

Drug checking static pilot results

March 2020

We believe harm reduction services, including drug checking, should be regularly available to all communities in New Zealand.

There is no such thing as safe drug use. All drug use is potentially harmful. Harms comes from using an unknown substance, using too much, or using in a harmful way.

Drug checking is a free service where people can identify if the substance they intend on taking is actually what they think it is, and have a conversation about their drug use. This harm reduction service plays a vital role in providing people with information so they can make more informed, and often safer, decisions about their drug use.

These services have been run in other countries for more than 20 years. In New Zealand, drug checking has been very successful at festivals for the past five years. We believe other people who use illicit drugs should be able to benefit from this service too. So, we piloted a monthly static drug checking clinic at the Drug Foundation Wellington office between July and December in 2019.

Client numbers increased over the pilot

112 samples were tested throughout the pilot. The number of clients and tested samples started low but increased steadily.

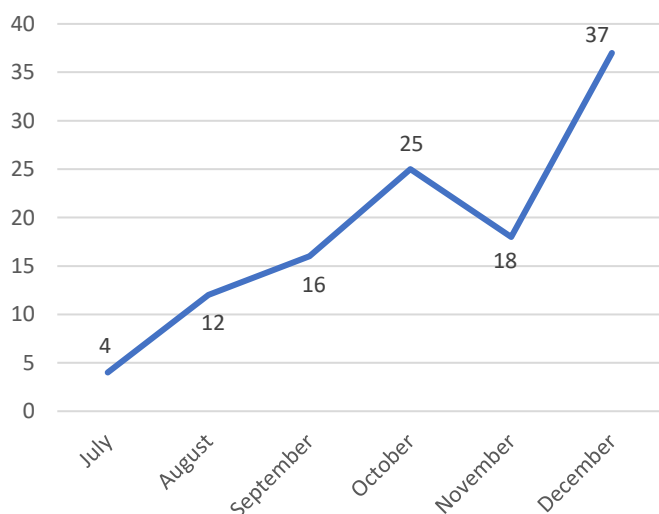


Figure 1 Number of clients at each clinic

Most clients thought they had MDMA

The samples bought in by clients were presumed to be:

- 68% (76 samples) in the MD family, with 70 samples presumed to be MDMA
- 11% in the Indole family, with 10 samples presumed to be LSD
- 4.5% cocaine
- 3.5% in the dissociative family, including ketamine
- 8% were unknown.

MDMA was the most common substance tested

The tested samples included:

- 67% (75 samples) were MDMA
- 9% LSD
- 4% cocaine
- 4% in the dissociative family, including ketamine
- 3% synthetic cathinones.

Two sample of the highly dangerous synthetic cathinone, n-ethylpentylone, were detected. One of these samples was mixed with MDMA.

Most substances were consistent with what clients thought they were

- 77% of the substances tested consistently with what they were supposed to be.
- 13% weren't consistent
- 3.5% were partially consistent.

Most clients said they wouldn't use the substance if it wasn't what they thought it was

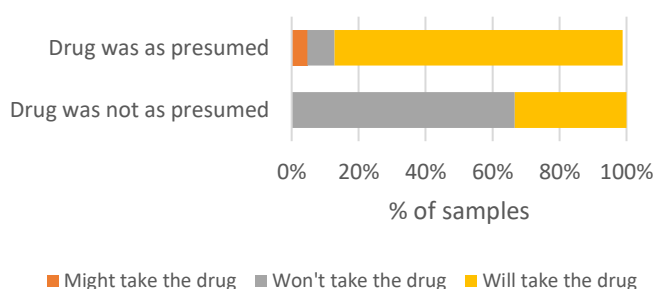


Figure 2 Clients' stated intentions to take the substance after testing