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## Drug Checking: In a dynamic reality of drug use

FREITAG, 10.11.2017 14:00-15:30

### Abstract Elisa Fornero

NPS: Italian news from the field (BAONPS project)

In the last decade, several NPS or classes of NPS have been included in the SCHEDULE I of illicit drugs in Italy. Nevertheless, few research about NPS use in drug service providers was carried out and outreach units were not informed about people using NPS: it seemed that just some specific groups were actually using NPS and they were not considered as problematic drug users.

In 2013, data from EMCDDA and Eurobarometer revealed that NPS production was increasing and they seemed to be sold and exchanged in party settings; the European Commission called for projects that could monitor and rapidly identify NPS: this was the main aim of BAONPS project and also the occasion to formally perform drug checking by an Italian multi-professional team.

BAONPS project experienced a new technique in drug checking on the field: RAMAN Spectroscopy, a qualitative technique that can rapidly identify synthetic drugs and also NPS. Furthermore, the portable RAMAN instrument allowed a non-destructive and no-invasive analysis. Drug checking allowed the data collection about what is really circulating in the nightlife scenario, especially regarding NPS; previously, data on NPS were really scarce, except sporadic and episodic reports from material seized by the police, emergency departments and hospitalizations, drug related deaths and data from service providers for drug addiction treatment. Furthermore, drug checking helped professional to have realistic and objective data about drug consumption.

During the BAONPS project 16 NPS were found: in 8 cases they were sold instead of traditional drugs. A particular case regarded alleged mescaline pills that instead contained 5-Meo-MiPT: the same pill was analysed in different times and different locations, and it always revealed to contain the same NPS.

Nine alerts were spread during the BAONPS project just in Italy: 8 of them were warnings about an NPS sold instead of a traditional drug and in 5 cases alerts were sent to the National Early Warning System, which in turn informed all the organisation involved in the system (toxicological laboratories, law enforcement agencies, drug service providers, NGOs, emergency services, hospitals etc.)