

HARM REDUCTION & DRUG MONITORING

THE IRISH CONTEXT

IOAD - 31ST AUGUST 2022

TIME TO
REMEMBER.
TIME TO ACT.

INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE
AWARENESS DAY 2022

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HEROIN/OPIOID EUROPEAN MARKET

- Heroin grown in Afghanistan and transported via Balkan route
- 1.3 million high risk users in Europe
- Irish Prevalence in 2014/15 was 18,988 people
- Currently 11,461 people on Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT)
- Opioids (mainly heroin) were the most common main problem drug reported in 2021. Heroin accounted for 87.3% (3,168) of all opioid cases in 2021. (NDTRS, 2022)
- Emergence of synthetic opioids across the EU is a concern, and two have been identified in Ireland in 2022



DRUG MONITORING IN IRISH CONTEXT

- The volatile nature of the drug market is a healthcare concern as new and more potent substances continue to emerge on the European drug market.
- Presence of new psychoactive substances on the drug market and the re-emergence of cocaine injecting

Monitoring initiatives include:

- Syringe Analysis
- EMCDDA Monitoring – European Web Survey – Irish Findings
- Real Time Drug Checking – Pilot test site in Electric Picnic 2022
- Waste Water – collaborative project with UCD leading on the sample collection and analysis, report to be published by year end
- Hair Analysis – will be further reviewed in 2023

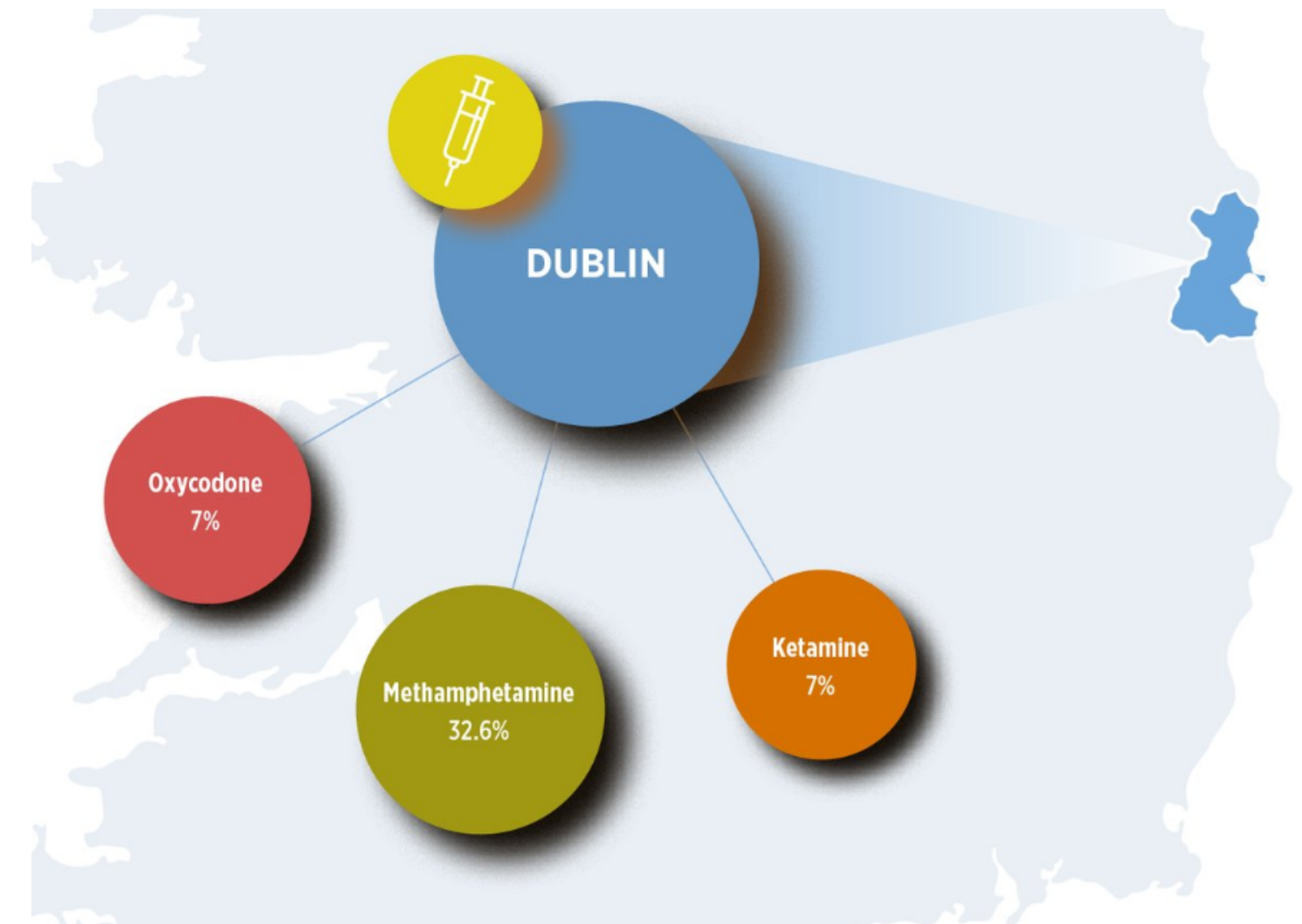
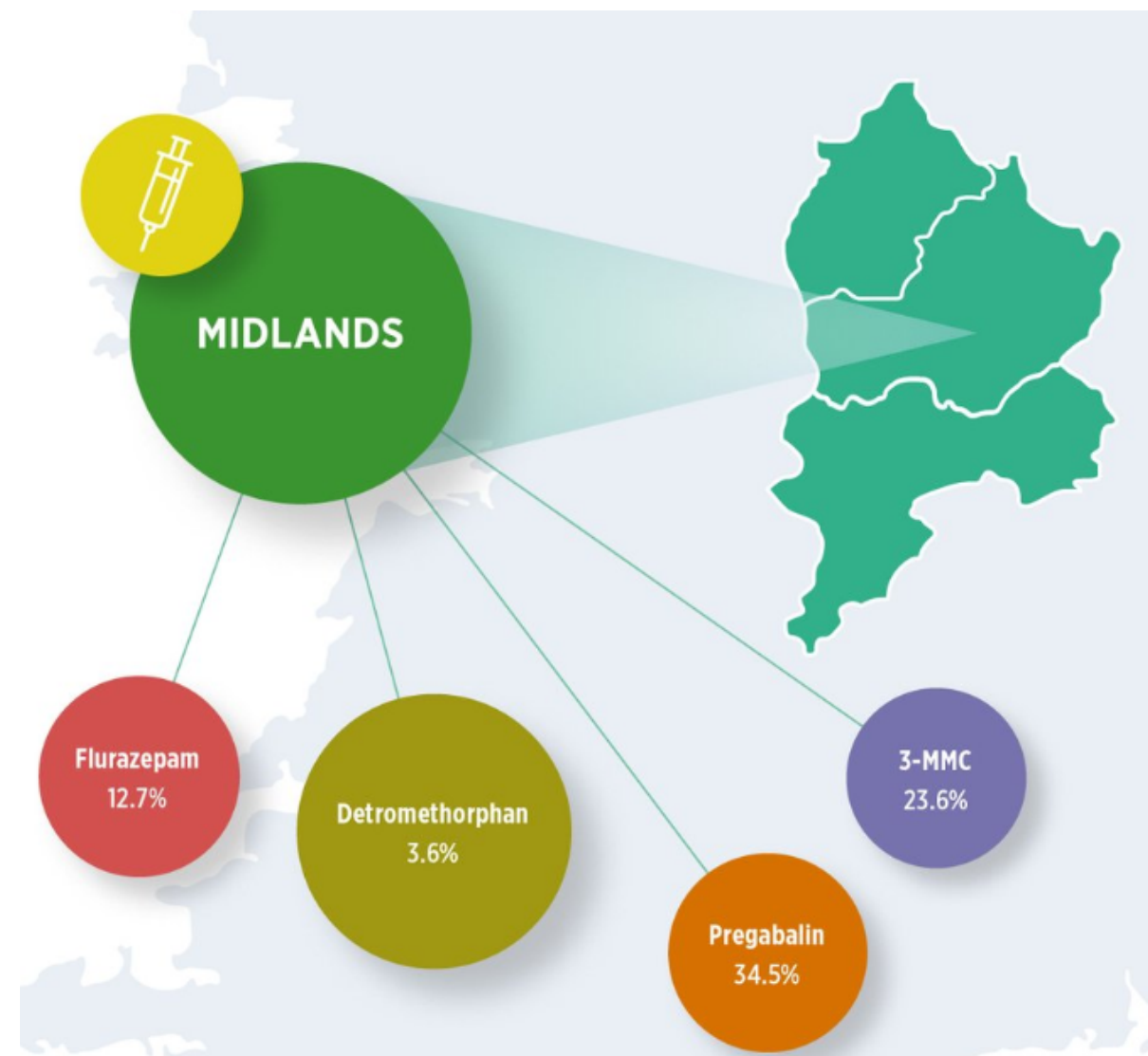
IRISH SYRINGE ANALYSIS PILOT PROJECT

- Report is evidence of the importance of cross-sectoral engagement to improve health outcomes.
- Part of the ESCAPE (European Syringe Collection and Analysis Project Enterprise) Network
- Successful collaboration between Merchants Quay Ireland, the HSE National Drug Treatment Centre laboratory, and the HSE National Social Inclusion Office.
- The findings from this study can now be used to inform interventions provided by MQI and other similar services.



IRISH SYRINGE ANALYSIS PILOT PROJECT

- Regional differences were identified with niche trends found in both locations.
- Methamphetamine rates were higher in Dublin, with ketamine and Oxycodone also being unique trends in the Dublin region also.



- Pregabalin rates were higher in the Midlands Region but may be as a result of oral consumption.
- Fluarazepam is likely a result of the injection of this substance in this specific location.

EUROPEAN WEB SURVEY ON DRUGS 2021

Over 18 who lived in Ireland and had used certain drugs over the past 12 months



TYPES OF DRUGS



- Cannabis
- Cocaine
- MDMA, amphetamines, methamphetamine
- Heroin
- New psychoactive substances (NPS)
- Nitrous oxide
- Psychedelic mushrooms

TYPES OF QUESTIONS



- **Frequency** and **amount** consumed on a typical day
- Drug use **patterns** according to sex and age
- The **reasons why** people use drugs, by drug type
- The **main sources** used to obtain drugs
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on drug use

MAIN TAKEAWAYS EWSD 21



Polydrug users

- 36% one drug
 - 20% two drugs
 - 44% used 3 or more
- ←-----→
- Cannabis
 - Cocaine
 - MDMA
 - Ketamine

Cannabis herb



- 77.4% buy
- 16.9% get for free
- 3.2% produce

	Last year			Last month		
	All	Males	Females	All	Males	Females
	n=5796	n=3815	n=1895	n=5796	n=3815	n=1895
Cannabis	91.2	92.0	89.8	69.5	73.0	62.4
Cocaine	48.5	48.3	49.4	22.9	23.0	23.0
Ecstasy	30.8	30.7	31.4	6.2	6.3	6.0
Ketamine	23.8	24.9	22.0	7.1	7.4	6.4
Magic mushrooms	22.1	24.5	17.2	4.9	5.5	3.8
LSD	18.8	21.5	13.3	4.4	5.1	2.9
NPS*	14.3	14.4	14.2	5.8	5.4	6.6
Amphetamines	10.8	11.3	10.0	3.0	3.3	2.4
Methamphetamine	3.9	4.3	3.3	1.1	1.3	0.7
GHB*	2.1	2.6	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.3
Heroin	1.1	1.2	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.3

REDUCING HARM AT FESTIVALS

- As part of the HSE 'Safer Nightlife' harm reduction campaign, we are launching a pilot programme which will initially take place at Electric Picnic
- First Irish drug monitoring programme to analyse drugs to provide real time information at a festival setting, following recommendation of the Report of the Emerging Drug Trends and Drug Checking Working Group
- This pilot is being introduced so the HSE can gain knowledge on current drug market trends so they can improve harm reduction responses specific to nightlife settings.



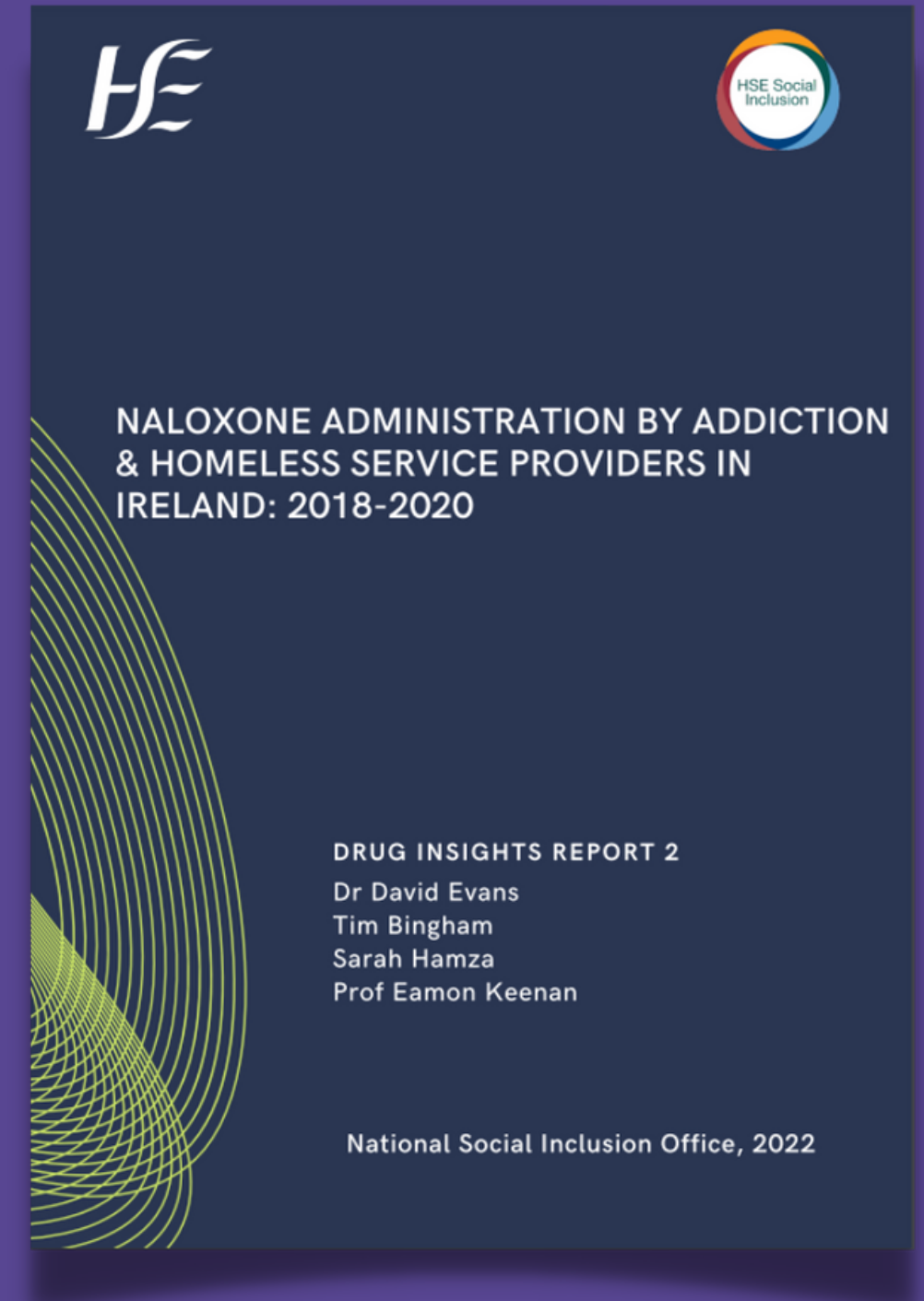
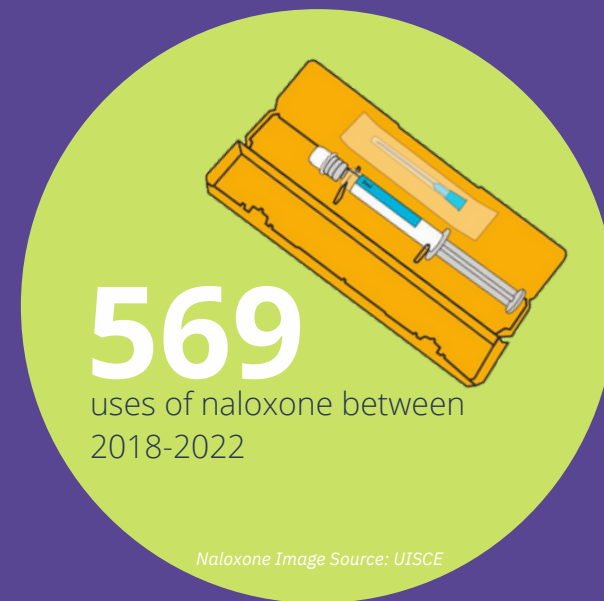
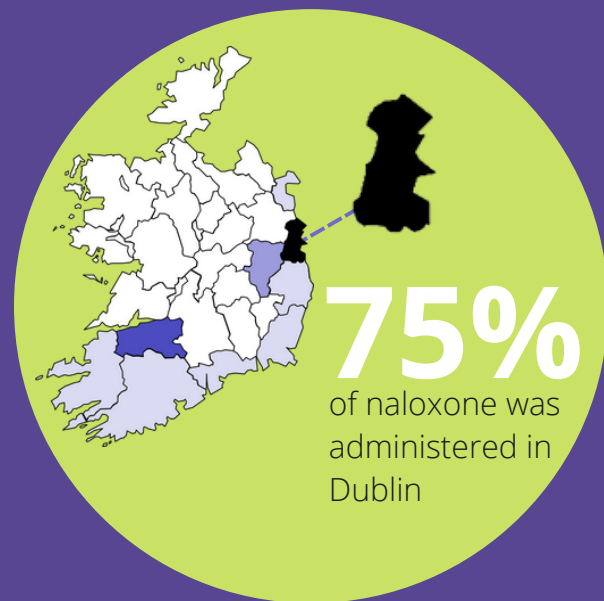
Current Festival Trends:

- Poly-drug Use - Overdose Risk
- Ketamine
- Psychedelics - Mental Health Side Effects



NALOXONE ADMINISTRATION REPORT

- This report has highlighted the fact that increased availability of training and the provision of naloxone in the community has potential to reduce drug- related deaths and continued investment will benefit individuals and their families.
- Over the three-year period, naloxone was administered on 569 occasions
- Estimated that this has resulted in saving at least 22 lives (using best available research)



THANK YOU