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What is Drug Checking Services

DCS is harm reduction intervention which enable individual drug users to have their drugs chemically analyzed, providing information on the content of the samples as well as advice and counselling as appropriate

Testing maybe used to:

- confirm whether the sample contains the psychoactive substance estimates the purity of the drug

- detects novel psychoactive substances,

- identifies contaminants,

- or monitors drug use patterns.

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DCS-Relevance in Georgia

Drug Scene

- Changes in the **Drug Scene** during the last years

- Raising **Overdose and death cases**

Harm Reduction

- Existing Harm Reduction (HR) interventions available in country are primarily directed to injecting drug use practices (needle and syringe programme) and HIV prevention, but do not respond to harm reduction needs in line with risks related to developments in drug market and drug use scene

- Young users, are not covered by harm reduction programs.

Drug Scene and Drug Market Monitoring

- There is no routine monitoring system.

- Frontline services are not considered part of the system.

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Community organization delivering Novel Harm Reduction services

- Electronic music festivals
- Harm Reduction Tent
- Drug reagent Testers
- Environmentally friendly Harm Reduction Materials
- Overdose Prevention/Management
- Volunteers Team and Peer educator approach
- Drug info

- **Drop-in Center**
- **Delivery Service**

- **Social Network & Web Page**
- **Information Campaign, Discussions & Consultation**

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DCS Aim and Impact

Aim: Harm reduction and drug scene monitoring
Impact: informs individuals as well as public health information systems

- To inform drug users, support and promote informed choice

- Consult about safe consumption

- Prevention of overdose and death caused by overdose;

- Connection of young and recreational users, to harm reduction and healthcare programs

Drug Checking Impact

DCS helps people make safe use decisions based on the information obtained, in some cases users decided:

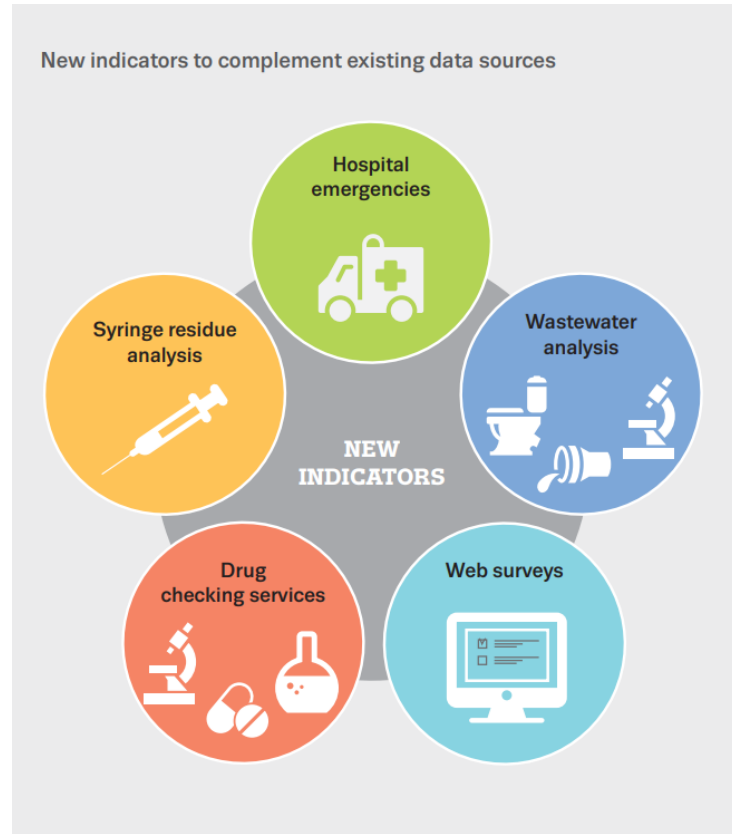|		
not taking that substance/drug at all;	taking less doses of the drug;	taking it over a longer period of time;
taking it in a different environment/setting;	taking more care in mixing with other substances;	or using a different route of administration.

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Drug Checking Impact- Monitoring

- DCS plays significant role in monitoring and surveillance of illegal drug markets

- Serves as a real-time, consumer-centered surveillance tool facilitating regulatory intervention in the illegal drug market.

- Execution of warning campaigns, can cause hazardous drugs to be quickly removed from the market

- Informs public health and harm reductions policy and practice

- Enables the national response measures to intervene at an earlier stage and more effectively based on a detailed picture of the drug markets and the users

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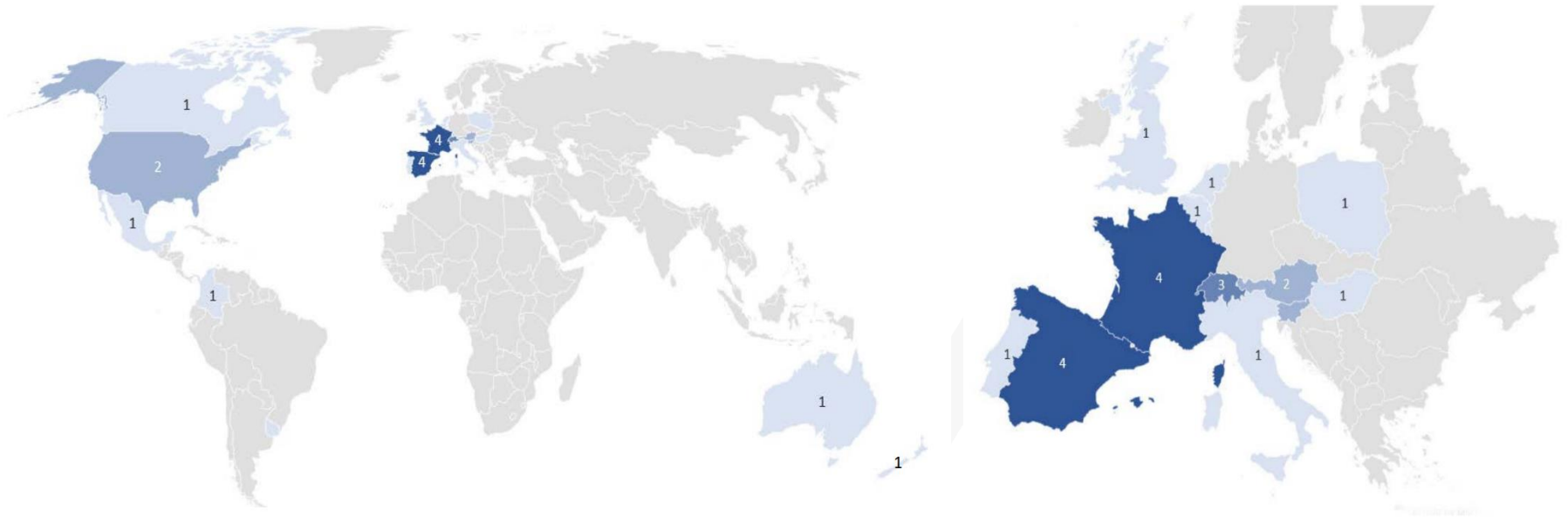FOR BETTER
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EMCDDA - European Drug Report 2019

New indicators to complement existing data sources

NEW INDICATORS: Hospital emergencies, Wastewater analysis, Web surveys, Drug checking services, Syringe residue analysis

Types of DCS

Technique	Colormetric reagents	High-performance liquid chromatography	Gas chromatography	Mass spectrometry
Timing	⏱️			📅
Testing for	Presence or absence of a component	Information on whole range of substances present	Quantitative information about all compounds	
Setting	At home	On-site/mobile	Remote site	
Who	Individuals	Professionals		
Results	Drug content	Public health alerts	Harm reduction information	Brief interventions
Use of results	Individual harm reduction	Public health action	Market monitoring	

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Global Practice of Drug Checking Services

- First DCS was established in 1992 in Netherlands.
- 31 DCS in 20 countries;

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Global Practice of Drug Checking Services

Service provision:

- Fixed-Site – Stationary services (Office, Community Centers, Laboratories)
- On-Site/Mobile - Field (Festivals, Night clubs)
- Postal services – Delivery of self test kits and receive samples by post (mail)

Funding Sources:

- 21 DC Services form 31 is financed by the government
    - Central/National Budget
    - State budget
    - Local municipality budgets
- 4 is supported by international funding agencies
- Non-governmental funding sources
- Night clubs and festivals provide financing
- Private and Philanthropic Foundations
- Private donations

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Legal Framework for Drug Checking Service

Key factors of legal framework for DCS

enabling festival and night club facilities to freely introduce drug checking services within their settings and events and this activity is not subject to administrative and / or criminal prosecution

allowing drug checking service providers to handle illicit substances and this activity is not subject to administrative and / or criminal prosecution

allowing drug users to supply, possess and surrender illegal/controlled substances for purpose of drug checking and disposal and this activity is not subject to administrative and / or criminal prosecution.

- **Drug-checking service as a scientific project (Netherlands, Austria)**
- **Exemptions (Canada)**
- **Comprehensive Legislation (New Zealand)**

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Recommendations

Program Framework

To integrate Drug Checking Services into National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan 2019-2022

To elaborate protocol of Drug Checking Services provided on-site at festivals and night clubs and fixed-site at community and civil society level

To integrate Drug Checking Services into National Harm Reduction Guidelines

To include Drug Checking Services into The Global Fund Concept Note for next allocation period (2022-2025)

To include Drug Checking Services into National Anti-Drug Action Plan 2021-2022

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Legal Framework

Develop a legal framework for DC services

- ➢ Exemption of administrative and criminal liability - for organizers, service providers and program users.

Monitoring

Ensure consideration of Drug Checking Services as an integral part of national monitoring mechanisms of drug market

- ➢ To build a strong communication and partnership among Drug Checking Service providers and National Drug Monitoring Center.

- ➢ To integrate Drug Checking Services into Early Warning System (EWS) of National Drug Monitoring Center.

Thank you for your attention

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