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THE EUROPEAN WEB SURVEY ON DRUGS:

PATTERNS OF USE OF NPS IN BELGIUM

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Session: Methods and approaches to inform drug policy and practice
Thursday, 24 October, 2019 - 11:10 to 11:20

.be

Declaration of no conflict of interest

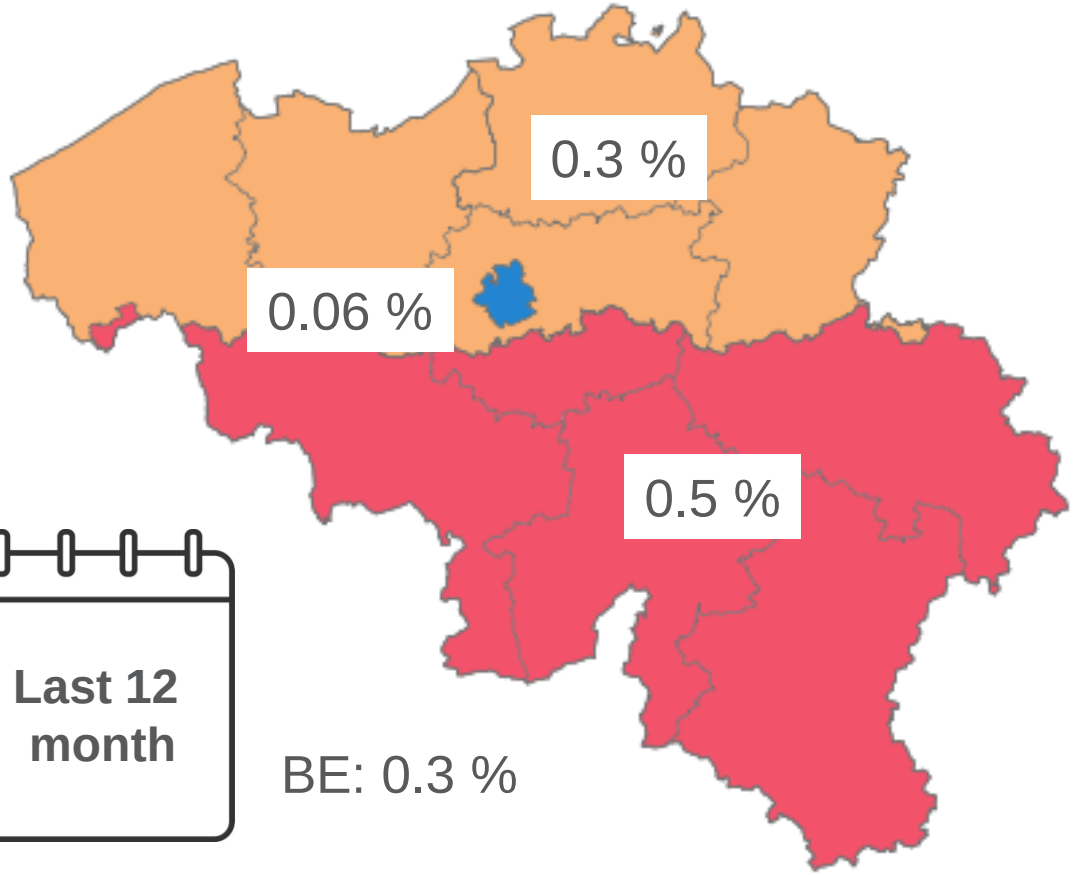
Core messages:

! *The European Web Survey on Drugs provided in a useful snapshot on NPS patterns with complementary information to prevalence studies*

? *How useful is it to continue to use a catch-all term in research such as “new psychoactive substances” ?*

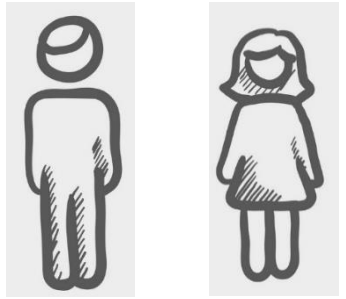
Background: the use of NPS in Belgium

- NPS = available, but indications of limited use in Belgium
- Most recent results from the general population survey conducted in 2018:



Last 12 month

BE: 0.3 %



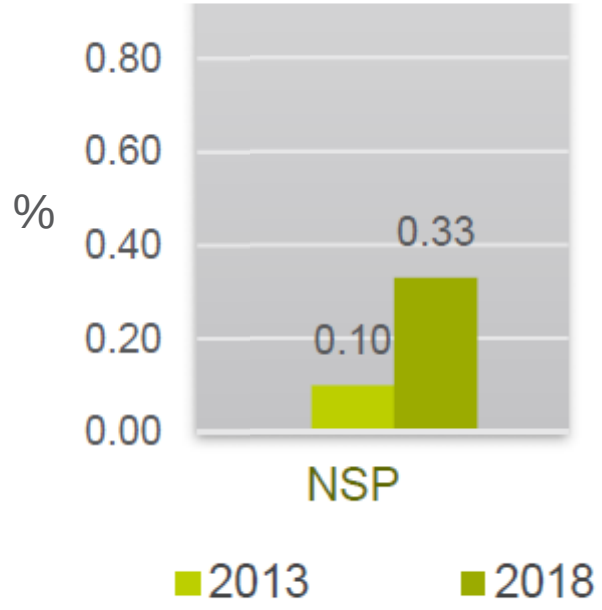
0.3 % 0.3 %

Age

15 – 24 yrs : 1.1%

25 – 34 yrs : 0.4 %

35 – 44 yrs : 0.2 %



Fact I: the online world is a effective gateway to reach (a subpopulation of) NPS users

European Web Survey on Drugs

- Collaboration of EMCDDA & national focal points
  (poster J.Matias: European web survey on drugs: patterns of use)
- Timing BE: mid November 2017 → January 2018
- Recruitment approach including social media ads

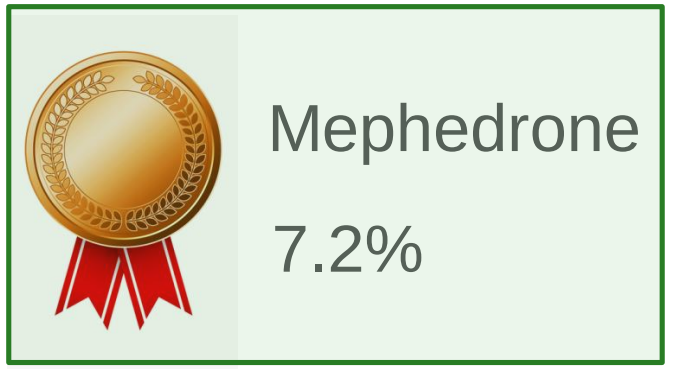
➔ Things to learn from branding & marketing

- Total number of accessed survey: 8164
- Eligible : **4378** (54%)
- Indicating NPS use in the last year : 1024 (23.4% of the total sample)
- Agreed to the module: **321** (~31%)

! ~~GHB~~ ~~Ketamine~~

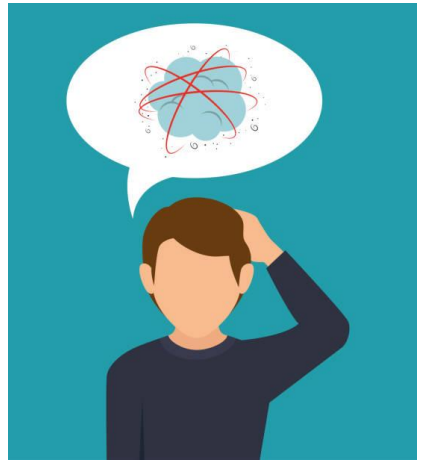
Fact II: NPS what? → Lack of common terminology

- EWSD allowed participants to specify on the specific substances used



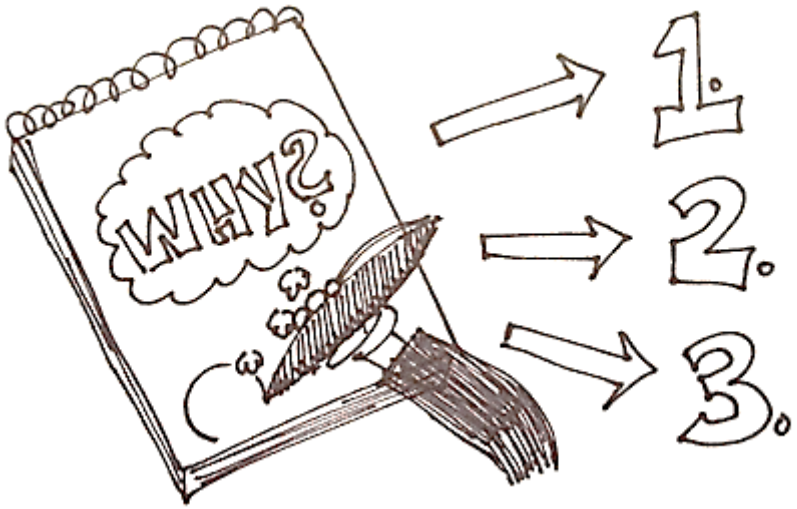
→ Many respondents proved to be unfamiliar with the categorization

- **17.1%** no specification on the type of NPS
- about **6%** didn't remember or never knew the name nor type
- **12.5%** of people indicating conventional drugs or prescription drugs



FACT III: For many users, NPS are just another choice on the menu

Primary motivations for NPS use:



Curiosity (48.0%)

‘having the opportunity’ / ‘availability’ (45.7%)

I like the effects of the product (36.9%)

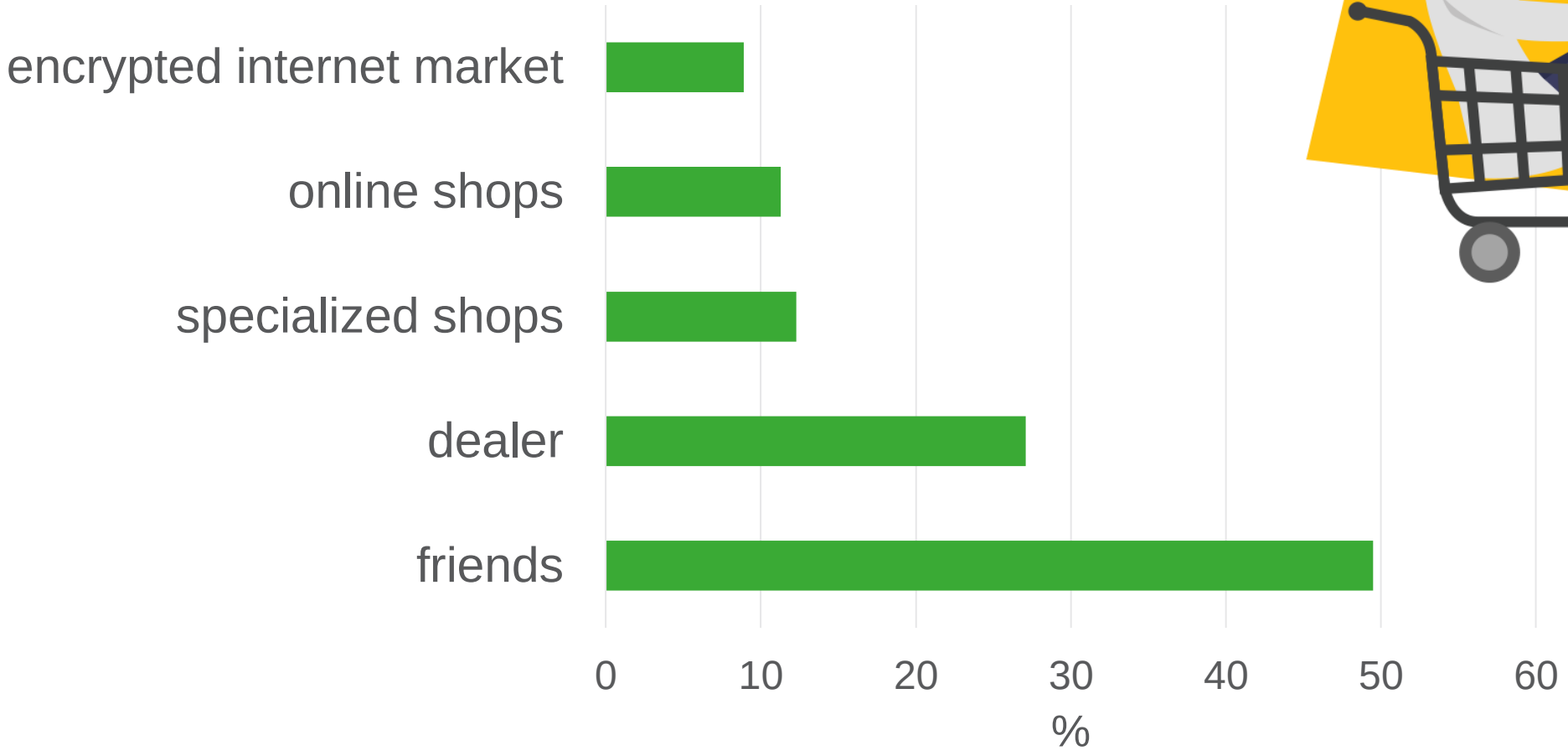
Legal aspects (17.4%)

➔ September 2017: new generic law banning NPS

Expected effects: partying (56.5%) & getting high (48.9%).

Fact IV: NPS are available on the regular drug market in BE

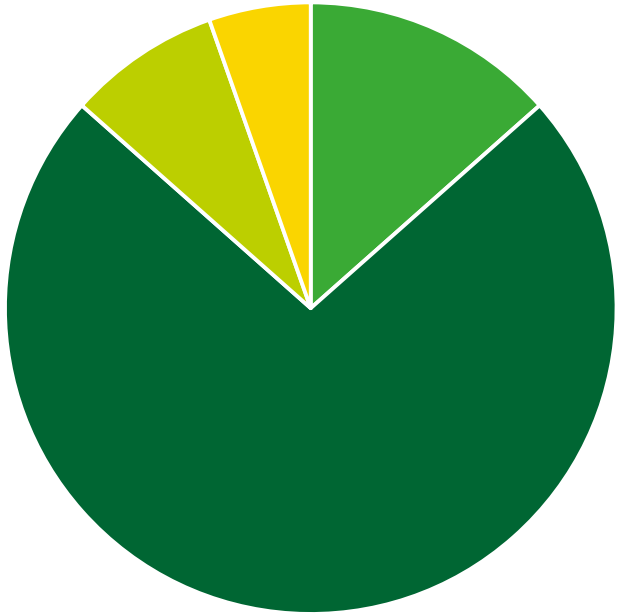
Usual route of NPS acquisition



FACT V: Diversity in NPS offer equals diversity among user profiles

Further repartition required

- According to **format**:



- According to **expertise level**: subtypes of users
  - "Experts"
  - "Regular users"
  - "supposed/claimed users"

Blotters, psychedelics, Online aspect

Specialized shops

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Thank you very much

Contact

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