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UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS & CONSEQUENCES
OF NPS USE IN RAPIDLY CHANGING DRUG MARKETS



Margot Balcaen

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Sciensano

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**General overview
Scanner**



Mireia Ventura

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Energy Control (ABD)

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**Analysis of NPS and
drugs purchased on
Darknet and Clearnet
markets**



Judith Aldridge

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University of
Manchester

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**The influence of
legislation on the
availability of NPS**



Jochen Schrooten

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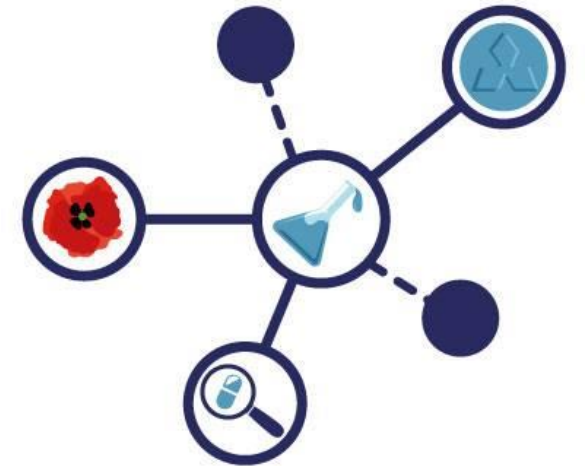
VAD

-

**The prevalence of
NPS use. Results of
the implementation
of a standardized
survey methodology
amongst 25 CSO's in
Europe**

Overview Project (1/2)

- ✓ Understanding the dynamics and consequences of NPS use in rapidly changing (online) drug markets
- ✓ **Until** end of November 2022 (34 months)
- ✓ Justice Programme – **Drug Policy initiatives**



This project was funded by the European Union's
Justice Programme – Drugs Policy Initiatives

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Overview Project (2/2)

Collaboration between:

- ✓ Sciansano (Belgium)
- ✓ VAD (Belgium)
- ✓ Energy Control (ABD) (Spain)
- ✓ Kosmicare (Portugal)
- ✓ MUW (Austria)
- ✓ Legal high inhaltstoffe (Germany)
- ✓ Youth Organisation for Drug Action (Poland)
- ✓ DrogArt (Slovenia)



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Drug Policy

= the overall direction and approach taken by a government to address drug issues

>> FOCUS:

- Whole system of laws
- Regulatory measures



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Legal Action (1/3)

What is the effect of the legal framework?

- Is there a big effect of a ban?
- What happens to the NPS market?



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Legal Action (2/3)

Investigation Scanner

- Web scraping
- Change in legislation in Poland & Belgium
- Retrospective analysis @Judith Aldridge



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Legal Action (3/3)

What is the effect of the legal framework?

- Is it too slow?
- Is there a big effect of a ban?
- Doesn't attack public health problems
- High social cost



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Alternative approaches

HARM REDUCTION

= public health interventions focusing on:

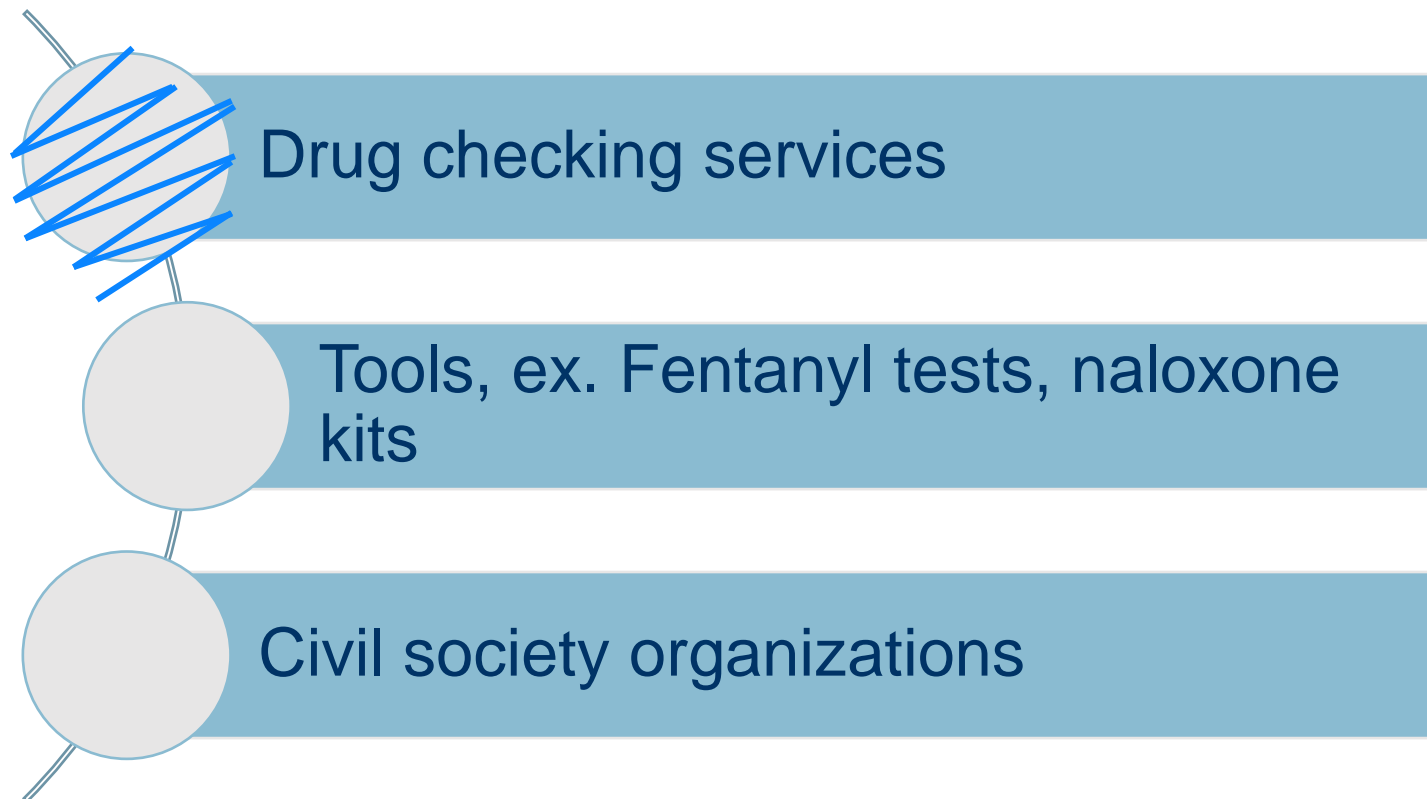
- Overdose prevention
- Infectious disease transmission
- Improve physical, mental and social wellbeing
- Offer low threshold option for accessing substance use disorder treatment
- ...



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Harm reduction initiatives @Scanner



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Drug checking services @Mireia Ventura (1/3)



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Drug checking services @Mireia Ventura (2/3)

Objective 1:

Samples bought
online

Does the
presumed
identity match
the real one?



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Drug checking services @Mireia Ventura (3/3)

Objective 2: How can we improve/ evaluate current analysis of NPS?

Employ different approaches and analytical techniques

Evaluate capability and compare different approaches

Minimum requirements to correctly identify & optimize procedures

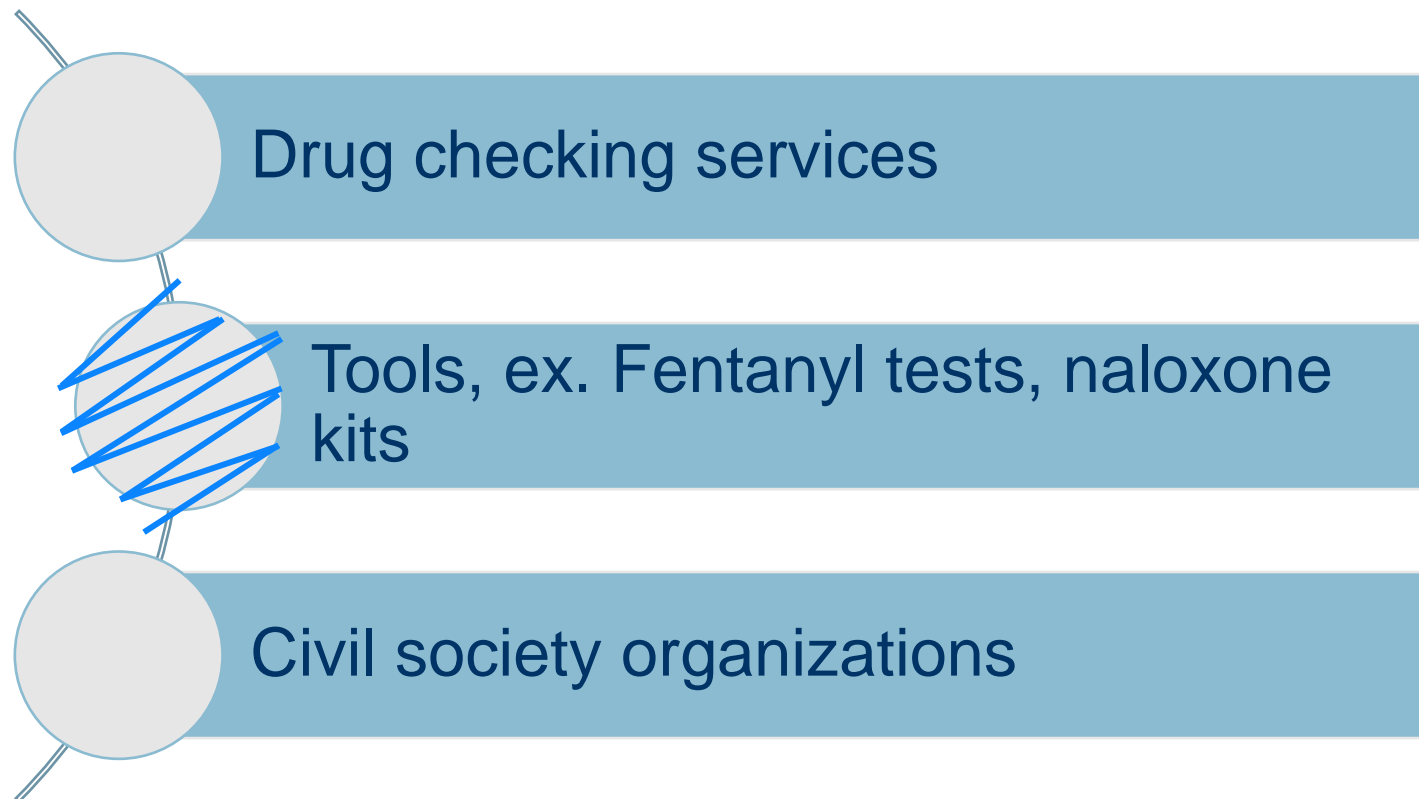


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Harm reduction initiatives @Scanner



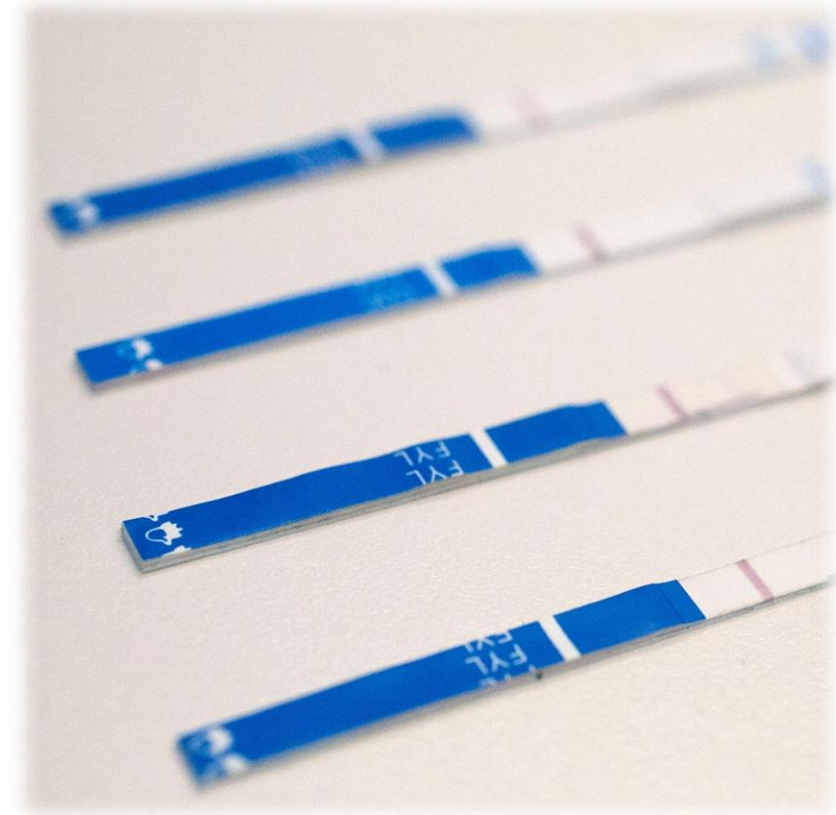
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Tools:

Fentanyl test kits



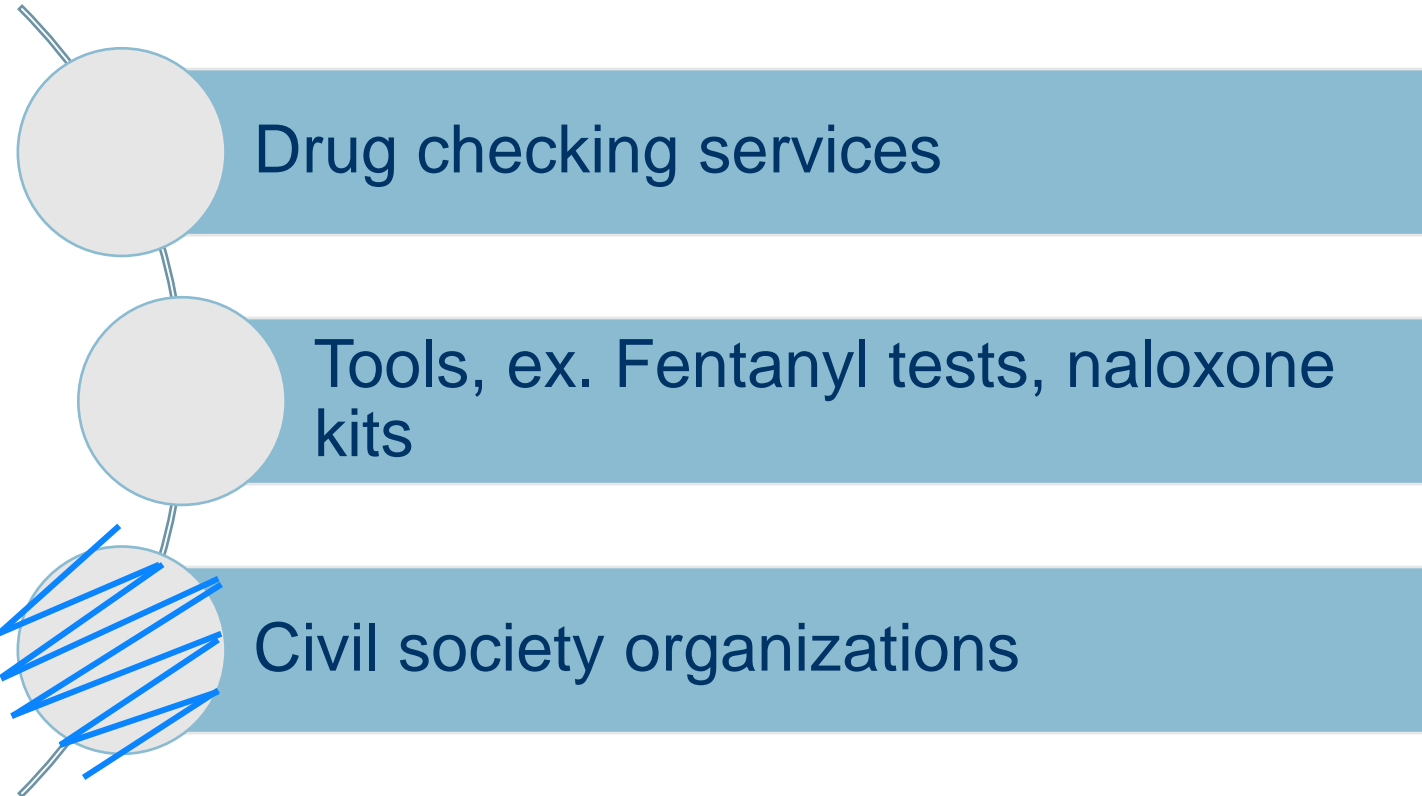
- Evaluation of fentanyl test kits
- Cluster map of fentanyl
- Collaboration with YODA – willingness of people to use strips



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Harm reduction initiatives @Scanner



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Civil society organizations @Jochen Schrooten

- NEWnet
- YODA low threshold settings
- FESAT drug helplines

- ✓ Support to collect prevalence data on NPS use
- ✓ Exchange methods for epidemiologic research
- ✓ Importance of reliable data collection across Europe



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Summary

- Harmonizing DCS & CSO's
- Improving chemical analysis
- Influence of legislation
- Evaluation harm reduction tools
- Exchange methods to collect data on NPS

Building a strong
network to strengthen
preparedness
towards NPS



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- Monitoring the novel psychoactive substances phenomenon in Europe



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In honor of Peter Blanckaert



Peter Blanckaert

°19.04.1978 † 14.03.2021



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