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Second International Conference on Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPSs): Keynote Addresses and Conference Abstracts

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The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) has been concerned about novel psychoactive substances for a number of years, and in a three way collaboration with the University of Hertfordshire (leading the award winning ReDNet project), and Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, it co-organized the First International NPS conference in Budapest, March 2012. The abstracts were published as special issue of the journal Addictologia Hungarica (Corazza, Demetrovics, Mervó, and Brady, 2012). Selected papers from the conference were also published as a special NPS issue of Human Psychopharmacology (Corazza, Schifano and Parrott, 2013).

The Second International Conference on Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) was held at Swansea University on 12–13th September 2013. This issue of Current Drug Abuse Reviews is presenting the abstracts for all the keynote addresses, oral papers and research posters, from the Second International NPS conference. The keynotes addresses given at Swansea described several areas of concern. Griffiths (2013) noted the dramatic expansion of NPS in the licit and illicit drug markets over recent years (EMCDDA-Europol, 2013a), the public health and regulatory challenges posed by them (Griffiths et al, 2013) and the key role of the Early warning system. Schifano (2013) described several examples of the novel drugs, and outlined some of the many problems they can cause, while Sedefov (2013) provided detailed evidence used for the assessment of the risks related to two of these novel substances

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(EMCDDA-Europol, 2013b). Corazza (2013) revealed how the use of smartphones and other modern technologies can facilitate the rapid dissemination of medical information about these novel drugs. Bersani (2013) noted how older and more established psychoactive drugs are associated with a range of psychopathological disorders, and noted that these newer substances often caused similar problems. In relation to the more established drugs, Curran focused on the problems associated with the use of Ketamine. Demetrovics and Kapitány-Fövény (2013) reviewed the implications of Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB) for risky sexual behaviour. Murray (2013) considered the adverse mental health impact of cannabis, skunk, and theartificial spice cannabinoids. Parrott (2013a,b) focused on the adverse neurotoxic effects of Ecstasy/MDMA in recreational drug users, and their adverse implications for well-being (Parrott, 2008). However, it is not just the users *themselves* who experience problems. Singer et al. (2012ab, 2013) noted that stimulant drugs such as cocaine and ecstasy/MDMA taken during pregnancy can cause developmental problems in the emergent babies.

The oral programme comprised papers from research groups across many countries, including Australia (Burns), Belgium (Blanckaert), Canada (Young), Germany (Siemann), Ireland (Van Hout), Italy (Bonavigo, Martinotti, Papanti, Seri, Serpelloni, Tagliaro), Malaysia (Fauzi), Norway (Flesland), Poland (Zawilska), Spain (Farré), UK (Baron, Blagbrough, Bowden-Jones, Corkery, Davidson, Masetti, Raby, Stair, Stuart, Wesnes, Wood), and USA (Fox). The research posters also came from groups in many different countries, including Australia (Bruno), Italy (Bersani, Bonavigo, Chillemi, Giorgetti, Marti, Papanti, Sabatini, Santacroce, Valeriani), Kenya (Mambo), Spain (Farré, Papaseit), and the UK (Ahmadi, Aldridge, Alotaibi, Bloeck, Chiappini, Clemente, Collins, Cullen, Deeb, Gant, Gaylor, Jones, Langham, Loi, MacLeod, Metastasio, Moffatt, Samuel, Sands, Shindi, Turner, Zaher). In overall terms, including the online contributions and live questions organised by Billy Liu and his multimedia team from Postgraduate Medicine at the University of Hertfordshire, the conference was attended by over 150 individuals from 22 countries worldwide and was followed online by 40 registered participants. This confirms that the several issues surrounding Novel Psychoactive Substances are of concern worldwide and that more effective multidisciplinary and multinational cooperation is required to tackle this rapidly expanding phenomenon. More information on the conference can be found at www.novelpsychoactivesubstances.eu

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