

Health and Social Problems Associated with Recent Novel Psychoactive Substance (NPS) Use Amongst Marginalised, Nightlife and Online Users in Six European Countries

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Abstract

Continued diversification and use of new psychoactive substances (NPS) across Europe remains a public health challenge. The study describes health and social consequences of recent NPS use as reported in a survey of marginalised, nightlife and online NPS users in the Netherlands, Hungary, Portugal, Ireland, Germany and Poland (n = 3023). Some respondents were unable to categorise NPS they had used. Use of 'herbal blends' and 'synthetic cannabinoids obtained pure' was most reported in Germany, Poland and Hungary, and use of 'branded stimulants' and 'stimulants/empathogens/nootropics obtained pure' was most reported in the Netherlands. Increased heart rate and palpitation, dizziness, anxiety, horror trips and headaches were most commonly reported acute side effects. Marginalised users reported substantially more acute side effects, more mid- and long-term mental and physical problems, and more social problems. Development of country-specific NPS awareness raising initiatives, health and social service needs assessments, and targeted responses are warranted.

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