

## Poster Abstracts

### PO-19

#### AN INTERNET SNAPSHOT STUDY TO INVESTIGATE THE AVAILABILITY, COST AND MOTIVATIONS FOR USE OF THE NOVEL BENZODIAZEPINES DICLAZEPAM, FLUBROMAZEPAM AND PYRAZOLAM IN THE UK

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**Objectives:** There has been increasing interest in the availability of non-prescription novel benzodiazepines and their sale as new psychoactive substances (NPS) in Europe. The aim of this study was to determine the availability and motivations of use for three novel benzodiazepines diclazepam, flubromazepam and pyrazolam in the UK from Internet suppliers.

**Methods:** In November 2014 using European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) Snapshot Methodology, Internet search engines (google.co.uk, uk.yahoo.com and ask.com.uk) were searched in English using the terms "buy diclazepam", "buy flubromazepam" and "buy pyrazolam". Data from sale forms were then converted into price per gram/pellet to allow comparison of cost between different purchase amounts, and repeated in March 2016 to assess for any supply changes. Relevant threads from leading drug user forums bluelight.org, drugs-forum.com, erowid.org and legalhighsforum.com were analyzed using a general inductive approach to determine motivations for use.

**Results:** In November 2014 there were 49 websites selling diclazepam, 33 websites selling pyrazolam and 39 selling flubramazepam. 74.5% of the sites appeared to originate from the UK and/or Europe. The drugs were sold in varying strengths and forms including pellets (50 Internet sites), powder (10) and blotters (2). One Internet site sold diclazepam and flubromazepam in pill form. In March 2016, an increase in websites per novel benzodiazepine was noted, with 55 websites selling diclazepam (33 new, 60%), 35 websites selling pyrazolam (19 new, 54.3%) and 45 selling flubramazepam (28 new, 62.2%). Over half of sites were also based in the UK/Europe (38, 63.3%). Drugs were sold as pellets (49 Internet suppliers, 81.7%), powder (19, 31.7%) and blotters (1, 1.7%). Pill forms were no longer available during this survey, however one Internet site sold diclazepam and flubromazepam in liquid form (1, 1.7%). The cost of novel benzodiazepine reduced with increasing purchase quantities e.g. the mean price per pellet was £5.05 ± £3.22 (for 1 pellet) to £0.11 ± £0.08 (for 100,000 pellets)

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for 1 mg diclazepam (March 2016). The main motivations for use included anxiolysis, euphoria and management of stimulant withdrawal.

**Conclusion:** These three novel benzodiazepines are widely available online, most commonly as pellets. There has been an increase in number of Internet sites between the two surveys. One site sold diclazepam and flubromazepam in liquid form, indicating sale intended for human consumption. This study could be used to support triangulation of data from other sources to tackle their extensive availability and inform harm minimisation strategies.