PHILTRE
BULLETIN
Issue 10 - Oct - Dec 2016
WEDINOS Quarterly Newsletter
Collecting, Testing, Informing
wedinos.org

WEDINOS Headlines

The WEDINOS project has been designed for the collection and testing of substances and, most importantly, dissemination via www.wedinos.org of pragmatic evidence based harm reduction information for users. WEDINOS aims to go beyond identification of novel substances, to address the harms associated with use of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), new combinations of established drugs and NPS and Steroids & Image Enhancing Drugs (SIEDs) .

TOTAL number of samples received by WEDINOS October 2013 to December 2016

- **6,056** Samples received
- **5,058** Samples analysed
- **17** Samples pending
- **344** Substances identified in either combination or isolation

This quarter (October 2016 to December 2016)

- **276** Samples received
- **202** Samples analysed
- **9** Samples pending
- **69** Substances identified in either combination or isolation
- **65** Samples rejected

Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Agonists and the Law

On 14th December 2016 a third amendment relating to Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Agonists (SCRAs) to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 came into effect. This provided a wide range of new controls against a wide range of SCRAs.

The first two sets of controls on the earlier SCRAs were quickly circumvented by “underground” chemists who found new SCRAs to replace the banned ones, whilst remaining legal. Since the first report of an SCRA to the European Early Warning System in 2008, the number of SCRAs has grown exponentially since then, making it the largest group of substances monitored by the European Monitoring Council for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

Continued on next page.

Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Agonists and the Law (continued)

On 15th November 2016 the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) its fifth addenda to their initial November 2014 report on "third generation" synthetic cannabinoids. Within this latest addendum the ACMD recommended expanding the current SCRA controls to cover a more extensive range of substances, banning a range of chemical series; that are not only part of the current available SCRAs, but also those predicted to be need for any future SCRAs. Any drug meeting these new chemical criteria is now controlled as a Class B Schedule 1 drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

12th August 2009 – ACMD - Consideration of the major cannabinoid agonists
23rd December 2009 – SCRAs, such as those found in the herbal smoking mixture 'Spice' classified as a Class B drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*.
November 2012 – A new group of SCRAs including those found in 'Black Mamba', are classified as Class B drugs*.
26th May 2016 – Psychoactive Substances Act came into force, making the import, manufacture and supply of psychoactive substances (not already controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971) an offence.
14th December 2016 – Extensive range SCRAs added to Class B of the Misuse of Drugs Act.

* It is important to note that where brands are mentioned, such as, 'Spice' and 'Black Mamba', it is the chemicals found within those products that are controlled. Over the past several years these products have been remarketed as 'new blends' containing SCRAs that circumnavigated the controls. At the time of writing the use of the terms 'Spice' and 'Mamba' are widely used, and used interchangeably as an umbrella term to describe SCRAs.

WEDINOS will continue to monitor the effects of legislation on submissions following this new piece of legislation. However, what we have already started to see since the implementation of the Psychoactive Substances Act, is not a new set of SCRAs entering the market place to replace those under legislative control, but, a reduction in the variety of strains submitted. Worryingly, the most commonly identified SCRA this quarter is the potent 5F-ADB, which is also joined in the WEDINOS top ten by MDMB-CHMICA.

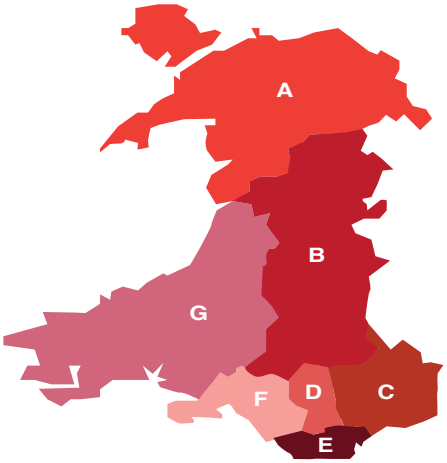
MDMB-CHMICA was the subject of a joint EMCDDA and Europol risk assessment in April 2016

SCRAs

FINDINGS...

WHERE...

Samples were submitted from six of the seven Welsh Health Boards. No samples were received form Powys Teaching Health Board.



Breakdown of sample submissions by Health Board areas

A - Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board – 24 samples.
B - Powys Teaching Health Board – 0 samples.
C - Aneurin Bevan University Health Board – 53 samples.
D - Cwm Taf University Health Board – 7 samples.
E - Cardiff & Vale University Health Board – 23 samples.
F - Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board – 28 samples.
G - Hywel Dda University Health Board – 6 samples.

41 samples were received from England, eight from Scotland and six from outside the United Kingdom.

WEDINOS does not analyse samples received from outside of the United Kingdom.

In relation to Welsh Health Board areas, the highest proportion of samples came from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, 56 samples were received and analysed, accounting for 24 per cent of all samples analysed.

Psychoactive Substances

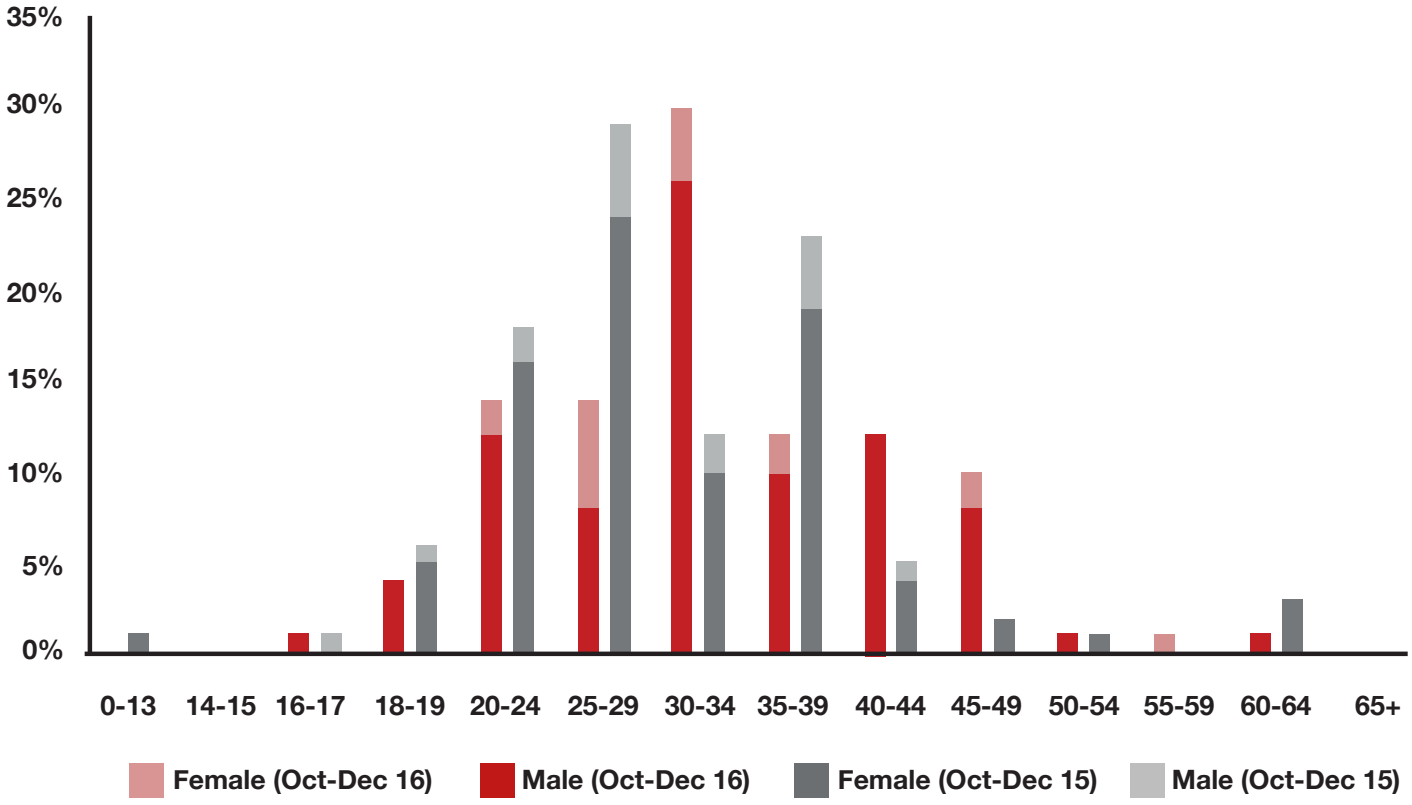
WHo...

Where a WEDINOS Effects Record was submitted and gender completed; 87 per cent (n=137) of submissions were from males. The remaining 13 per cent (n=21) were females.

The median age for all mind altering / psychoactive sample providers (Wales and wider UK) was 30 years (average age was 33 years old); with an age range of 17-63 years.

- Females - median age was 30 years and an average age of 33 years (range: 22-57)
- Males - median age was 30 years, with an average age of 33 years (range 17-63 years)

Gender / Age profile of samples providers – Psychoactive Samples (This quarter compared to the same quarter last year)



Reason for purchase
All samples

182 Mind Altering / Psychoactive samples were submitted for analysis during this quarter. 16 samples of Image and Perfromance Enhancing Drugs (IPEDs)were submitted via Public Health Wales agreed sentinel.

Samples Submitted from Wales

85 per cent of Welsh samples were submitted via 34 services / organisations; with the remaining 15 per cent being submitted anonymously.

Of the 182 Mind Altering/Psychoactive samples:

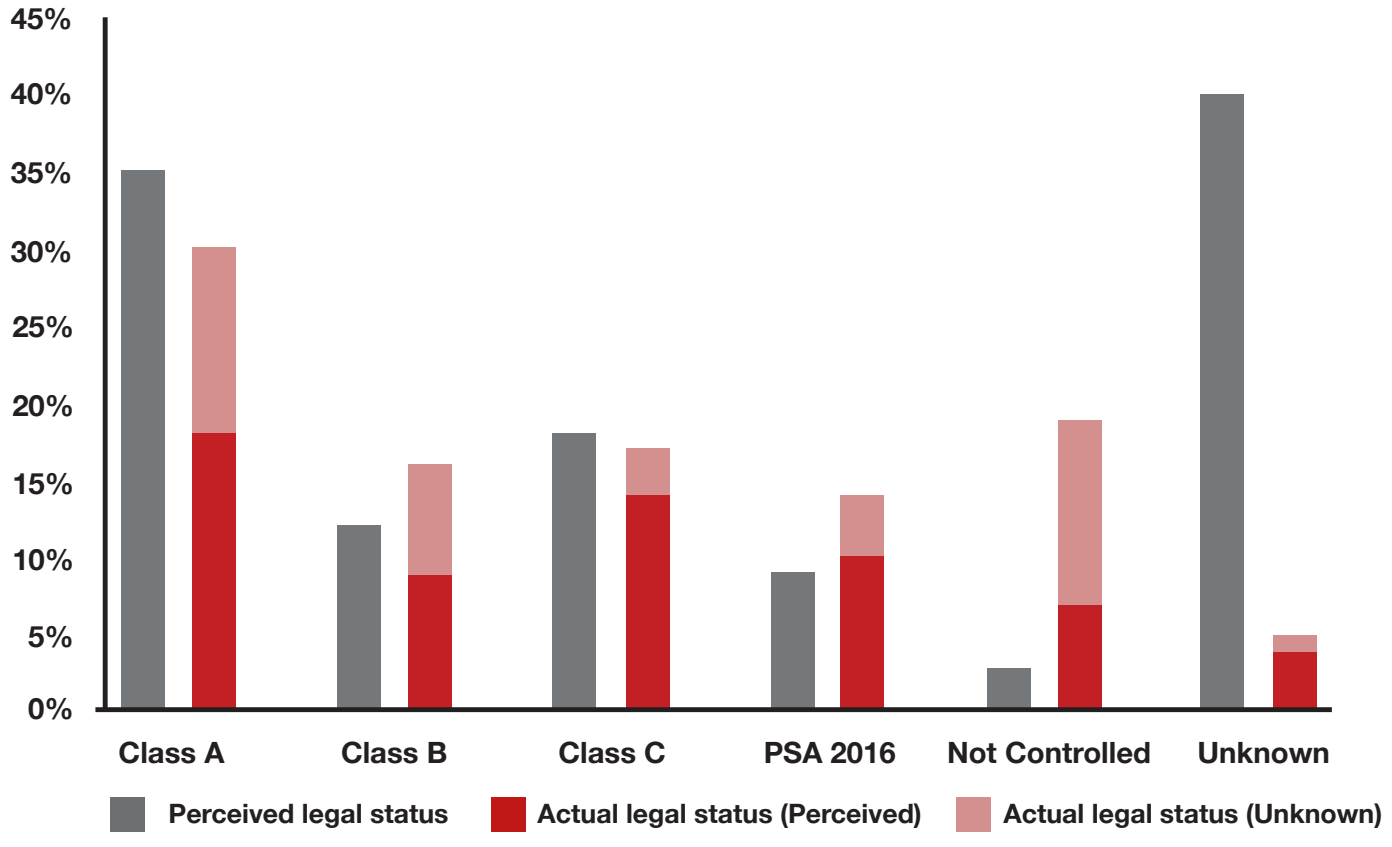
- 35 samples were purchased in the belief that they were Class A substances
- 21 Class B
- 42 Class C
- 15 were believed to be controlled by the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 (PSA 2016)
- 6 were believed not to be controlled
- A further 73 were submitted without any information relating to purchase intent, or perceived legal status

Post analysis we see that Class A increased from 35 samples to 55. Class B increased from 21 to 29, Class C decreased from 42 to 31. The number of substances controlled by the PSA 2016 rose from 15 to 25. Substances that are not controlled increased from 6 to 44. Eights samples remained unidentified. It must be noted that although the majority of groups increased with the post analysis categorisation of the "unknown" substances, several samples moved between classifications. Examples of this include

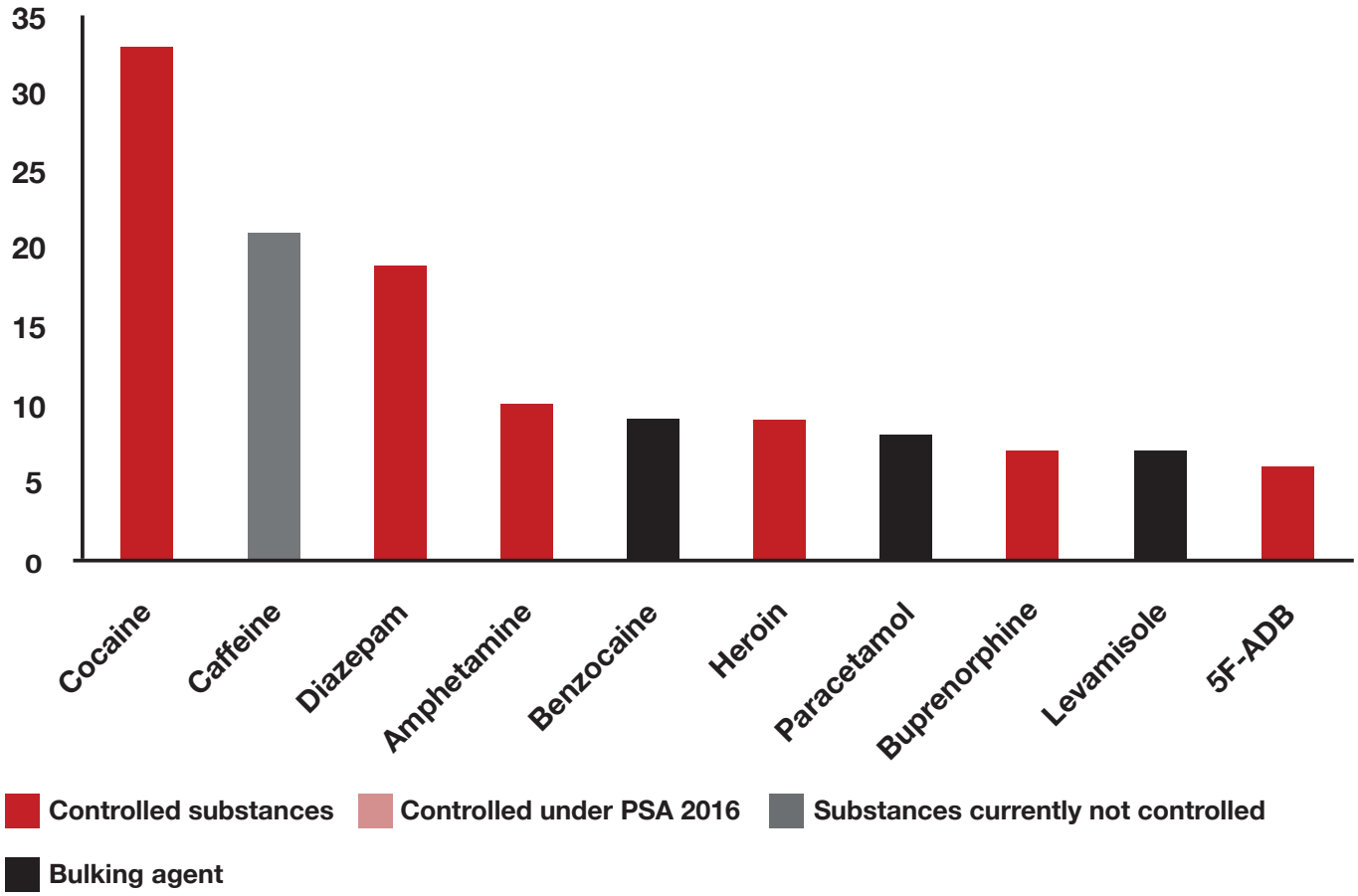
Sample believed to be....	Found to contain...
Diazepam	Diclazepam
Diazepam	Zopiclone
Diazepam	Alprazolam
Diazepam	Clonazolam
Ketamine	Cocaine
Amphetamine	Caffeine
Cocaine	Paracetamol
MDMA	Amitriptyline
MDMA	Ephylone
MDMA	Caffeine
Mephedrone	Mexedrone
3-Fluorophenmetrazine	Dibutylone
3-Fluorophenmetrazine	AMB-FUBINACA
LSD	25B-NBOMe
2C-I	Cocaine

Reminder as of Monday 4th April 2016: WEDINOS stopped analysing individual samples that, on the effects sheet only provide details of purchase intent stated as 'legal high' or 'research chemicals'. It is an important element of WEDINOS that we are able to provide information both on what individuals intended to purchase and the actual content of the sample substance. When submitting a sample, please ensure that you include as much information as possible around what you intended to buy on the sample and effects record as well as effects experienced if the sample was consumed. If the sample was not consumed include your reason for submission. Many thanks.

Proportion of controlled and not controlled / legal – Perceived and Actual (Psychoactive Substances)



Most commonly identified substances
Most commonly identified substances in Mind Altering / Psychoactive Substance samples



The most commonly identified psychoactive substance was Cocaine. The most commonly identified psychoactive substance that is not currently controlled was the SCRA 5F-ADB.

Caffeine was the most commonly identified bulking / cutting agent; however, this substance was also found in isolation and may have been sold for its stimulant effects.

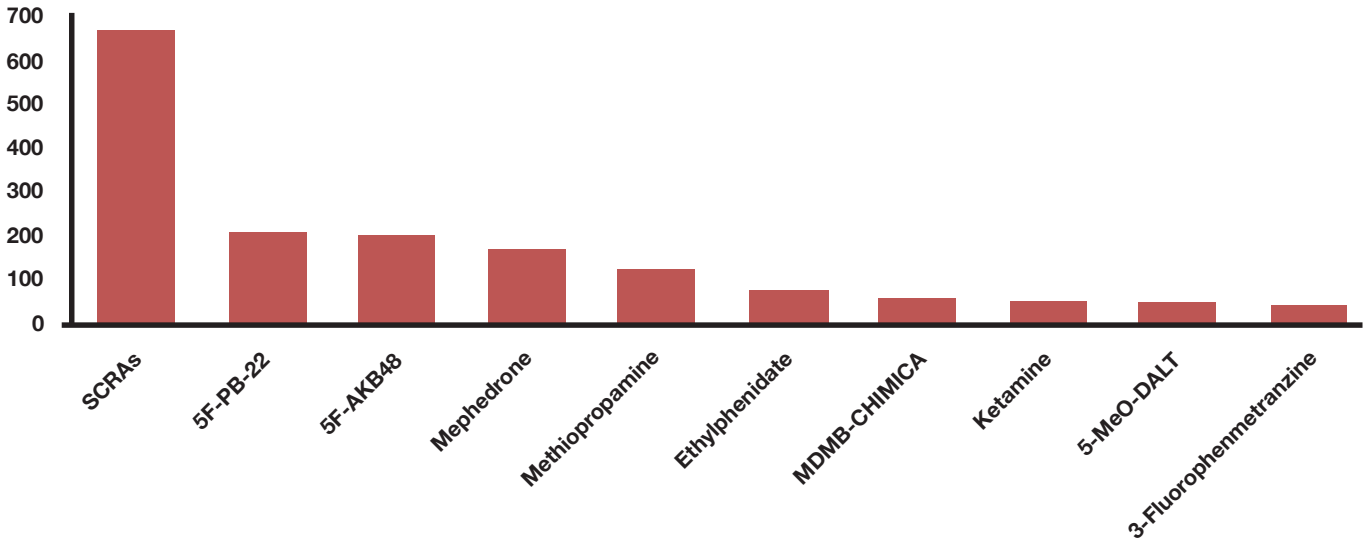
New Psychoactive Substances Top Ten

Top 10		Oct to Dec 16	Oct 15 to Sept 16
Number 1	Up 7	5F-ADB	5F-PB-22
Number 2	Re-entry	Mephedrone	MDMB-CHMICA
Number 3	Re-entry	MDMB-CHMICA	Ketamine
Number 4	Down 2	Ketamine	5F-AKB48
Number 5	Re-entry	AMB-FUBINACA	Mephedrone
Number 6	Re-entry	Ephylone	5F-ADB
Number 7	Re-entry	Methylhexanamine	Etizolam
Number 8	New entry	Dibutylone	3-Fluorophenmetrazine
Number 9	Re-entry	Methylone	Alprozolam
Number 10	Down 6	Diclazepam	Diclazepam

With the exception of the June – September 2016 quarter; since the launch of WEDINOS in October 2013 Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Agonists (SCRAs) have been the most prevalent NPS' submitted to and identified by the project. This quarter is no exception with three out of the top five spots being held by SCRAs and seven strains identified. They were followed jointly by designer benzodiazepines, with four being identified and cathinones.

Interestingly with cathinones over the last quarter we have seen mephedrone re-enter the top ten.

Ten most commonly identified New Psychoactive Substances (Oct-2013 – Dec 2015)

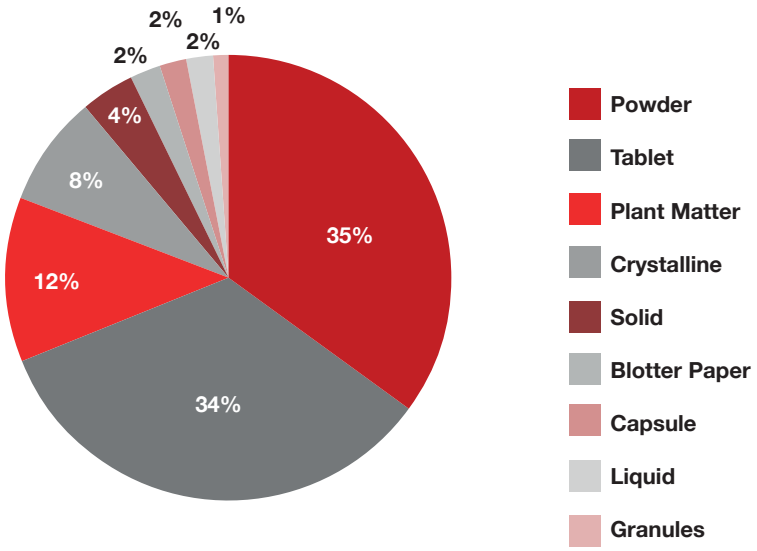


SCRAs total 662 shows all SCRAs as a group. 5F-PB-22, 5F-AKB48and MDMB-CHMICA are synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists. Methiopropamine, Ethylphenidate, Mephedrone and 3-Fluorophenmetrazine are stimulants. 5-MeO-DALT is a psychedelic tryptamine. Ketamine is a dissociative.

HOW...

Form of Sample & Method of Consumption

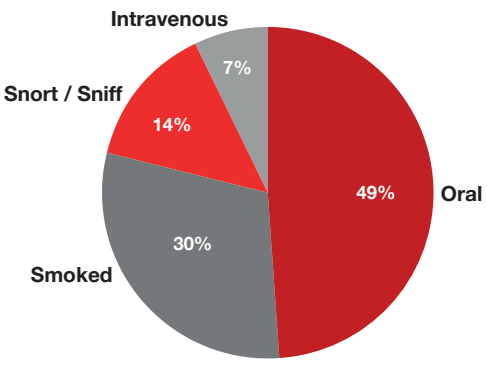
Mind Altering/Psychoactive
Powder remains the most prevalent sample form



Where samples were purchased as Mind Altering/ Psychoactive & a method of consumption was recorded (62 per cent, n=80), and assuming that all plant matter and plant matter Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Agonists are smoked, samples were used consumed through a variety of methods, the most common was oral consumption (49% per cent), this is comparable to last quarter (50%); followed by smoking (27 per cent, 30 per cent last quarter). Snorting / sniffing as a route of administration made up 14 per cent of responses, with 7 per cent stating they used their substance via intravenous injection up from 4 per cent the previous quarter.

This quarter there was a variety of substances identified where intravenous use was reported; including: heroin, ketamine and cocaine. Injection of any substance carries a risk, however, this risk is increased when the sample found upon analysis differs from the purchase intent; for example, a sample submitted as mephedrone was found to contain ketamine upon analysis.

Mind Altering/Psychoactive - Method of Consumption



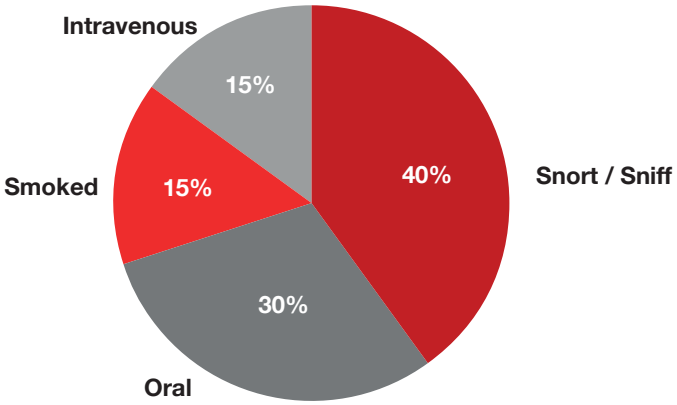
Method of Consumption: Powders

The preferred method of consumption for powders and crystalline materials remains snorting / sniffing.

Intravenous use was higher for this quarter compared to the previous. During this quarter intravenous use was reported by providers of samples purchased as heroin, mephedrone and crack cocaine.

It must be noted that although the percentage figures for intravenous drug use has increased as a number it has not. The increase in percentage figure may be attributed to the fact that over 50 per cent of powders were submitted without the method of consumption reported. For WEDINOS to monitor trends and provide pragmatic harm reduction advice and information it is essential that, where possible, sample providers complete as much of the 'sample and effects record' as possible.

Method of use for powders



GEOGRAPHIC PROFILES / LOCAL TRENDS

Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMU)

- 28 samples were received from ABMU this quarter
  - During analysis 10 substances were identified in isolation or combination. Three samples contained no active compound and one remained unknown as there was an insufficient amount of the sample available for testing.
  - Buprenorphine was the most commonly identified substance.
  - The problematic SCRA, 5F-ADB, was identified in four plant matter products.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABU)

- 53 samples were received ABU this quarter.
- During analysis of those samples, 25 substances were identified either in combination or in isolation, with on samples having no active compound identified and five having an insufficient amount of material to complete analysis.
- Cocaine was the most commonly identified substance within the in ABU; a statistic that is influenced heavily by the analysis of night club amnesty bins from within Newport city centre. Other stimulant substances identified included: amphetamine and mephedrone. No synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists were submitted this quarter

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCU)

- 24 samples were received from BCU this quarter
- During analysis of those samples, 16 substances were identified either in combination or in isolation. Three had no active compound identified.
- Benzodizepines were again the most commonly identified substances within BCU, with diazepam and alprazolam and clonazepam identified

Cardiff & Vale University Health Board (CVU)

- 23 samples were received from CVU this quarter
- During analysis 16 substances were identified either in combination or in isolation. Two samples had no active compound identified One sample did not contain a sufficient amount of sample material for analysis to be completed.
- Five SCRAs were identified; 5F-AKB48, 5F-PB-22, 5F-AMB and the highly potent 5F-ADB and MDMB-CHMICA
- A sample submitted as mephedrone, was found to contain ketamine.

Cwm Taf University Health Board (CTU)

- 7 samples were received from CTU this quarter
- During analysis 5 substances were identified either in isolation or comibination. One sample contained no active compound.

Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDU)

- 6 samples were received from HDU this quarter
- During analysis nine substances were identified in combination or isolation.

Powys Teaching Health Board (PT)

- 0 samples were received from PT this quarter
- We are aware that individual submitting samples in the Powys area have experienced time delays from the point of submitting samples to receipt at Cardiff toxicology laboratories. WEDINOS is working with all our relevant stakeholders to improve this situation.

Help us to build a better picture of substance prevalence or any trends in substance use within Wales and the wider UK. WEDINOS would happily accept an increase in samples of psychoactive substances submitted. If you require further information on submitting a sample please visit www.wedinos.org or email admin@wedinos.org

News from the Home Office and abroad

December 2016 – Home Office - Circular 010/2016: a change to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/circular-0102016-a-change-to-the-misuse-of-drugs-act-1971

December 2016 – Home Office - Advice on U-47,700, etizolam and other designer benzodiazepines - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-on-u-47700-etizolam-and-other-designer-benzodiazepines

November 2016 – EMCDDA - Drug-related infectious diseases in Europe: update from the EMCDDA expert network - http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/rapid-communications/2016/drug-related-infectious-diseases-in-europe

November 2016 – EMCDDA - New psychoactive substances in Europe: legislation and prosecution — current challenges and solutions - http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/joint-publications/eurojust/nps-legislation-and-prosecution

November 2016 – EMCDDA – Drugnet 96 - http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/drugnet/96

October 2016 – Home Office - Seizures of drugs in England and Wales: user guide - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/seizures-of-drugs-in-england-and-wales-user-guide

October 2016 – Home Office - Methiopropamine temporary class drug order: ministerial response- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/methiopropamine-temporary-class-drug-order-ministerial-response

The WEDINOS project does not test food samples, biological samples, samples submitted within paraphernalia of use, samples that are submitted with an incomplete effects form. On Friday 25th July 2014 WEDINOS stopped accepting samples of Image and Performance Enhancing Drugs other than those submitted by sentinel contributors.