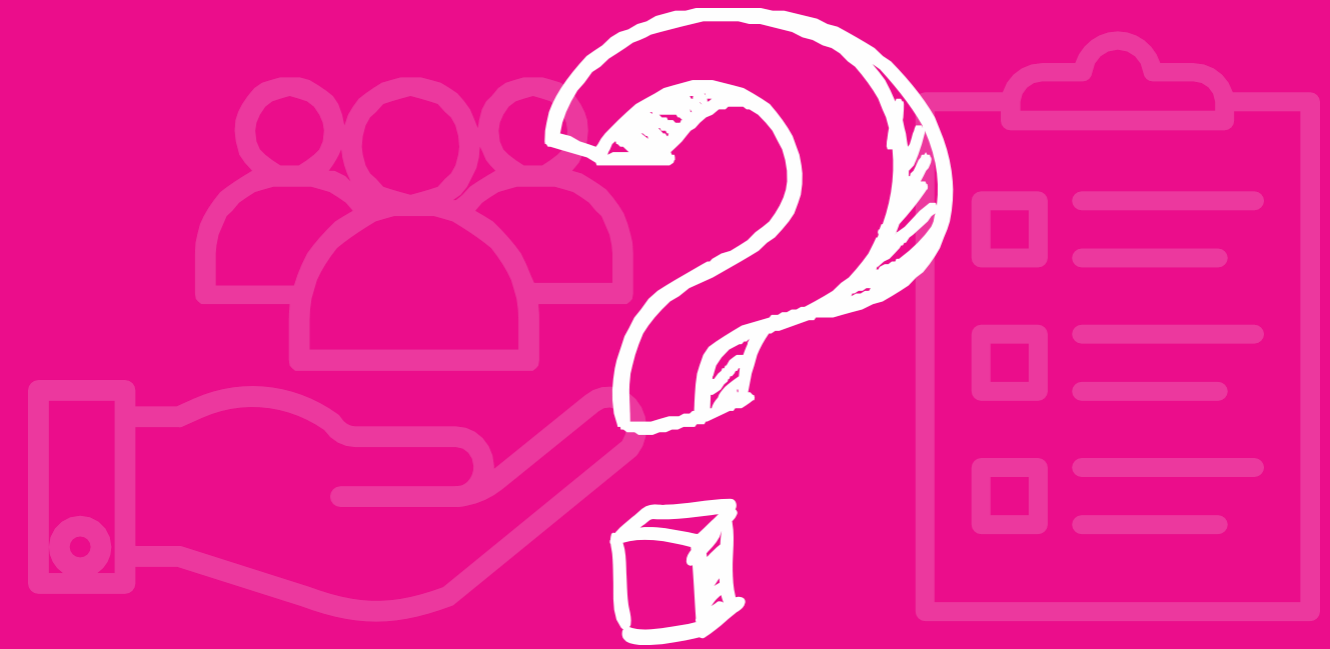
Nurture Nugz HHC Blond Hash 25%



Nurture Nugz HHC Blond Hash 25%

Nitazenes

- Nitazenes are a diverse group of synthetic opioids
- Developed in the 1950's and never brought to market due to their potency and overdose risk
- Isotonitazene emerged on the EU drug market around April 2019
- Powders, tablets, liquids
- Recent emerging issue in the UK and Scotland



Examples include:

- isotonitazene
- metonitazene
- N-pyrrolidino-etonitazene (also called etonitazepyne)
- etonitazene
- protonitazene
- N-desethyl etonitazene



Adapting 'back of house' partnership in response to the emergence of nitazenes

November 2023: First large outbreak, Dublin City - N-pyrrolidino protonitazene

December 2023: Second outbreak, Cork City (Southern Ireland)

*77 non-fatal overdoses during outbreak period Nov - Dec

February 2024: Third HSE Alert, 2.83kg of powder seized identified as protonitazene

March 2024: Fourth HSE Alert, progression to Prison setting

June 2024: Fifth HSE Alert, progression to counterfeit benzodiazepine market

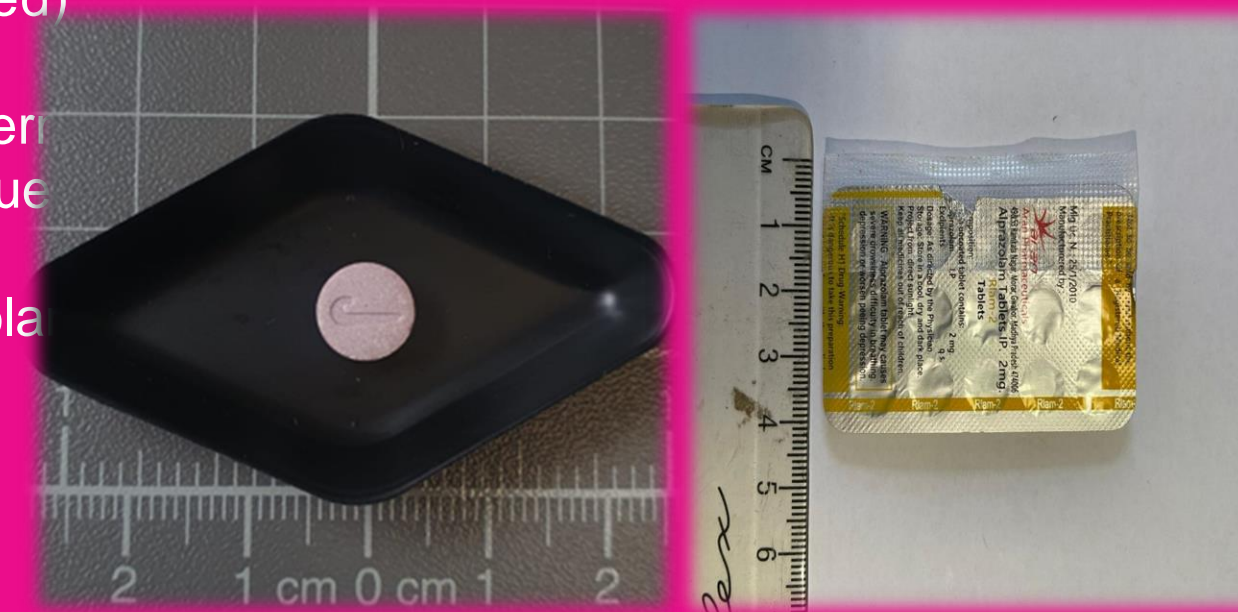
July 2024: Prison service issue alert

August 2024: Prison service issue an alert (not nitazene related)

September – November: Variety of tablets continue to be a concern
Yellow nitazene tablets appearing sporadically – no new alerts issued

Update issued on 'Nike' brand tablet – metonitazene and bromazepam

December: Update issued on 'Red backs'
Progression of yellow nitazene tablet to the Cork market
2025: Main issues relating to novel benzodiazepines and pregabalin



**HSE Drug Warning**
January 12th 2024

Extreme Risk

A red alert remains in place for people using heroin in Dublin and Cork. A nitazene drug is being sold falsely described as 'new' heroin or 'strong' heroin.



Heroin **Nitazenes**

Photo source: Forensic Science Ireland

Ongoing concern

Nitazenes are strong synthetic opioids that can cause serious overdoses, hospitalisation and drug-related death.

Recommendation

Mind yourself, care for others and make a safety plan.
Access, carry and use naloxone. This could save your own or someone else's life.
It's safer not to use drugs at all. If you use heroin, follow harm reduction advice. Access drug treatment to protect against overdose.

Do not buy:

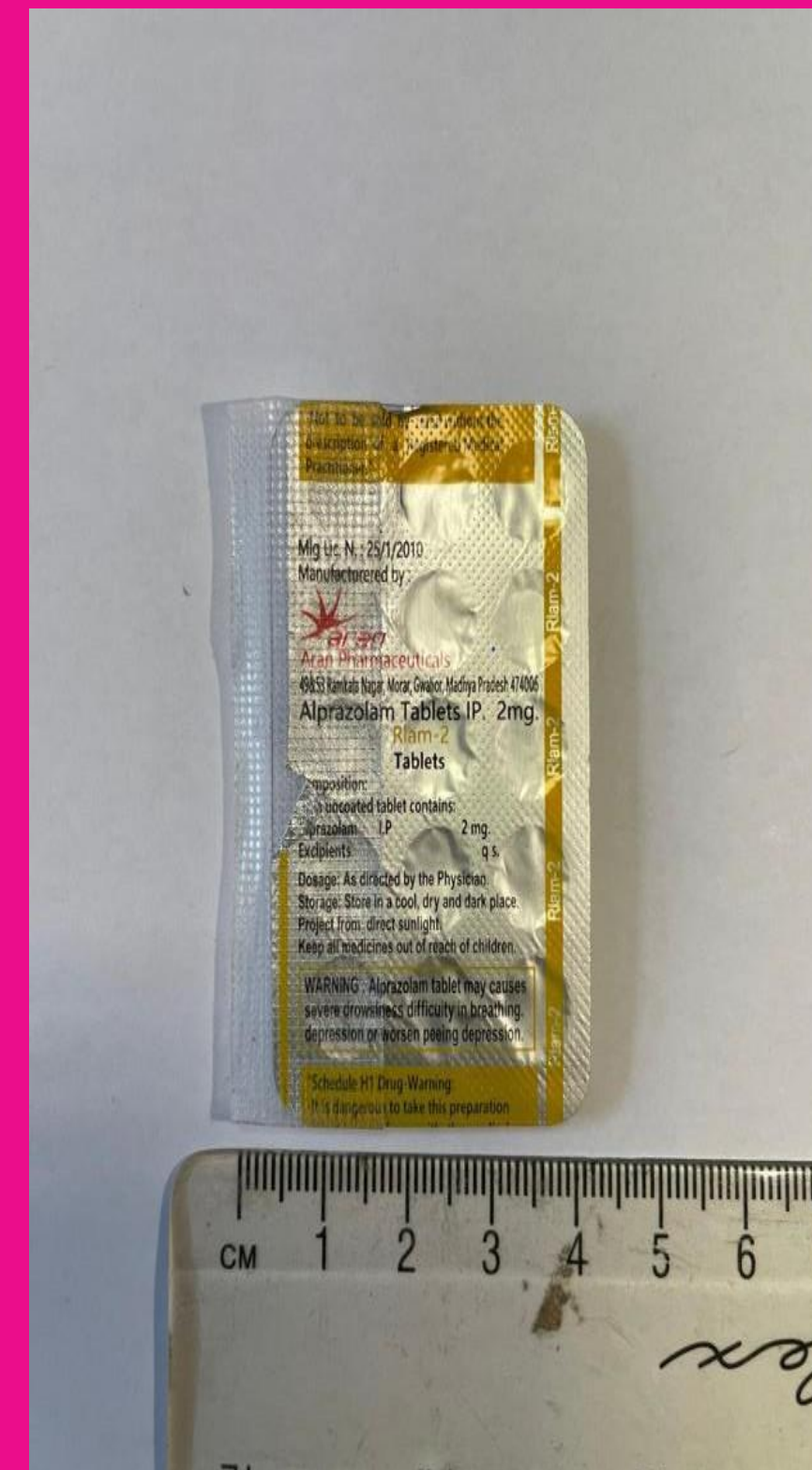
- new types of drugs
- new batches
- from new sources

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Current tablets in circulation



Alprazolam



Protonitazene



Coinciding issues with counterfeit benzodiazepines

- Rapidly changing market, difficult to monitor
- Current fear of nitazenes among professionals

naloxone is effective in reversing and that the persistence of symptoms despite administration of naloxone may indicate the presence of other drugs



Nike logo tablet: found to contain Alprazolam and Tramadol

HSE Communication, 2019



Bromazolam communication, April 2024

Clobromazolam associated with outbreak in Irish Prison Service, 14th August 2024





NEW BENZODIAZEPINES IN IRELAND

New substances and mixtures of substances have been found in benzodiazepines (benzos) in Ireland. These substances are riskier to take.

- **Sourcing without a script:** You can't trust the contents/strength or how you will react if you buy from a dealer or online
- **Packets 'blister packs':** Won't guarantee the contents or dose
- **New/high strength drugs :** Can mean a greater risk of overdose, bad mental health experiences or suicidal feelings
- **Mixed tablets:** Tablets could contain a number of different substances in one
- **Be extra careful.** Start with a small test dose and wait at least 2 hours
- **Avoid using with other substances,** with alcohol or prescription medication
- **Don't use alone.** If using, let someone know

Don't be afraid to get medical help on 112/999 if you or a friend becomes unwell or feel suicidal after using.

Tolerance to benzodiazepines develops quickly. Don't reduce your use without medical support

For more information go to [Drugs.ie/newbenzos](https://drugs.ie/newbenzos) - HSE Drug and Alcohol Helpline 1800 459 459 Monday – Friday 9:30 am – 5:30 pm

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HSE DRUGS.ie
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support

Sourcing without a PRESCRIPTION?

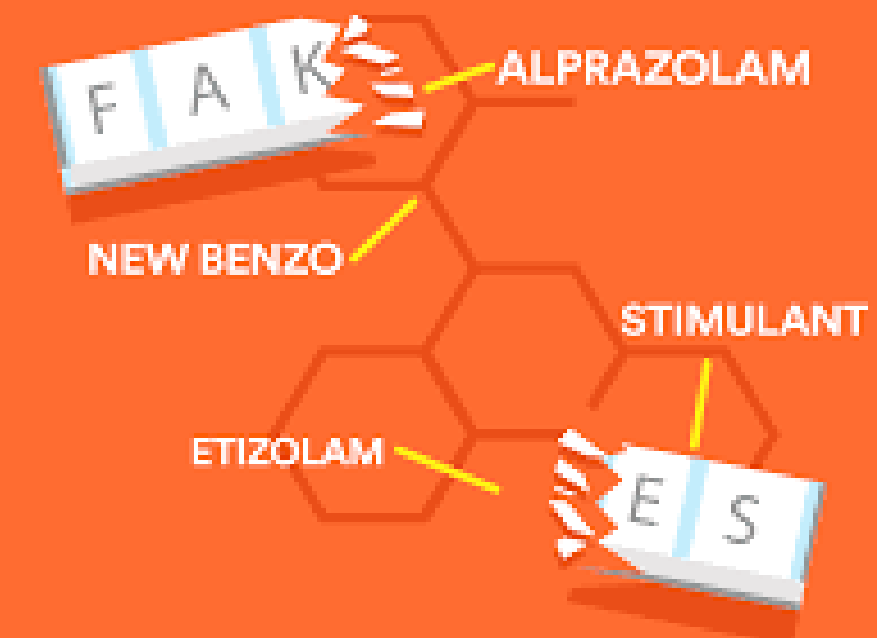


You can't trust the contents

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Drug and Alcohol Information and Support

What's in a FAKE BENZO?



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Drug and Alcohol Information and Support

HSE drug trend update

17th of December 2024

RLAM-1 tablets known as 'Red backs' have been found to contain Tramadol (an opioid) and not alprazolam (benzodiazepine) which they are labelled to contain.

Tramadol is a strong painkiller that should not be taken without medical guidance as it may cause overdoses

These tablets are an extra risk for people who:

- do not use opioids /without an 'opioid tolerance'
- take more without waiting to feel the full effects
- use these tablets with other opioids or depressants such as alcohol or benzodiazepines.



There is ongoing concern for tablets sourced without a prescription. Packets can look the same and can contain different substances. Other products available on the market could also contain new benzodiazepines or synthetic opioids (nitazenes).

Recommendation

- It is always safer not to use medications without a prescription.
- Treat all tablets with caution at this time.
- Avoid using alone, let people know you are using and when.
- Access naloxone in a local drug service: this will help reverse the effects of these tablets.
- Start low and go very slow: Effects can be slow to kick in and the time can be longer for some people. Avoid using more.
- Do not be afraid to get medical help.
- Let medics know about this risk communication.



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HSE Drug Trend Update for National Service Providers

Increased risk of overdose associated with Pregabalin products currently available on Irish drug market

2nd April 2025

Pregabalin 'Lyrica'

- Increase in reports of non-fatal overdose
- Concern for first time seizure activity
- Current trends relate to new/cheap product available
- Movement of trends with new populations

About this update

A small number of non-fatal overdoses have reportedly occurred across Ireland and the UK this year associated with Pregabalin capsules 'Nervigesic'.

Earlier this year, the HSE became aware of a small number of people (n= less than 5) experiencing seizure activity following use of this brand of tablet in the South East region. Subsequently, a tablet was provided to the HSE Emerging Trends Laboratory for analytical review, with no adulterants or other substance of concern identified.

Description of tablet

Red and white capsules labelled 'Signature'. Branding states that tablets contain 300mg of Pregabalin within a box of 150 tablets.

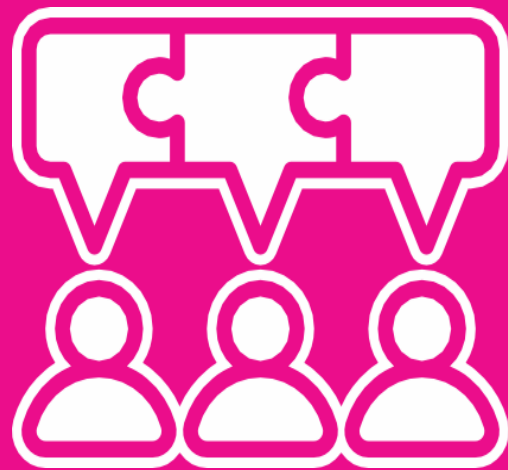


Image source: Irish Customs and the Health Products Regulatory Authority and the HSE, 2025

Developing an Irish Early Warning System in partnership with the Health Research Board

Improving sources

- Expanding drug analysis an essential tool to progress Irish EWS
- Greater access to samples annually
- Engaging with people who use – beyond typical addiction service populations
- Wastewater pilot
- Hospital monitoring pilot
- Outbreak review and evaluation



Outputs

- Guidelines, structure, training
- IT computerised based system
- Communications platform
- Improved detection and reporting

HSE drug trend update
17th of December 2024

TRAM-1 tablets known as 'Red backs' have been found to contain Tramadol (an opioid) and not alprazolam (benzodiazepine) which they are labelled to contain.


Tramadol is a strong painkiller that should not be taken without medical guidance as it may cause overdoses


These tablets are an extra risk for people who: do not use opioids /without an 'opioid tolerance' take more without waiting to feel the full effects use these tablets with other opioids or depressants such as alcohol or benzodiazepines.

There is ongoing concern for tablets sourced without a prescription. Packets can look the same and can contain different substances. Other products available on the market could also contain new benzodiazepines or synthetic opioids (nitazenes).

Recommendation

- It is always safer not to use medications without a prescription.
- Treat all tablets with caution at this time.
- Avoid using alone, let people know you are using and when.
- Access naloxone in a local drug service: this will help reverse the effects of these tablets.
- Start low and go very slow: Effects can be slow to kick in and the time can be longer for some people. Avoid using more.
- Do not be afraid to get medical help.
- Let medics know about this risk communication.



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HSE Drug Trend Update

We're analysing MDMA powders/crystals onsite at Electric Picnic.

These high strength products are a cause for concern. Higher strength means higher risk.

It's safer not to use at all. If you do, get harm reduction information on **Drugs.ie**



 #ReduceTheHarm DRUGS.ie
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support

