

pill testing | dossier - Update 2008

Vereniging voor alcohol- en andere Drugproblemen

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Organisation

Name: *Techno +*

Address: *Paris*

Phone: ++33603829719

E-mail: *tplus@technoplus.org*

Webpage: *http://www.technoplus.org*

Budget : *300 000€*

Involved organisations:

Health Departement City of Paris

The project

Name: *Techno+*

Starting Date: *1995*

Target group: *party goers, party organisers, club owners, harm reduction workers*

Regular activities:

On site :

- *drug, sex, driving, body piercing, ear protection... leaflets*
- *condoms*
- *on-site pill and powder testing (TLC)*
- *paper straw*
- *Kits for safer shooting*
- *Alcohol breath tests*
- *ear plugs*
- *resting area*
- *crisis intervention*

Web :

- *web with more detailed info on drugs, sexuality and harm reduction*
- *News on drugs, culture, policy and research*
- *on line command of material*

Other :

- *Training*
- *Artistic activities*
- *Lobbying*

Legal situation: *Since the Harm reduction law voted in 2004 and one of his act published in 2005, color-based tests as Marquis' test are forbidden. The official reason is that this kind of test may give a wrong feeling of safety for drug users because there is no information about the complete composition of the product. The unofficial political reason is that defenders of the strict repressive way in the drug field can't accept a tool that "help people to use drugs". So a lot of projects loose this tool and the fear of a trial like Techno+'s one in 2004 make them to improve new way of analysis substances. Founders don't support color-based tests any more but encourage to develop new methods like TLC started by XBT project in 2005 then used by others projects (Techno+).*

The official project of analysis, SINTES (Système d'Identification National des Toxiques et Substances) lead by the government has been reduced financially and now deal only with substances that have hurt or caused an accident or a death.

The project is funded by the government and local institutions. Testing is mostly done at illegal or outdoor raves, because organisers of "official" or indoor parties are afraid of police interventions.

TLC is now in the same situation as Marquis' test in 2003 : the no law about it so founder's doesn't support clearly this tool. All projects interested in it are afraid of the possibly interdiction of TLC during next years for bad reason too.

Results for last year: 2007

Quantitative Results:

Number of parties: 35

Flyers: 100 000

Condoms: 10 000

Alcohol breath test : 10 000

Straws : 80 0000

On site pill and powder testing: 10 times

Number of people reached (estimated): 211470

Web visitors : 58 000 new visitors

On site pill and powder testing

Techno+ was created in 1995 and made on-site and stationary pill and powder testing between 1999 and 2005 (date of the interdiction by the government).

Since 2005 we develop a TLC on-site service based on XBT project's one but faster and less expensive.

Site: *Techno+ info stand or chill out at parties. Testing is mostly done at illegal or outdoor raves, because organisers of "official" or indoor parties are afraid of police interventions.*

Involved professionals: *The on-site project staff include 35 peers/users , 2 of them are employed.5 volunteers are trained for TLC testing*

Activities: *Provide qualitative information about the presence (or not) of the substances inside the sample.*

Test procedure: *The TLC tests is done in our truck or a tent reserved for this only. A small amount of the pill is scratched. The system provides only qualitative data. The analysis is free of charge and take at least 15 minutes. 2 volunteers are required : 1 to manipulate and 1 to fill our form. Members of the project team may touch the pill and give it back to the potential consumers.*

Information about the results is given to the person who brought the pill for testing.

Techno + also gives out information to other organisations. On-site "information talks" are offered at raves, clubs and festivals, even if there is no on-site pill testing.

43 peers/users are members of the team.

Brief evaluation results:

There has not been an evaluation yet but a monitoring of each testing session.

Organisation

Name: *APDES – Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento*

Project: *CHECK-IN*

Address: *Alameda Jean Piaget, 100*

4410-373 Arcozelo, Vila Nova de Gaia - Portugal

Phone: *+351 227 531 106 ; +351 227 531 107*

Fax: *+351 227 533 046*

E-mail: *check-in@apdes.net*

Webpage: *http://check-in.apdes.nett*

Contact: Filipa Morais Soares

Annual budget: 33.371,56€ (2006)

Involved organisations:

Coordenação Nacional para Infecção VIH/SIDA

Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal – Departamento de Toxicologia (Porto)

The project

Name: CHECK!N

Starting Date: February 2006

Target group: party goers.

Regular activities:

Info stand at parties where the following services are available:

- drug and sex info
- condoms
- on-site pill testing
- stationary pill-testing (sending a sample to lab)
- snorting tubes
- ear plugs
- water sprinkles
- resting area
- crisis intervention

Web spaces:

- web with more detailed info on drugs, sexuality and harm reduction (<http://check-in.apdes.net>)
- web forum about parties, sex and drugs (<http://check-in.editboard.com/>)
- myspace (http://www.myspace.com/check_in)
- Youtube Chanel (<http://www.youtube.com/checkiin>)
- Periodic newsletter with interesting findings about these subjects

Legal situation: project activities are certified by the National Drug Institute (IDT) according to the portuguese Harm Reduction Law (DL.183/2001). For pill-testing activities special authorization needs to be asked.

Results for last year: 2006

Quantitative Results:

Number of parties: 11

Flyers: 9647

Condoms: 31788

In loco pill testing: 461

Stationary pill testing: 6

Alcohol breath testing: 664

Number of people reached (estimated): 5187

Web visitors (4months): 123 new visitors

Qualitative Results

The impact of the first months of intervention has been very positive. People were happy with the kind of services we had at parties and valued positively the content of our interventions. We managed to create an outreach structure adapted to this kind of settings and portuguese information on harm reduction strategies related to drug use was spread. The basis for further work were established.

On site pill testing

Site: CHECK!N info stand at parties

Involved professionals: minimum 2 persons (employed/trained volunteers)

Activities: Provide qualitative information about the presence (or not) of the substances MDMA, MDEA, MDA, 2C-B, AMPHETAMINE (speed) and OPIATES inside the

sample.

Test procedure: The Marquis test is a reagent field test conducted by placing a drop of reagent liquid onto a small sample of the material being tested. The chemicals in the reagent, react differently with different chemicals, turning a variety of colors based on the what is in the material being tested. A typical reaction to MDMA (or same family) is dark purple / black. A bright orange reaction can indicate the presence of amphetamine or methamphetamine in general. A bright yellow / green reaction can indicate the presence of 2C-B. A pink reaction indicates the presence of opiates. The person is informed about the test procedure and the kind of information we can obtain through this method. We also inform about the possibility of running a lab test for more complete results. We ask the person what does he/she expects the substance to be and if they have already tried it. We take notes about the substance presentation (pill/pounder; color; logo) and its reaction to the marquis test. We inform the person about the result and if there is no reaction or the reaction does not correspond to the person expectation, we put an alert on a board in the info stand. While running the test we talk about matters concerning the substance use, highlighting harm reduction strategies. In the end we give a flyer with more detailed info about the substance tested.

Stationary pill testing

Site: "Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal" (National Forensic Institute)

Involved professionals: minimum 2 lab professionals, depending the number of samples (Clinical Doctors, Biochemistry Doctors, Pharmaceuticals, Toxicologists, Biomedical Analysts and others)

Activities: This procedure allows separate and quantify the components of the sample, with this information we can provide alerts about founded nocive adulterants.

Test procedure: (Gas Chromatography / Mass Spectrometry)

The Gas Chromatography process separates a substance into its various component parts. Each component is then sent to the Mass Spectrometer which bombards the components with a beam of electrons in order to give the molecules a charge. The molecules of a given component break apart into fragment ions which are then sent into a powerful magnetic field where fragments of various weights separate from each other. The separated fragments can then be charted and the chart compared to a database of previously verified molecules for identification.

For the lab test we need to collect a sample and give it a code, so we can mail it to the lab. After being coded, it must be the interested person to mail it to the lab, because according to the portuguese law the professionals/volunteers of the project should not carry the substance with them. The person can give us his/her email so we can send the result, or just take note of the code. The results should take 2 weeks. In case of alert, we publish it in our web forum and newsletter.

Brief evaluation results:

The pill testing service is new in our country, so most of the people does not know what it is about. In the beginning people were suspicious about it, but now, more and more people are interested in testing. However, when we explain the test procedure some of them are disappointed because the info we can give with a marquis test is very little and the info we can give with a lab test usually takes too long. Sometimes we are not able to test on-site for the demanded substance (e.g. cocaine, ketamine, ...). Nevertheless, the number of people using the service is rising.

Organisation

Name: Drugs Information and Monitoring System (DIMS)

Address: Trimbos-institute PO Box 725, 3500 AS Utrecht, The Netherlands

Phone: +31 30 2971171

Fax:

E-mail: Rniesink@trimbos.nl

Webpage: www.drugs-test.nl

Contact: Dr. R.J.M. Niesink

Annual budget: about €500.000,-

Involved organisations: About 20 Dutch organizations for drug care and prevention are involved, as well as the Ministry of Health and the Dutch Health Inspectorate. For an actual survey of participating organisations, see :www.drugs-test.nl

The project

Starting date: January 1992

Target group: persons actually consuming „party drugs“.

Regular activities:

- stationary pill testing
- distribution of information material
- production of information material
- running a web page
- information talks (stationary)
- scientific publications
- policy making support

Legal situation:

Pill testing is an official part of Dutch drug policy and has been approved by the Dutch Parliament. The DIMS project is, however, not allowed to analyse pills that are presented by obvious dealers or producers. Since Ecstasy is considered a *hard drug*, there are special agreements with the *Ministry of Justice* and the General Prosecutors. Pill testing is mainly done for scientific purposes, i.e. monitoring of illegal drug markets.

2007 data:

- about 500 pills per month tested
- average age of reached persons: 22.3, 20% female, 80% Male

Stationary pilltesting

Site: offices of DIMS participants (see www.drugs-test.nl)

Other offers:

- presenting results to the target group on site
- information talks

Test procedure:

Potential consumers pay EURO 3.- for the analysis, depending on the office involved. The test is mainly based on an on-line determination system; generally the whole pill is needed. If the pill is recognized, only a scraping is sufficient. The system is able to give information about qualitative *and* quantitative data.

Generally, information on pill content is only given to the person who brought the pill and to health organisations. Other organisations must meet special criteria and have to pay for the information.

Evaluation

A full evaluation concerning programme, process and outcome has been carried out:

Korf, D.J., Benschop, A. en Brunt, T. Pillen testen in Nederland, Rosenberg Publishers, Amsterdam 2003. ISBN90 5170 730 4

Organisation

Name: ChEck iT! – Verein Wiener Sozialprojekte

Address: Gumpendorfer Str. 8, 1060 Wien

- *Phone:* +43 1 585 12 12

Fax: +43 1 585 12 12 - 30

E-mail: checkit@vws.or.at

Webpage: www.CheckYourDrugs.at

Contact: Sophie Lachout

Annual budget: about EURO 300 000.-

Involved organisations: Verein Wiener Sozialprojekte, Medical University Of Vienna – Clinical Institute of Medical and Chemical Laboratory Diagnostics

The project

Name: ChEck iT!

Starting Date: April 1997

Target group: Recreational drug users, affiliated persons, "multiplier"

Regular activities:

- information- and counselling:
 - on-site
 - online
 - face to face at the consultation centre "HomeBase" for individuals or in groups
 - crisis intervention
- on-site pill testing
- production and distribution of information material
- running a web page
- prevention workshops
- workshops for multipliers
- research and scientific publications
- development and improvement of chemical procedures

Legal situation: A drug policy concept for all of Austria does not exist, there are several drug policy concepts for the Austrian provinces. Pill testing is part of the official Vienna drug policy that was passed by majority decision. Basis for on-site pill testings are official statements by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health declaring pill testing a legal procedure, if it is done by a scientific institution. No illicit substances may be touched or handled by the project members, for giving back or passing on illicit substances would be a violation of the Austrian law on controlled substances. *ChEck iT!* has a good working base with the local police who supports the preventive measures of the project: the police is present at events where *ChEck iT!* is offering chemical analysis, but do not concentrate their actions on visitors of *ChEck iT!*.

Results for last year: 2006

15 Parties (8 with Drug Checking), 2130 information- and counselling talks on-site, 271 tested drug samples; 350 online counselling mails; about 100000 visits at www.CheckYourDrugs.at

On site pill testing

Site: raves, clubs, events, festivals

Involved professionals: 3-10 employed psychologists/socialworkers/apprentices (~10h each), 3-7 employed chemists (~10h each)

Activities:

- drug checking
- information and counselling talks
- crisis intervention
- distribution of information material
- giving out free drinking water
- giving out fruits
- giving out condoms for free

Test procedure: Usually the analysis is done close to the information desk, not visible and inaccessible for visitors. Potential consumers do not have to pay for it and they wait for the results on the spot, where they fill out a questionnaire (voluntarily) and talk to the project staff. The tests are done anonymously. Each potential user gets an individual number with which he/she can identify the content of the substance as posted near the *ChEck iT!* tent after the analysis. The project staff must not touch the pill while documenting and analysing it. The potential consumer scratches the pill over sandpaper; less than 5% of a pill (or powder) is sufficient to do the test. The chemical analysis is based on liquid chromatography (HPLC) and LC-MS; this system is able to give qualitative and quantitative information. The results of the analyses are also published on the Internet (without logo and picture).

Information and counselling: is only done by professionals (psychologists/socialworkers/apprentices) and is based on the concept of "motivational interviewing" by Miller and Rollnick.

Stationary pill testing

Site: -

Involved professionals: -

Activities: no stationary pill testing

Test procedure: -

Brief evaluation results:

81 % of ecstasy users covered by the EU-study "Pilltesting - Ecstasy and Prevention"(Benshop A. et al, 2002) - which involved *ChEck iT!* - reported that they never visited a drug counselling service. 58 % of the persons making use of pill testing reported that they would not contact *ChEck iT!* without the availability of pill

testing. The results of this study on the effectiveness of pill testing also show that persons making use of testing ("tester") are better informed about the risks of ecstasy use as the "non-tester". The more often the persons included in the study made use of the pill testing service, the better their information base was. An improved information base does not necessarily result in change of behaviour. Tester and non-tester showed in principle a similar consumption behaviour - but more regular tester used drugs less frequently and showed a less risky party behaviour. In addition, tester normally use less pills if the results of testing indicate a high dosage. Tester also report that they do not use a pill if the result of analysis shows that it is a different substance than expected. Thus, information provided by pill testing is motivating the users to decrease their drug use. Thus, it can be concluded that pill testing is an effective secondary prevention method. The provision of objective and factual information tailored for the specific scene through the staff of *ChEck iT!* results in increased knowledge and changes of behaviour. The empirical results disprove the concerns that pill testing might stimulate the use of illegal drugs.

Organisation

Name: *Jugendberatung Streetwork - Drogeninformationszentrum DIZ und Saferparty.ch*

Address: Wasserwerkstr. 17, 8006 Zürich

Phone: +41 43 300 54 77

Fax: +41 43 300 54 71

E-mail: diz@zuerich.ch – info@saferparty.ch

Webpage: www.saferparty.ch

Contact: alexander.buecheli@zuerich.ch / brigit.eversdiallo@zuerich.ch

Annual budget: about 100'000 Euro / For Nightlife Prevention

Involved organisations: Lead Jugendberatung Streetwork

Laboratory:

- Gesundheits- und Fürsorgedirektion des Kantons Bern, Pharmaceutical Control Laboratory Bern - mobile drug testing
- RESEACHEM Burgdorf – stationary drug testing

The project

Name: Jugendberatung Streetwork

Starting Date: 1992

Target group: party goers & recreational drug user

Regular activities: Outreach Counselling Youth Work

Legal situation: Legal 100% subsidy from the City

Legal situation drug testing:

Results for last year: 1997

Total presence: 126

Prevention in public space: 11

Prevention on school party's: 4

Prevention in school classes: 35

Prevention in clubs: 15

Short contacts: 4115

Counselling sessions: 1022

On site pill testing

Site: saferparty.ch, on site pill testing in the city of Zurich, since 2001

Involved professionals: 3 – 5 social Worker and one laboratory assistant

Activities: Test laboratory and chill out in the venue; harm reductions material; information material about recreational drugs; qualitative and quantitative results from "recreational drugs" (powder or pills) combined with a counselling session; no snoring tubs and needle exchange

Test procedure:

- *Information about the drug testing procedure*
- *Transfer of the substance to the laboratory team*
- *Questions about the substance (cost, age, origin, experience)*
- *Analyzing the substance with HPLC*
- *Counselling session with a social worker, documented with a questionnaire*
- *Return of the substance rest*
- *Oral presentation of the drug testing result*

Stationary pill testing

Site: Drogeninformationszentrum (DIZ), Stationary drug testing every Tuesday evening, since 11.2006

Involved professionals: one social worker, core team 4 social worker, joint venture with the therapeutic and medical services GAIN (www.gain-zh.ch) and Checkpoint (www.zah.ch)

Activities: , harm reductions material; information material about recreational drugs; qualitative and quantitative results from "recreational drugs" (powder or pills) combined with a counselling session; possibility to arrange therapeutic counselling session; possibility to arrange medical test's (HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis C); no needle exchange

Test procedure:

- Information about the drug testing procedure*
- Collecting the substance*
- Questions about the substance (cost, age, origin, experience)*
- Transfer of the substance to the external laboratory*
- Analyzing the substance with HPLC*
- Counselling session with a social worker, documented with a questionnaire*
- On Friday possibility to get the results by e-mail or phone*

Brief evaluation results:

2007

Presences: 63

Mobile drug testing: 10

DIZ: 53

Number of substances: 277

Mobile drug testing: 170

DIZ: 107

Warnings: 17

Mobile drug testing: 14

DIZ: 3

Counselling sessions: 665

Mobile drug testing: 522

DIZ: 143

In the beginning of the mobile pill it was difficult to have access to the venues because the owners were uncertain about it. They believed that a presence of the lab

in the club implicated more police control. After a difficult start the testing was more and more successful. With this experience we started in 2006 with a stationary drug checking possibility. The goal of the DIZ was: to reach a larger target group and to have an efficient possibility to mediate therapeutic and medical services to recreational drug users. The first experience shows that older consumers and more females are coming to the stationary drug checking.

Legal Situation

Drug Testing with the goal of harm reduction is not against the law in Switzerland. But it is only possible with a laboratory which is allowed to collect substances, or with a pharmaceutical permission in every time there must be a political decision of the local city. It is not allowed to give out quantitative analyses for "obvious dealers".

Germany: no drugtesting anymore

Ende des Drugchecking-Programms der DROBS Hannover Pillenidentifikation muss nach 10 Jahren eingestellt werden. Es ist vorbei! Das seit 1994 bestehende Angebot der DROBS Hannover, Ecstasypillen auf ihre Inhaltsstoffe zu testen, gibt es nicht mehr. Zehn Jahre wurde die DROBS Hannover wöchentlich mit Laborergebnissen aus Holland versorgt. Über 90% der in Niedersachsen kursierenden Ecstasypillen konnten über die niederländischen Laborlisten identifiziert werden.

Dies war ein einmaliges Angebot in Deutschland, das von vielen Konsumenten dankend angenommen wurde. Anfang 2000 haben sich unseres Erachtens die Vertriebswege der Pillen jedoch verändert. Wir gehen davon aus, dass ein Großteil der in Deutschland verkauften Pillen nicht mehr den Weg über Holland nimmt. Seitdem gelingt es der DROBS Hannover nur noch etwa 30% der Substanzen zu identifizieren. Schnell sollte ein regionales Labor gefunden werden, um hier Abhilfe zu schaffen. Leider sind unsere Bemühungen jedoch an vielen Punkten bis heute gescheitert. Was blieb, waren die Laborergebnisse aus den Niederlanden, mit denen wenigstens zum Teil die "Böse-Pillen-Listen" aktualisiert werden konnten.

Nun, im Februar 2004, dürfen wir auch noch diese letzte Quelle nicht mehr nutzen. Das niederländische Institut darf uns aus rechtlichen Gründen nicht mehr mit Testergebnissen aus Holland versorgen. Daher verfügen wir über keinerlei Informationen mehr und es besteht auch nicht die Möglichkeit in Einzelfällen welche zu bekommen. Die KonsumentInnen können sich wieder zwischen Selbstversuch und Verzicht entscheiden. Die DROBS Hannover bedauert diese Entwicklung sehr! Vor diesem Hintergrund ist die Einführung eines flächendeckenden, bundesweiten Ecstasy-Test-Systems bzw. Monitoringsystems mit der Möglichkeit von Laboruntersuchungen in verschiedenen Bundesländern dringend notwendig. Durch eine zentral gesteuerte Vernetzung von Suchtberatungsstellen sollte künftig ein bundesweites Testangebot aufgebaut werden. Ob dieses umgesetzt werden kann oder eine Utopie bleibt, ist im Moment schwer einzuschätzen.