

WEDINOS Headlines

274
Substances
Identified
in Combination or
Isolation

2127
Samples
Analysed

So Far -
October 2013 to
December 2014

268
Samples
Analysed

This Quarter -
October 2014 to
December 2014

96
Substances
Identified

Hunting the Krokodil

The thing all services are looking for; but hoping it's already dead when they find it.

Throughout various media outlets, forums and meetings we often hear mention of concerns over anecdotal reports of the presence and use of Krokodil within South Wales.

In terms of substance use Krokodil usually refers to homemade desomorphine; an opioid derivative of codeine. Like heroin it is a depressant drug with a high addiction potential. It is most prevalent in Russia and Eastern Europe, however, it has been reported in UK press; usually accompanied by headlines about this "flesh eating drug". Since March 2014 the WEDINOS project has received three samples labelled as Krokodil; one each from Blaenau Gwent, Neath and Newport.

- The Blaenau Gwent sample (a brown liquid) was unfortunately submitted without any effects data; upon analysis it was found to contain the synthetic cathinone 4-Methylethcathinone (4-MEC).
- The Newport sample (a white crystalline material) listed effects such as relaxation, but also increased energy, increased confidence and enhanced senses. Like the Blaenau Gwent sample, Newport's Krokodil contained a stimulant, another synthetic cathinone – Mephedrone.
- The most recent Krokodil sample (a yellow powder) was submitted from Neath in November 2014. Effects data listed euphoria, increased confidence, auditory hallucinations, visual hallucinations, irregular heartbeat, and insomnia. Following analysis the sample was again found to contain a stimulant – amphetamine, as well as agomelatine an antidepressant.

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).

Superman 'Ecstasy' pills

22nd December 2014 Dutch Drugs Information and Monitoring System (DIMS) issued an alert regarding ecstasy tablets containing a deadly amount of para-methoxy-methamphetamine (PMMA). The concerns were in relation to pink / light red, pentagram shaped tablets bearing the Superman logo on both sides. It was noted that identical tablets containing only MDMA were circulating in Belgium and The Netherlands.



9th January 2015 at least six deaths and several non-fatal intoxications being reported by authorities in the United Kingdom (at least two deaths) and Sweden (four deaths) linked to the consumption of diamond-shaped ecstasy tablets bearing the Superman logo.

26th January 2015 information received from the Spanish National Focal Point via the organisation Energy Control, that ecstasy tablets bearing the Superman logo in Madrid have been found to contain high levels of PMMA (140 milligrams). This new information means that there is the possibility of the continued availability of pills sold as ecstasy but containing large quantities of PMMA being available within the United Kingdom.



Blaenau Gwent Sample

4-MEC



Newport Sample

Mephedrone



Neath Sample

Amphetamine & Agomelatine

In all Krokodil samples submitted to the WEDINOS project the main psychoactive substance was a stimulant. No desomorphine was found, nor was any other opioid derivative.

New entries to the top ten

This quarter we see a reduction in the number of synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists within our list of the ten most commonly identified substances, with new entries for the psychedelics 5-MeO-MiPT, 4-AcO-DMT and 6-allyl-6-nor-LSD. However, during this quarter eight synthetic cannabinoids were identified.

The emergence of 5-MeO-MiPT and 4-AcO-DMT may have followed the increase in prevalence of samples containing 5-MeO-DALT, another psychedelic tryptamine. Their emergence may also have been affected by the classification of Tryptamines as Class A substances under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 on 7th January 2015.

The inclusion of 6-allyl-6-nor-LSD (AL-LAD) comes on the back of an increase in the number of blotter paper samples submitted throughout 2014, particularly between April and September. Throughout 2014, 34 blotter papers were submitted with 15 compounds identified.

News from the Home Office and abroad

6th January 2015 - A Change to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971: control of AH-7921, LSD-related compounds, tryptamines, and rescheduling of GHB.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/circular-0012015-a-change-to-the-misuse-of-drugs-act-1971-control-of-ah-7921-lsd-related-compounds-tryptamines-and-rescheduling-of-ghb>

2nd December 2014 - Drug misuse statistics in England: 2014. Annual report presenting a broad picture of health issues related to drug misuse, prevalence of drug misuse, health outcomes including hospital admissions, drug treatment and deaths.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/drug-misuse-statistics-in-england-2014>

26th November 2014 - Letter to ACMD regarding advice on MT-45 and 4,4'-DMAR. Crime prevention minister writes to the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs to accept their recommendation to control these 2 drugs as Class A drugs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-acmd-regarding-advice-on-mt-45-and-44-dmar>

14th November 2014 - Report summary: synthetic opioid MT-45. Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs' report on the synthetic opioid known as MT-45.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-summary-synthetic-opioid-mt-45>

14th November 2014 - Report summary: synthetic stimulant 4,4'-DMAR. Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs' report on the synthetic stimulant known as 4,4'-DMAR.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-summary-synthetic-stimulant-44-dmar>

November 2014 - EMCDDA Risk Assessment. This report presents the data and findings of the risk assessment on the new psychoactive substance, MT-45.

<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/risk-assessment/mt-45>

November 2014 - EMCDDA Risk Assessment. This report presents the data and findings of the risk assessment on the new psychoactive substance, 4,4'-DMAR.

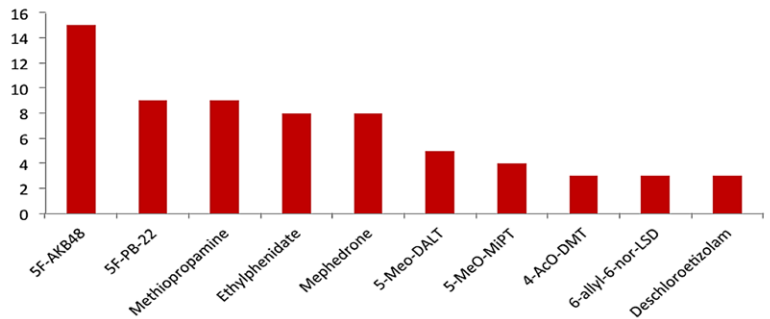
<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/risk-assessment/4,4-DMAR>

5th November 2014 - Shooting Up: infections among people who inject drugs in the UK. This Public Health England report describes the extent of infections among people who inject drugs (PWID) in the United Kingdom. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shooting-up-infections-among-people-who-inject-drugs-in-the-uk>

30th October 2014 - Seizures of drugs in England and Wales, financial year ending 2014. Contains the number of drug seizures made and quantity of drugs seized.

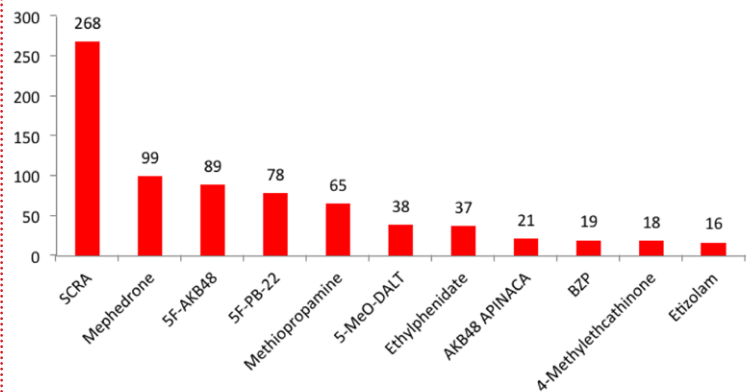
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/seizures-of-drugs-in-england-and-wales-financial-year-ending-2014>

Ten most commonly identified New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)



5F-AKB48, 5F-PB-22 are synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists. Methiopropamine, Ethylphenidate and Mephedrone are stimulants. 5-MeO-DALT, 4-AcO-DMT and 5-MeO-MiPT are psychedelic tryptamines. 6-allyl-6-nor-LSD (AL-LAD) is also a psychedelic. Deschloroetizolam is a benzodiazepine analogue.

Ten most commonly identified New Psychoactive Substances (Oct-2013 – Oct 2014)



SCRA total 268 shows all SCRA as a group. 5F-AKB48, 5F-PB-22 and AKB48 APINACA are synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists. Methiopropamine, Ethylphenidate, Mephedrone and 4-Methylethcathinone are stimulants. 5-MeO-DALT is a psychedelic tryptamine. BZP a piperazine and Etizolam a benzodiazepine analogue.

Notifications to the EMCDDA

In the past quarter WEDINOS has submitted one notification to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) for the following substance:

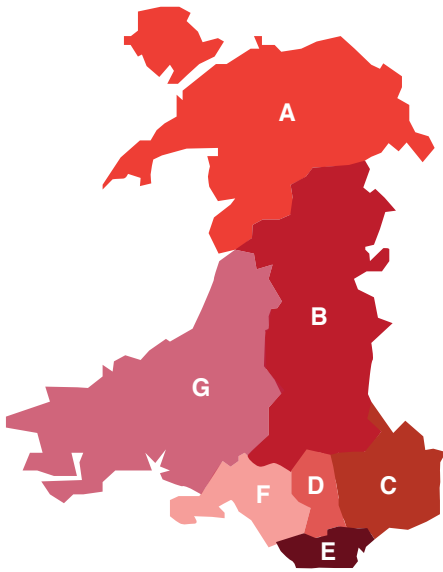
3rd December 2014 -

3-fluoro phenmetrazine - stimulant

FINDINGS...

WHERE...

Samples were submitted from 6 of the 7 Welsh Health Boards.



Breakdown of sample submissions by Health Board areas

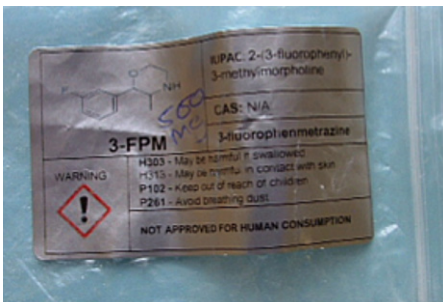
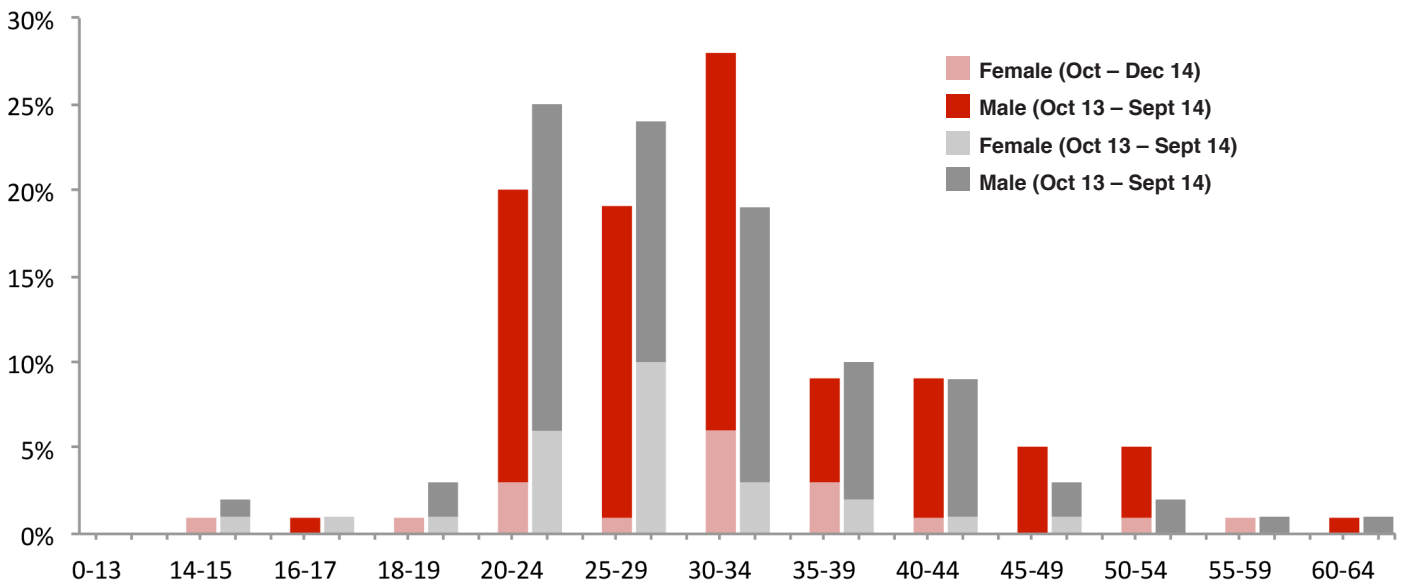
- A** - Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board – 6 samples (92 samples between Oct 2013 and December 2014).
- B** - Powys Teaching Health Board – 0 samples (10 samples between Oct 2013 and June 2014).
- C** - Aneurin Bevan University Health Board – 54 samples (367 samples between Oct 2013 and December 2014).
- D** - Cwm Taf University Health Board – 2 samples (48 samples between Oct 2013 and June 2014).
- E** - Cardiff & Vale University Health Board – 46 samples (196 samples between Oct 2013 and December 2014).
- F** - Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board – 18 samples (120 samples between Oct 2013 and December 2014).

- G** - Hywel Dda University Health Board – 7 samples (37 samples between Oct 2013 and June 2014).

128 samples were received from England, 3 from Northern Ireland and 4 from Scotland. **WEDINOS does not analyse samples received from outside of the United Kingdom.**

In relation to Welsh Health Boards, the highest proportion of samples came from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, 54 samples were received, accounting for 20% of all samples analysed.

Gender/Age Profile of Sample Providers - Psychoactive Samples



Reason for purchase - All samples

250 Mind Altering / Psychoactive samples were submitted for analysis during this quarter. 18 were submitted via Public Health Wales agreed sentinel providers of Steroids and Image Enhancing Drug (SIED) samples as SIEDs.

Samples Submitted from Wales

78% of Welsh samples were submitted via 20 service / organisations; with the remaining 22% being submitted anonymously.

Notifications to the EMCDDA

3rd December 2014 - 3-fluorophenmetrazine (3-FPM) - Related to phenmetrazine and is the 3-fluoro analogue. With this compound being a phenethylamine it is expected to have stimulant yielding effects.

WHAT...

Of the 250 Mind Altering/Psychoactive samples:

- 35 samples were purchased in the belief that they were Class A substances
- 23 Class B
- 15 Class C
- 91 were believed not to be controlled
- A further 86 were submitted without any information relating to purchase intent, or perceived legal status.

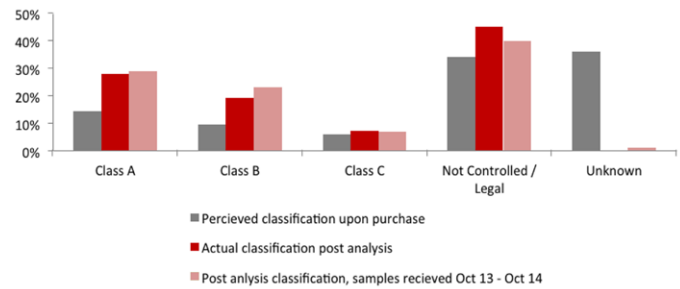
Post analysis we see that Class A increased from 35 samples to 71. Class B increased from 23 to 47 and Class C from 15 to 18. Substances that are not controlled increased from 86 to 114. It must be noted that although all groups increased with the post analysis categorisation of the “unknown” substances, several samples moved between classifications.

Examples of this include:

- Sample believed to be Ketamine – found to contain Cocaine upon analysis
- Sample believed to be MDMA – found to contain BZP and TFMPP upon analysis
- Sample believed to be Amphetamine – found to contain Ethylphenidate upon analysis
- Sample believed to be MDMA – found to contain 5-MeO-DALT and Methiopropamine upon analysis
- Sample believed to be Modafinil – found to contain Cocaine upon analysis
- Sample believed to be Cocaine – found to contain 3-Methylmethcathinone upon analysis.

Of the six samples purchased and submitted as a “legal high”, five contained controlled substances. These substances included Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), 2C-I, Methylone, 5-MAPB and MDMA.

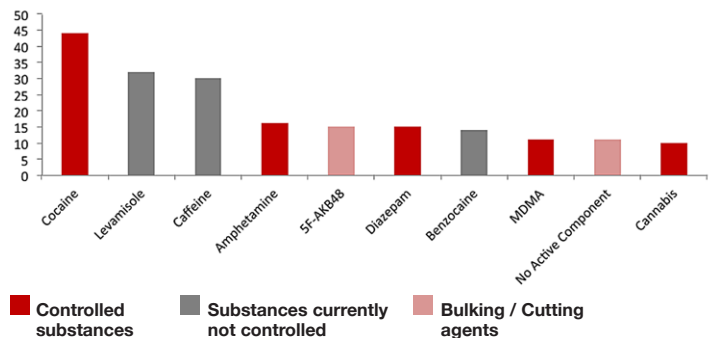
Proportion of controlled and not controlled / legal – Perceived and Actual (Psychoactive Substances)



NB. Following analysis samples were categorised based on the highest classified substance present. Order of classification / control – Class A, B, C, Temporary Class Drugs Order, Not controlled.

Most commonly identified substances

Most commonly identified substances in Mind Altering / Psychoactive Substance samples



Levamisole was the most commonly identified bulking / cutting agent followed by Caffeine. Consistent with previous finding Levamisole is found exclusively within samples containing cocaine; whereas Caffeine appears to be used far more diversely, being identified in far wider range of samples, including those that contained Heroin, Amphetamine, Cocaine, MDPBP, 5-MeO-DALT, Methiopropamine, Ethylphenidate and Methylone as major components.

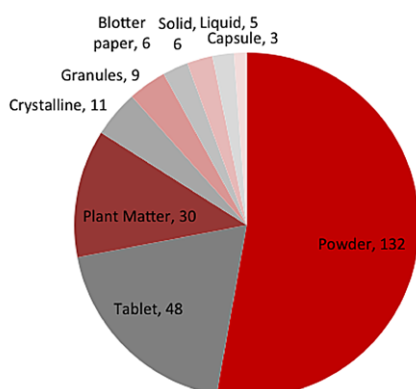
HOW...

Form of Sample & Method of Consumption

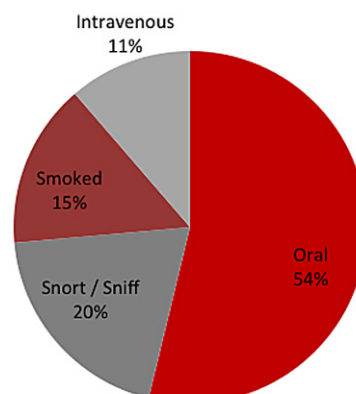
Mind Altering/Psychoactive

Where samples were purchased as Mind Altering/Psychoactive, a method of consumption was recorded, 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 method was to consume a substance orally (37%) followed by Sniff/Snort (34%).

Mind Altering/Psychoactive - Form of Sample



Mind Altering/Psychoactive - Method of Consumption

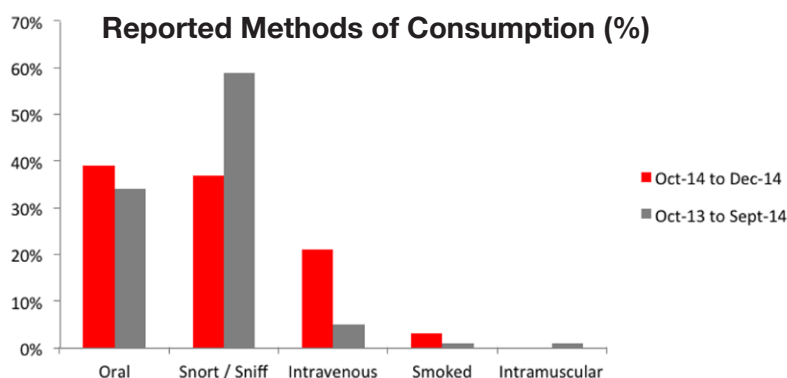


Changes in methods of consumption for powders

Focusing on the method of use for powders and crystalline materials we see the most common method was to consume a substance by snorting / sniffing. Intravenous use accounted for 21% and relates to samples of Mephedrone, Amphetamine, Methamphetamine, Heroin and Ethylphenidate.

The injection of NPS, and in particular Ethylphenidate, has already caused concerns amongst drugs services within Scotland. The Scottish Drugs Forum (SDF) and the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS have produced an informative guide with the intention of informing people of the risks associated with injecting NPS. This and other harm reduction resources can be found here:

<http://www.sdf.org.uk/index.php/drug-information/>



WHO...

Where a WEDINOS Effects Record was submitted and gender completed; 85% (n=156) of submissions were from males. The gender split for Mind Altering/Psychoactive substances was 85% (n=142) male to 15% (n=26) were females. In relation to Steroids & Image Enhancing Drugs, 88% were submitted by males (14 male / 2 female).

The average age of all sample providers was 32 (age range 15 to 61). Of those samples that were submitted as Mind Altering/Psychoactive and age was stated the average was age 32 (age range 15 to 61). The average age of sample providers of Steroids & Image Enhancing Drugs was 32 (age range 20 to 52).

The overall median age for all mind altering / psychoactive sample providers (Wales and wider UK) was 31 years (average age was 28 years old):

Females - median age was 28 years and an average age of 27 years (range: 14-49 years).

Males - median age was 31 years, with an average age of 30 years (range: 14-61 years).

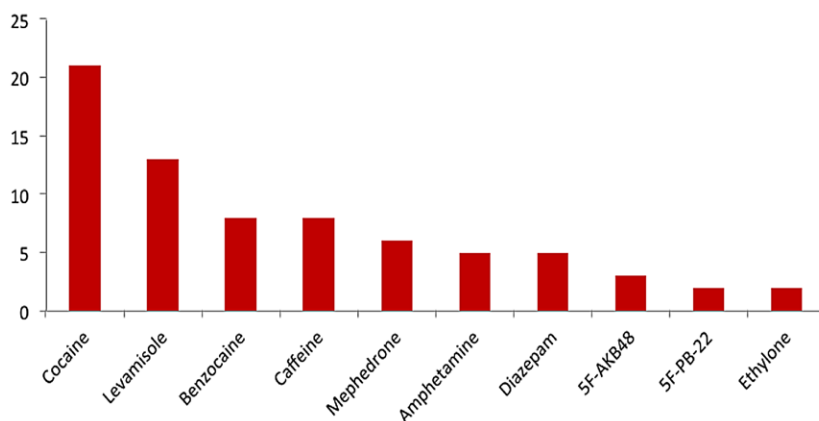
GEOGRAPHIC PROFILES / LOCAL TRENDS

Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMU)

- Cumulative total: 120 samples
- 18 samples were received from ABMU this quarter.
- During analysis 22 substances were identified either in combination or in isolation, with one sample having no active compounds identified.
 - Stimulant type compounds featured highly amongst the samples submitted from within ABMU with 3-Fluorophenmetrazine, Amphetamine, Cocaine, and Methiopropamine being profiled.
 - 3-Fluorophenmetrazine was a new notification on a European level identified by WEDINOS on 3rd December 2014. This sample was submitted as a result of positive engagement between the WEDINOS project and internet based NPS user / harm reduction forum.
- However, no samples of SCRA's or synthetic cathinones were submitted from within AMBU. We do not feel that this is a true reflection of trends in substance use in the AMBU area and would welcome your input and would happily accept more samples.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABU)

- Cumulative total: 367
- 54 samples were received ABU this quarter.
- During analysis of those samples, 23 substances were identified either in combination or in isolation, with two samples having no active compound identified.
- Cocaine was the most commonly identified substance within the in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board; a statistic that is influenced heavily by the analysis of night club amnesty bins from within Newport city centre. Levamisole and Benzocaine feature highly, but were found exclusively as bulking / cutting agents with samples that also contained cocaine. Samples containing MDMA and piperazines were also submitted.

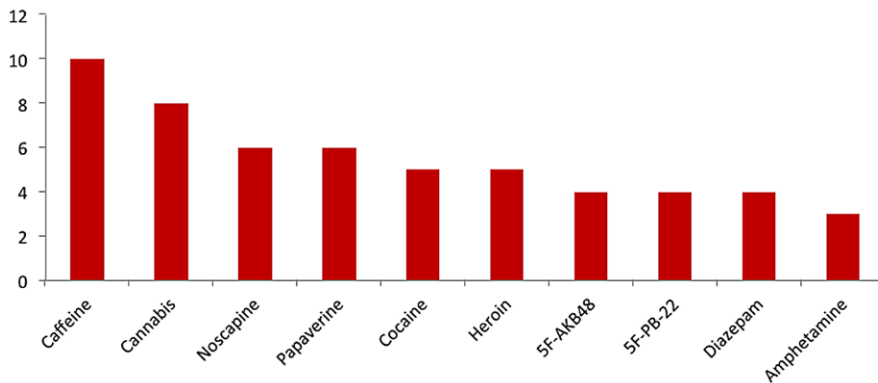


Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCU)

- Cumulative total: 92
- 6 samples were received from BCU this quarter
- During analysis of those samples, 9 substances were identified either in combination or in isolation
- Substances identified included Caffeine, Cocaine, Ethylphenidate, Heroin, Levamisole, Mannitol, Noscapine, Papaverine and Paracetamol

Cardiff & Vale University Health Board (CVU)

- Cumulative total: 196 samples
- 46 samples were received from CVU this quarter
- During analysis 29 substances were identified either in combination or in isolation, with one sample found to contain no active chemical compound
 - Samples of interest include:
 - Two samples that were purchased as Aphrodisiacs that upon analysis were found to contain Methamphetamine
 - A sample submitted as heroin that upon analysis was found to contain bulking / cutting agents commonly found in heroin; Noscapine, Papaverine, Mannitol, Caffeine. This sample contained no heroin.



Cwm Taf University Health Board (CTU)

- Cumulative total: 48 samples
- 2 samples were received from CTU this quarter
- These samples were found to contain Diazepam and Amphetamine.
- Previously the majority of samples from within the Cwm Taf University Health Board area were of SIED's. The number of samples submitted from within CTU has fallen each quarter since WEDINOS began accepting samples from sentinel contributors. We 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

Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDU)

- Cumulative total: 37 samples
- 7 samples were received from HDU this quarter
- During analysis 8 substances were identified in isolation, or combination.
- Three samples contained Benzodiazepines (Diazepam and Diclazepam). Three samples were stimulant type substances (Ethylphenidate, Methylphenidate and MDMA). And one sample was found to contain the SCRA's 5F-AKB48 and 5F-PB-22.

Powys Teaching Health Board (PT)

- Cumulative total: 10 samples
- No samples were received from PT this quarter

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 Steroids and Image Enhancing Drugs other than those submitted by sentinel contributors.