
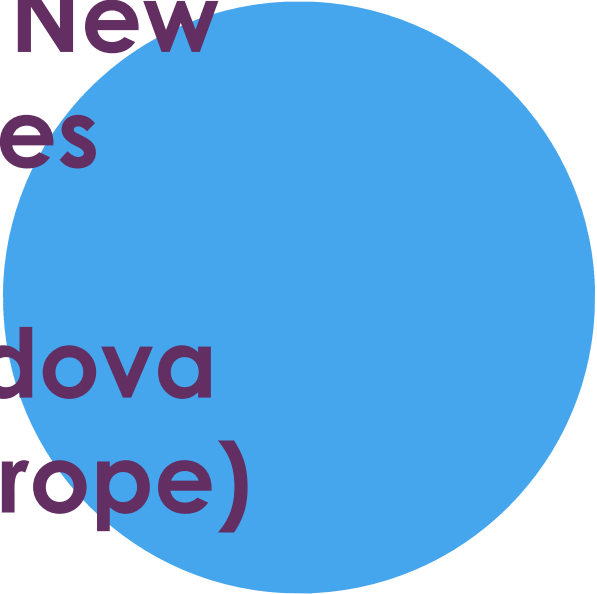


Research on the Use of New Psychoactive Substances and Challenges in Responding to It in Moldova and Belarus (Eastern Europe)



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About research

- ▶ Research project 'New Psychoactive Substance Use in Moldova and Belarus', conducted in partnership between the Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA) and the School of Law, Swansea University, funded by **the Global Challenges Research Fund**. Principle Investigator Dr. Rick Lines of Swansea University.
- ▶ **The objective** - to create a more accurate picture of the use of NPS in Moldova and Belarus, which will subsequently be used both for political advocacy by national civil society organizations and as a contribution to the international data on the use of NPS.
- ▶ **Methods** of data collection and analysis:
Two stages:
 1. Desk research and preparation of questionnaire based on the collected information;
 2. Structured interviews/ focus groups with key respondents.

Results of the research in Moldova

- ▶ Weak **data collection** on NPS use;
- ▶ Significant **increase in the use** of NPS;
- ▶ **Most used** NPS:
 - ✓ *synthetic cannabinoids – spices / khimar / smoking mixtures / ethnobotanical substances;*
 - ✓ *synthetic cathinones – salts.*
- ▶ New users and young users **smoke or inhale** NPS;
- ▶ **Low availability of and access to harm reduction services** adapted to the situation and needs of people who use NPS (in particular, non-injecting ones);
- ▶ **Non-injecting NPS users** cannot be registered as clients of the harm reduction programs, because they do not use syringes;
- ▶ **Problem of realistic documenting and incorporating of the NPS use into the statistics** of medical services and law enforcement agencies. Depending on the clinical manifestations of the use of NPS, cases are assigned either to the group of cannabinoids or to the group of amphetamines;
- ▶ NPS sales in Moldova are mainly conducted **online or by phone**.

Results of the research in Belarus

- ▶ Weak **data collection** on NPS use;
- ▶ Significant **increase in the use** of NPS;
- ▶ Less people are registered as having substance use disorder;
- ▶ NPS use in most of the cases requires repeated injections over a short period of time (**15-30 injections per night**).
- ▶ Age to apply criminal liability – **14-16** y.o.
- ▶ There are **no specific harm reduction services for NPS users** in the harm reduction programmes, as well as lack of psychological or psychotherapeutic support;
- ▶ **No response on overdoses**;
- ▶ **No treatment/programmes** for the non-injecting drugs users;
- ▶ Risks related to law enforcement while buying psychoactive substances online.

Recommendations



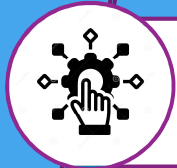
To provide periodic data collection on the use of NPS from various stakeholders;



To conduct research on the risks of NPS consumption;



To adjust harm reduction programs by identifying and implementing interventions that are relevant to the needs and profile of people who use NPS (including non-injecting NPS users)



To adapt existing psycho-social and medical-social interventions to ensure effective work with people who use NPS, including non-injecting users



-To review existing drug policies and redesign it based on human rights, health and evidence-based approaches.