PHILTRE BULLETIN
Issue 14 - July - Sept 2018
WEDINOS Quarterly Newsletter
Collecting, Testing, Informing
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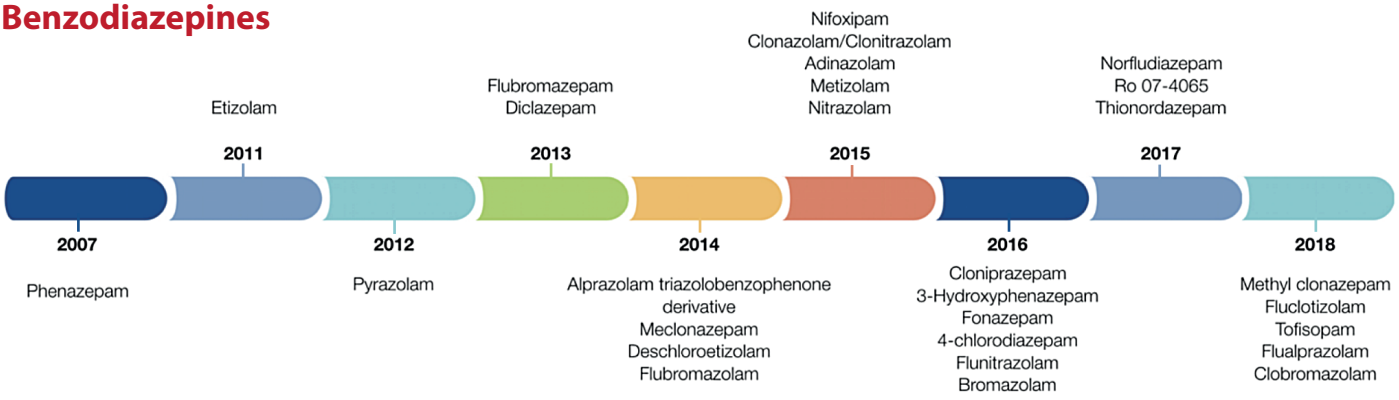
In this issue: July to September 2018 – 624 samples received – 404 analysed – 60 substances identified.

Project launch (Oct 2013) to Sept 2018 – 9,244 samples received – 7,725 analysed – 383 substances identified.

Benzodiazepines



Timeline of benzodiazepines notified as new psychoactive substances in Europe, 2007–18, EMCDDA, http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/activities/action-on-new-drugs

The most commonly identified chemical group of psychoactive substances during this reporting period were benzodiazepines; with eight benzodiazepines' identified. Diazepam was the most commonly identified benzodiazepine followed by etizolam and alprazolam (commonly known as Xanax), other benzodiazepines identified were: clonazolam, clonazepam, lorazepam, nitrazepam and phenazepam. These findings are the same as those discussed in the latest WEDINOS annual report (Apr 2017-Apr 2018).

As mentioned in that report, the prevalence of this range of substances is a potential risk for individuals using benzodiazepines, as dosage, potency, onset and duration of effects varies greatly.

This increase in the prevalence and range of benzodiazepines available is consistent with international drug market reports. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Drug Report 2018; reports considerable of "other substances",which includes structurally diverse substances, especially since 2014, totalling 155 substances by the end of 2017. This category includes NPS-derivatives of benzodiazepine and prescription medicines, including fentanyl analogues.

The European Monitoring Council for Drugs and Drug Addiction in their 2018 report, highlight concern in relation to the emergence of new-benzodiazepine substances and their availability and accessibility via online markets. These substances are not licensed medicines in the European Union, and very little is known about their toxicology; however, as with other benzodiazepines risks are likely to increase when they are used alongside illicit drugs or alcohol[1]. There have been 14 new benzodiazepines reported to the EU early warning system since 2015, almost doubling the number identified since 2007.

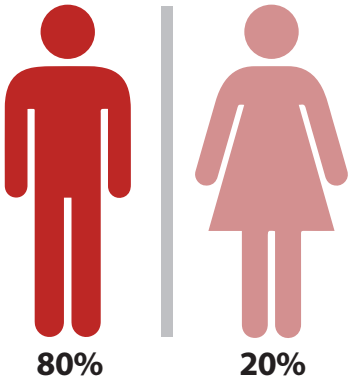
The EMCDDA is currently monitoring 23 new benzodiazepines.

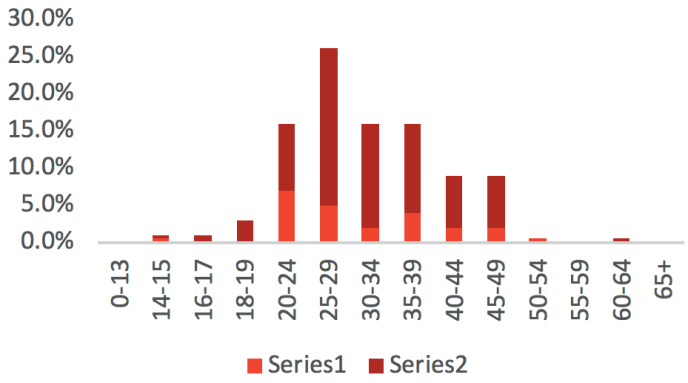
Increases in use and deaths related to benzodiazepine-type NPS, sold under names such as "legal benzodiazepines" or "designer benzodiazepines", are a growing public health issue in some countries[2].

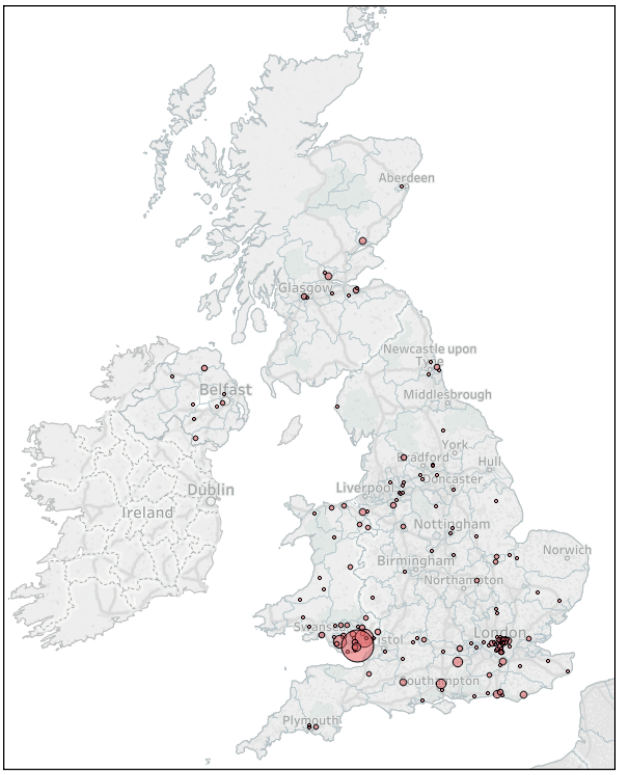
1. European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (2018), European Drug Report 2018: Trends and Developments, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/system/files/publications/8585/20181816_TDAT18001ENN_PDF.pdf
2. UNODC, "Non-medical use of benzodiazepines: a growing public health threat?" Global SMART Update, vol. 18 (September 2017).

Who:

68 per cent of samples were accompanied with demographic data







Where:

404 samples were submitted from across the United Kingdom. Samples were submitted from 42 services as well as anonymously by individuals.

What:

Top ten most commonly identified substances. NPS refers to New Psychoactive Substances.

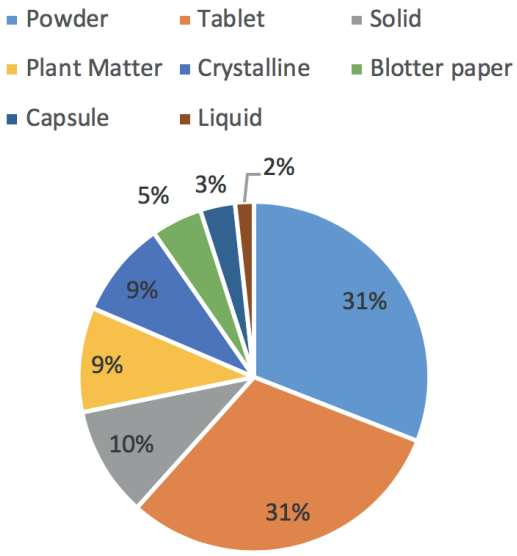
Number	All Substances	NPS
1	Cocaine	5F-ADB
2	MDMA	Etizolam
3	Diazepam	AMB-FUBINACA
4	Caffeine	Ketamine
5	5F-ADB	Alprazolam
6	Cannabis	2C-B
7	Amphetamine	Quetiapine
8	Etizolam	Pregabalin
9	AMB-FUBINACA	Zopiclone
10	Ketamine	Modafinil

This quarter several samples were found to contain different substances upon analysis to the purchase intent:

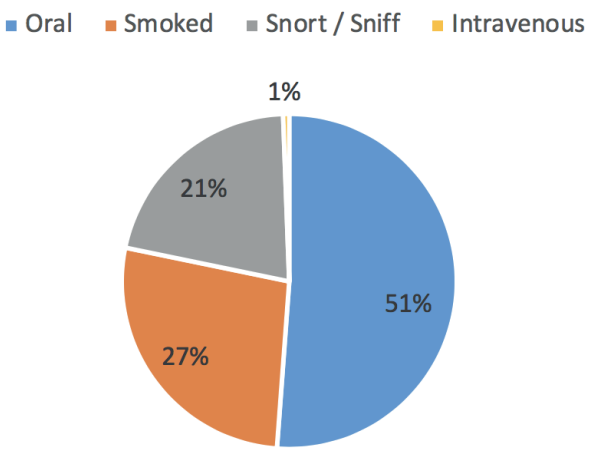
Sample believed to be…	Found to contain…
11 x Diazepam	Etizolam
3 x Diazepam	Alprazolam
Diazepam	Clonazolam
4 x Alprazolam	Etizolam
Alprazolam	Clonazolam
Alprazolam	Paracetamol
Zolpidem	Etizolam
Zopiclone	Phenazepam
2 X THC product	5F-ADB
CBD oil	5F-ADB
Cocaine	Caffeine
MDMA	Paracetamol
Amphetamine	Caffeine

How:

Form:



Route of administration – all samples:



Here the intravenous use relates to a sample of crack cocaine submitted from Betsi Cadwaladr University LHB.

Route of administration – Powders and crystalline material:

Snort / Sniff
63 per cent

Oral
30 per cent

Smoke
7 per cent