

TARGETING DRUG USERS IN NIGHTLIFE SETTINGS:

(meta)reflection on questionnaire
and current terminologies

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From: João Matias [<mailto:Joao.Matias@emcdda.europa.eu>]

Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 10:27 AM

Subject: 2018 GPS expert meeting - call for abstracts

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to update you on the annual EMCDDA expert meeting on the Key Indicator "Prevalence and patterns of drug use among the general population" which will take place in Lisbon on Tuesday and Wednesday 15 and 16 May 2018. As this is a Key Indicator meeting, the National Focal Points should confirm the attendance of participant experts from each country for the main meeting.

We would appreciate if you could confirm your participation by the end of March to Sofia Cabral (sofia.cabral@emcdda.europa.eu). I would like to remind you that travel / accommodation expenses will be covered by National Focal Points, following the contractual agreements with the EMCDDA.

We are working on the draft agenda, so we are sending out a call for abstracts. Please let us know if you have data to present or would like to make a presentation on a topic that would be of interest to the meeting, using the attached template. This year, there is also the possibility to propose a parallel session on a given topic of interest, e.g. if there is a specific multi-country analysis you would like to lead.

Looking forward to receive your abstracts.

Overview

A. Looking back:

- Mixed methods approach for studying drug use at a Belgian EDM festival
- Monitoring & developing related interventions with stakeholders

B. Looking ahead:

- Lacking information
- Difficulties when zooming in on NPS

Part A – Work done at a Belgian EDM festival

Timing: 2014 – 2017 Case study: 2015



Tomorrowland

Characteristics:

- 3 days
- ~180,000 visitors → from all over the world
- Applied drug policy: zero tolerance

Primary goal:

- drugs circulating at the user level?
- emphasis towards NPS and related adverse events

Mixed method approach for studying drug use



We have to remember that what we observe is not nature in itself,
but nature exposed to our method of questioning — [Werner Heisenberg](#)

Mixed method approach for studying drug use



Different approaches, similar results

1. A lot of drug use

- **17.2%** confirmed (intention of) use.

2. A lot of polydrug use

- **One in three** (5.5% of the total sample) had or would also combine several types of drugs (excluding alcohol);
- Most common observed combinations:
MDMA and/or cocaine + alcohol;
- Concurrent use of **drugs and alcohol** is very common, and responsible for a large amount of admissions to emergency services.

3. Confirmed trends:

- **MDMA content** in ecstasy tablets remarkably **high**
24% > 200mg MDMA base / tablet;
- **NPS use** clearly present & used (4-FA, α -PVP,...);
- newcomer: **Ketamine.**

Exciting opportunities for further (improved) monitoring & support to interventions?

More than just a data collection.

Added value to interact with **different stakeholders**: may help improve the health and wellbeing of drug users



Next steps for timely and sensitive identification of new threats



- ? What about other adverse effects
- ? Precautionary measures
- ? Purchase details?
- ? ...
- ? Exploring « Online tools » : scraping, surveys, ...

A new questionnaire comes with a lot of question marks

→ Application of the EMQ module on new psychoactive substances ?

Question 1) Purpose: Intended as a top level 'catch all' question.

Q1 New substances that imitate the effects of illicit drugs (such as cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine, etc) may now be sometimes available. They are sometimes called (*insert 'local name' such as, 'legal highs', 'research chemicals*) and can come in different form, for example – herbal mixtures, powders, crystals or tablets.

(GPS expert meeting ~2013/2014)

- A common module is a good start. Comparability.
- Difficulties in understanding the question(s)
 - mostly non-consumers who have never heard of these drugs

Questioning how to question NPS use?

Recent actions confirmed difficulties with terminology:

a) NPS-Care research

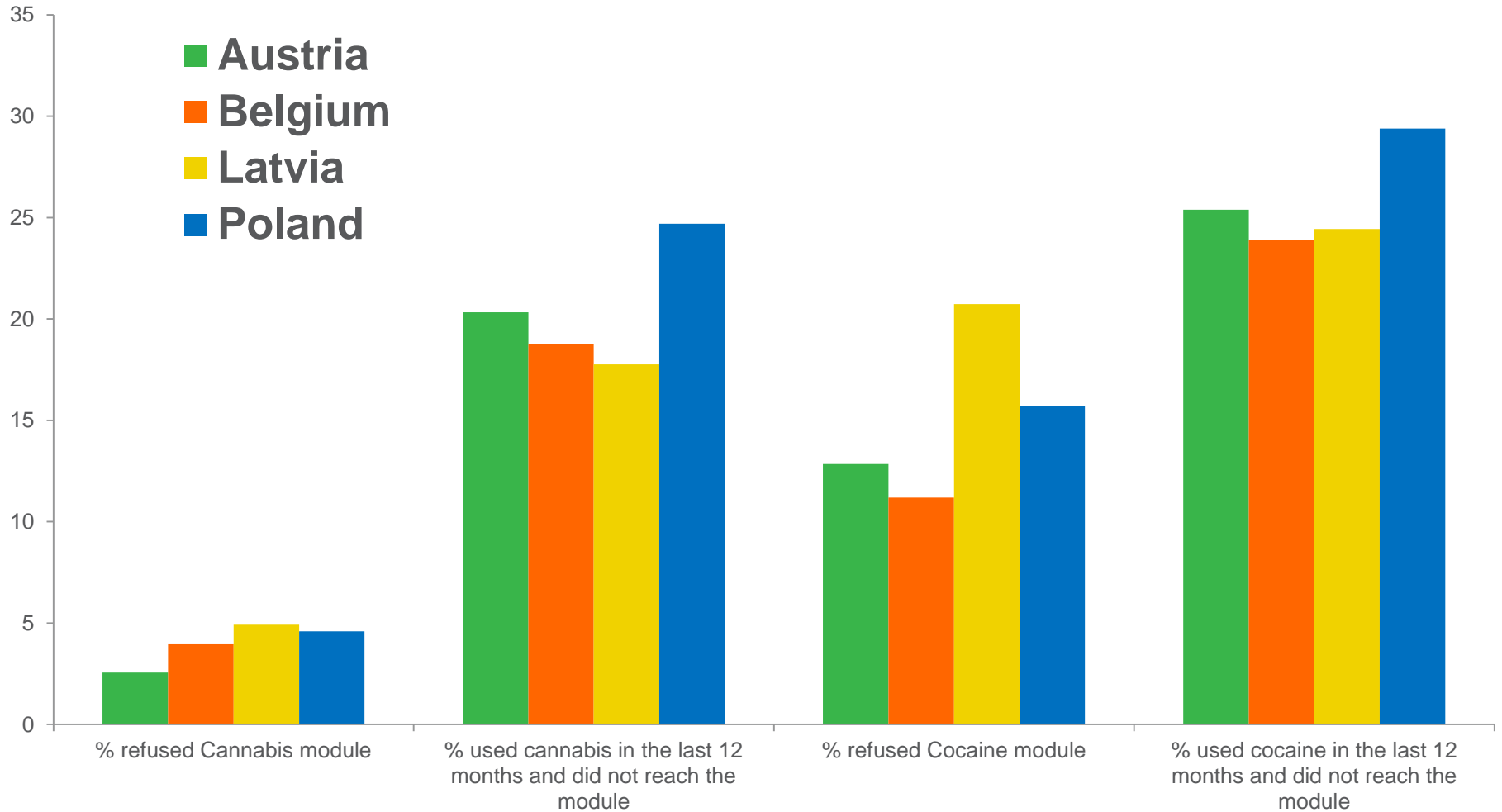
- On-going research by means of a.o. **face-to-face interviews**
- Language issues
- Difficulties in recruitment + difficulties during the introduction of the interviews

b) EMCDDA's 2nd wave of the Web survey on drugs

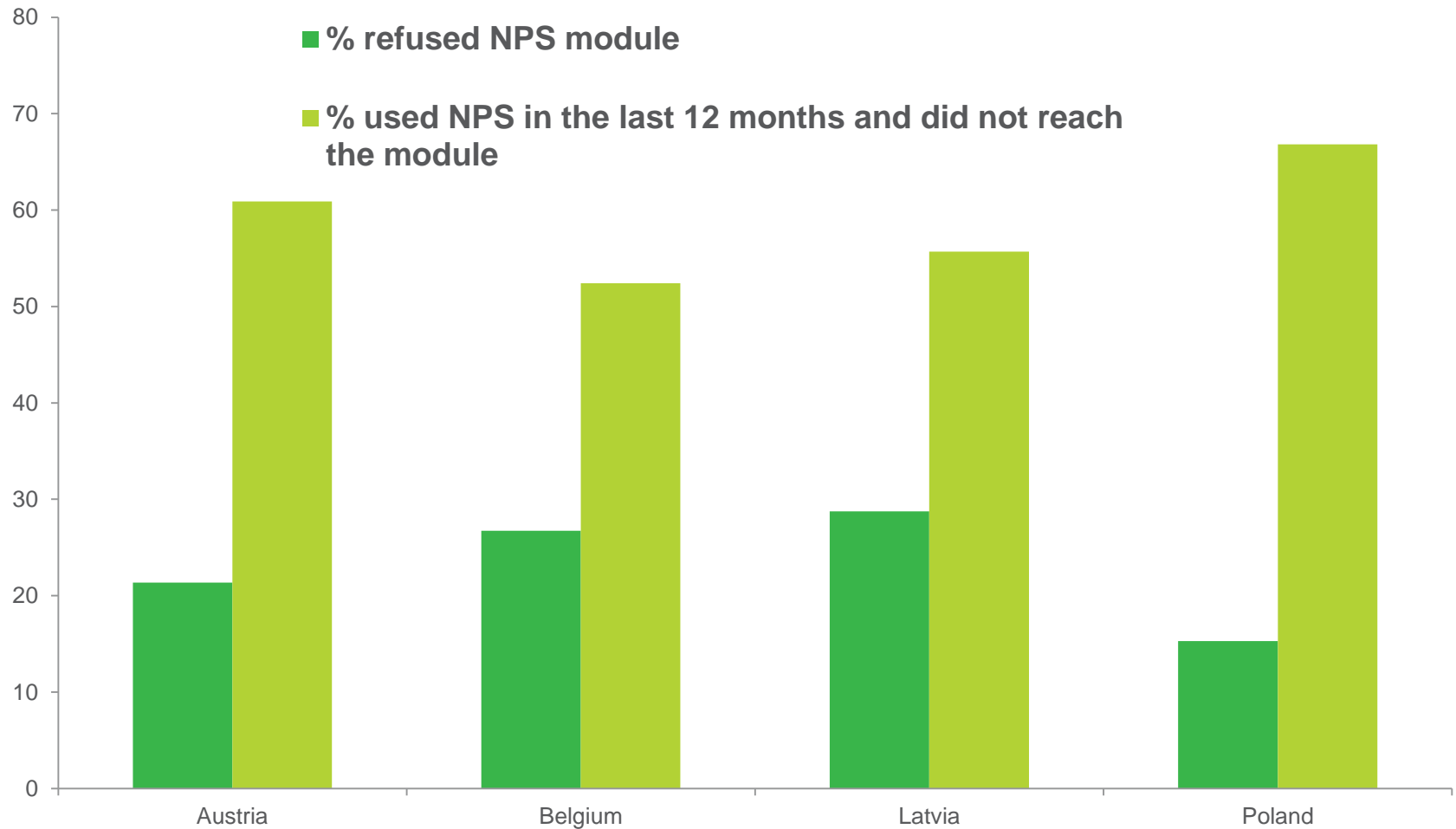
Already different ways to address the topic!

- Comments
- Errors in filling out the survey → users lack knowledge on products
- Drop outs

Web survey: Important to look at drop outs



Web survey: Important to look at drop outs



So...get me started

Opinions, national experiences, comments, tips & tricks?

Now...
in coffee or lunch breaks....
or the parallel session!



Thanks!

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