duced by the United Nations (UN). This study assessed the impact of UK, Chinese and UN controls on NPS availability in the UK.
**Methods:** Deaths occurring 2007-2022 were extracted from the National Programme on Substance Use Mortality and analysed.
**Results:** Analysis focussed on opioids, stimulants and cannabinoids – the main drug classes targeted by recent Chinese and UN controls. Among 1,669 NPS detections, 254 were NPS opioids, 927 NPS stimulants, 488 NPS cannabinoids. Of the 115 distinct NPS identified, 87.8% (n=101) were first controlled in the UK. However, marked reductions in NPS detections only occurred following the introduction of Chinese controls. For example, following the synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists (SCRAs) generic ban in the UK under the Psychoactive Substances Act (2016), SCRA detections continued to increase (2016 n=19, 2017 n=69) whereas a significant drop was observed upon their generic control in China in 2021 (2021 n=112, 2022 n=14).
**Conclusions:** Despite earlier UK controls, reductions in NPS availability in the UK were primarily associated with later Chinese restrictions, suggesting that international supplier controls may be more effective than domestic legislation.

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### Profiling and Assessing the Risks of Image and Performance Enhancing Drugs: A Cross-Cultural Perspective

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**Introduction:** Image and performance-enhancing drugs (IPEDs), or lifestyle drugs, are a wide range of products presented as having the potential to improve mental and physical function and health. The present study aimed to profile IPEDs use, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown, a period characterized by physical distancing, isolation, gym closures, and other altered lifestyle habits.
**Methods:** A cross-sectional observational study investigating the type of IPEDs consumed and purchasing methods was disseminated via a web-based questionnaire in eight countries (United Kingdom, Italy, Lithuania, Hungary, Portugal, Spain, Brazil, and Japan) between April and May 2020. This included the Exercise Addiction Inventory (EAI), the Appearance Anxiety Inventory (AAI), and the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS).
**Results:** A total of 736 IPEDs users were included in the survey. The mean age of the sample was 33.05 years (SD =10.06), with females' rate of 64.2%. Among IPEDs users, 6.8% were at risk of exercise addiction (EAI >24), 27.6% presented high levels of appearance anxiety and 24.9% revealed low levels of self-compassion and emotional self-regulation. Most participants (55.6%) purchased IPEDs through pharmacies/specialised shops, while 41.3% purchased IPEDs on the Internet. Online shoppers of IPEDs were mainly men who reported higher scores on the Exercise Addiction Inventory. One or more IPEDs classifiable as "potentially at-risk" were used by 66.3% of the sample. Users of "potentially at-risk IPEDs" were younger and mostly males. They showed higher scores both at Exercise Addiction Inventory and Appearance Anxiety Inventory.
**Conclusions:** This study profiled users of IPEDs during the peak of lockdown policies due to the COVID-19 breakdown. Both purchasing methods and types of IPEDs consumed were associated with distinct socio-demographic aspects and psychopathological traits. Some relevant cross-cultural differences were highlighted. Longitudinal studies will be needed to determine the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on IPEDs consumption.

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### E-Vaping Patterns of Use, Information Needs and Risk Perception in the Post Pandemic Era: An International Survey and Social Media Listening Study

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**Introduction:** The rapid proliferation of Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPSs) in e-cigarette products presents an urgent public health concern. These include herbal compounds, synthetic cannabinoids, cathinones, and other potent analogues, often used by young adults. Their unregulated presence in vape liquids raises significant addiction and intoxication risks. This study aimed to elucidate current trends in NPS vaping and user perceptions to inform clinical and regulatory interventions.
**Methods:** This study employed a mixed-methods design that combined an international survey with social media listening. The survey was in English and Greek, distributed between April and December 2024 via online forums (e.g., Bluelight), social media, and university mailing lists. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS. Simultaneously, a netnographic study analyzed 11,721 social media comments (Reddit, YouTube) to extract motivations and perceptions. Data scraping tools Apify and ExportComments were employed, followed by thematic categorization and sentiment analysis.
**Results:** The survey received 1,045 responses where 210 respondents (20%) were vapers {49% males; 40% aged 25–39; (66% heterosexuals, 21% bisexuals); (47% from Greece, 22% from the UK, 18% from the US and Canada)}. The majority 52% were either high school or college leavers. 86% trusted online resources for information regarding vaping and only 32% referred to healthcare professionals. 81% stated that reliable online resources would work best as the main source of information. 62% of participants were tobacco smokers, and only 21% were ex-smokers. A total of 46% started e-vaping at 25 years or above; 60% used vapes daily. 72% had frequent or occasional cravings to vape; 37% tried to stop unsuccessfully. Meanwhile 31% complained about adverse events after vaping such as coughing, weakness, dizziness, sore throat, chest pain, palpitations, anxiety, COPD. Natural novel psychoactive substances, synthetic cannabinoids and flavorings as well as nicotine were mainly referred to as preferred in vaping liquids. 55% of participants stated that vaping poses medium risk. 32% of the vapers were also users of prescribed medications such as codeine, oxycodone, and 40% also users of NPSs (mainly herbals and benzodiazepines) combined with vaping. Netnographic findings revealed that the primary motivations for vaping were smoking cessation (63%), perception that vaping was less harmful (15%), and sensory appeal (8%). Youth often cited stress relief, peer influence and social identity as vaping drivers. Posts also highlighted widespread unawareness about NPS presence in vape products, reflecting a dangerous information gap.
**Conclusions:** Vapes are increasingly exploited as vehicles for a range of illicit drugs and NPSs, particularly among youth, with high addiction and toxicity risks. Real-time monitoring, better education strategies, and targeted policies are urgently needed. Understanding psychological motivators, such as stress coping or social appeal, is crucial to inform prevention strategies and regulatory responses.

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