

## Availability and use of new and emerging psychoactive substances in Australia

**Authors:** AMY PEACOCK<sup>1</sup>, AMANDA ROXBURGH<sup>1</sup>, RACHEL SUTHERLAND<sup>1</sup>, JULIA UPOROVA<sup>1</sup>, ANTONIA KARLSSON<sup>1</sup>, DAISY GIBBS<sup>1</sup>, LOUISA DEGENHARDT<sup>1</sup>, RAIMONDO BRUNO<sup>2</sup>, PAUL DIETZE<sup>3,4</sup>, SIMON LENTON<sup>5</sup>, ROSA ALATI<sup>6</sup>, MICHAEL FARRELL<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, <sup>2</sup> School of Psychology, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia, <sup>3</sup> Centre for Population Health, Burnet Institute, Melbourne, Australia, <sup>4</sup> School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, <sup>5</sup> National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University, Perth, Australia, <sup>6</sup> Faculty of Medicine and Social Sciences, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

Presenter's email: [Amy.Peacock@unsw.edu.au](mailto:Amy.Peacock@unsw.edu.au)

**Introduction and Aims:** The number of new psychoactive substances (NPS) identified globally has proliferated, and early detection of NPS with potential to cause substantial harm is critical. Yet, this expanding production makes monitoring NPS challenging. This presentation will describe new trends in availability and use of various NPS in Australia, including availability and purchasing online.

**Method:** Data are drawn from annual interviews from 2010-2018 with people who regularly use ecstasy and other stimulants (Ecstasy and Related Drug Reporting System; EDRS) and from 2016-2018 with people who regularly inject drugs (Illicit Drug Reporting System; IDRS). Data on NPS availability on darknet marketplaces in 2017 were also analysed.

**Results:** The highest rate of past six-month NPS use was observed in 2012 amongst EDRS participants (52%); since then, rates have declined to one-third of the sample. There has been a notable decline amongst this group in synthetic cannabinoid use. Less than one-in-ten IDRS participants report past six-month NPS use. EDRS participants who had purchased drugs online typically obtained traditional illicit drugs rather than NPS. Further, analyses of darknet marketplace listings suggest that NPS are less commonly listed by vendors relative to traditional illicit drugs.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** NPS use is common amongst the sentinel sample of people who use ecstasy and other stimulants, although the rate of use has declined more recently. Despite commonly held beliefs about NPS being predominantly sourced via online marketplaces, traditional illicit drugs are more commonly obtained online by those who report purchasing via this platform, and NPS are less commonly listed on darknet marketplaces relative to traditional illicit drugs.

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