Prevention Advice

International Conference on SPICE Prevention Issues
26.09.2012 Frankfurt am Main
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Background
Background
Questions for prevention and harm reduction

– Which substances with which effects are on the market?
– What are the effects and potential harms of these substances?
– Where are these substances sold?
– Who uses legal highs and in which context?
– What is the motivation for taking legal highs?
– Are there new (individual or external) risks related to the use of legal highs?
– What is the potential of the positive effects?
– Are the existent measures sufficient for this new phenomenon?
– Etc.
Background
Why people use legal highs?

There are several motivations reported by user why they take legal highs.

The most important are:
– To be high (mostly specific)
– the quality aspect
– the legal status
– the access to the product
– curiosity
Background
Who uses legal highs?

– The majority of users are over twenty years old and have already experiences with illegal drugs.
– Only a minority uses legal highs before illegal ones.
– Regularly use is not often reported
– There is no substitution of illegal drugs with legal highs.

Meier Larissa (2012): Unveröffentlichte Masterarbeit an der Universität Zürich
Morgenstern, C./ Werse, B. (2012): Unveröffentlichter Bericht zur Online-Umfrage Legal Highs Schweiz
Successful prevention and harm reduction measures today
**Successful measures today**

**Basics**

**Accept orientation:** The use of substances is accepted as a human fact. The goal is to create a fact based awareness concerning the risks related to drug use.

**Risk management:** Starts early in school, the aim is to teach humans how to manage the risk of life, including/for example drug use.

**Low threshold:** The access to prevention or harm reduction must be as easy as possible (free of charge, anonymous).
Successful measures today
Zurich’s integrated approach

At Clubs, Raves
- Information, Advice
- Drug Checking
- Outreach work
- Information, Advice, Drug Checking
- Providing further help
- Counselling
- At School
- Professional
- Safety and Club staff
- Safer Clubbing
- Round Table
- Warning system
- SNS
- Expert groups
- NEWIP Project
- Early detection & intervention
- Bar & Club commission
- Warning.ch

DIZ

Trainings

Networking

Project

Saferparty.ch

Networking

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At Clubs, Raves

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Trend reports

Observations

Drug analyses

Nightlife in general
Successful measures today
Important role of Drug Checking

Drug checking is an established long-term tool, but the analysis of herbal mixture (also cannabis) is difficult/expensive.
Successful measures today
Limiting individual problems and harm

Questionnaire and individual contact makes possible early detection and intervention.

Risk management, Harm Reduction, Safer use and Drug Checking reduce the harm of drug use.
Successful measures today
Less poly drug use

Stadt Zürich, Soziale Einrichtungen und Betriebe
Jugendberatung Streetwork

Streetwork 2012, n. 2200
Successful measures today
Typical consumption during a party night

In 2011 0.8% reported the use of a legal high product during a typical party night.
Successful measures today
Lacks today

**Facts:** No sufficient information about the effects, side effects and long term effects of new substances. More urban myths.

**New media:** Besides the project and information website, new media are less likely to be used for consultation, counselling and consumption management (web work).

**Peers involvement:** Users of legal highs have to be regarded as experts for these new substances and should therefore be integrated in or empowered to create peer support projects.
Conclusion?
Conclusion
What we can do today

Exchange global facts about legal highs within existing and new networks (NEWIP project, EMCDDA).

An integrated, acceptance oriented and low threshold approach together with drug checking create more risk awareness, also concerning legal highs users.

Consultation and counselling embedded in this context make early detection and intervention possible and offers the opportunity to provide further help if needed.
Conclusion
Obstacles

• The illicit drug market is always one step ahead
• For several reasons, drug checking is not possible everywhere
• Risk management is not part of drug prevention in schools
• No exchange culture between police, prevention and harm reduction
• Many harm reduction offers are located in nightlife settings
• Concerning the motivation, an integrated approach has effects on:
  • being high, curiosity and the quality aspect
• No or less influence on:
  • the legal status and the access to the product
Conclusion
Rethinking Drug Policy

The reality that taking drugs is human, the legal high phenomena and the limited prevention and harm reduction possibility should motivate us to rethink the current drug policy.

Because only a new drug market control approach offers the possibility to influence the motivation for taking legal highs in general and in a sustainable way. There is not only legalisation or prohibition, today we know different market control models in between.
Thank you for listening 😊

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