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**INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE  
CONTROL COMMISSION  
CICAD**

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security

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**NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES (NPS)  
CANADIAN SITUATION**

# **New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) *Canadian Situation***

***58<sup>th</sup> CICAD Regular Session  
Trujillo, Peru  
November 11-13, 2015***



- Context
- Trends in Specific NPS in Canada
- Canada's Efforts to Monitor and Control

# Context

- Wide array of substances from a variety of sources
- Producers and distributors in the illicit market continue efforts to circumvent the law by identifying new substances that may not be controlled and marketing them – often to youth – as “safe” or “legal” highs
- Often limited information on the health effects and potential harms of new substances, compounded by variability in drug composition depending on source and batch
- Online sales, marketing and sharing of information among illicit market players and NPS users contributes to scope and reach of the problem

# Trends in Specific NPS in Canada (2005-2014)

YEAR	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
2C family	6	66	47	85	179	268	480	870	693	246
Salvia		9	8	4	20	36	25	22	45	25
Tryptamines	14	8	128	248	159	74	1026	702	314	201
BZP/TFMPP		8	163	1,195	2,344	1,906	2,676	3,793	2,203	735
MBZP									14	217
Heliomethylamine								161	220	234
Alpha-PVP								22	513	61
MDPV						13	269	1,362	618	451
Mephedrone						10	7	18	11	8
Methylone					1	7	3	56	482	805
Ethylone									1	172
Synthetic Cannabinoids					2	88	59	70	396	143
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>1532</b>	<b>2705</b>	<b>2402</b>	<b>4545</b>	<b>7076</b>	<b>5510</b>	<b>3098</b>

# NPS Trends Reported by Law Enforcement in Canada

## **In Canada** (reported by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police)

- Emergence of various types of synthetic drugs (both regulated and unregulated)
- Appearance of high numbers and varieties of NPS, often sold as “bath salts”, “legal highs” or “plant food”
- Use of synthetic cannabinoids recreationally

## **At the Canadian Border** (reported by Canada Border Services Agency)

- Identified 46 different NPS (2000-2011)
- Identified approximately 30 new NPS each year (since 2011)
- Identified 7 new synthetic cannabinoids each year (2009-2014)
- Recent emergence of designer benzodiazepines, fentanyl analogues, phenmetrazine analogues and PCP analogues

# Canada's Efforts to Address NPS

- **Health Canada**

- Monitors the drug situation in Canada and conducts broad and targeted research and surveillance activities
- Responsible for legislative control response
- Provides laboratory analysis support to law enforcement to identify seized drugs

- **Canada Border Services Agency**

- Identifies goods that are detained at the border because of non-compliance with the Customs Act or other federal legislation

- **Royal Canadian Mounted Police**

- Has shared responsibility for criminal drug enforcement with municipal and provincial law enforcement agencies
- Engages in information sharing with national and international partners

# Health Canada's Monitoring of NPS

- Ongoing media and literature scanning
- Ongoing review of substances identified by law enforcement and other analytical laboratories
- Internet Monitoring Project - Launched in fall 2012, aimed at examining sale of NPS via the Internet in Canada
  - Methods were adapted from existing internet monitoring protocols, e.g., Psychonaut Web Mapping Project in Europe, EMCDDA Snapshot in the EU
  - Key findings: Number of websites changes on a regular basis, thus the search methods need to be updated frequently; Limited number of websites actually hosted in Canada, although many websites offer shipping to Canada
- Questions on NPS have been added to biennial general population surveys
  - For example, the 2014-15 Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol & Drugs Survey included questions on synthetic cannabinoids, BZP/TFMPP, Bath salts, 2Cs, NBOMEs, Tryptamines and Salvia



# Control of NPS in Canada

## ***Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA)***

- Provides control over the possession, import / export, production and distribution of controlled substances and precursors, which are listed in schedules to the Act
- Certain schedule entries have been worded to capture more than a single substance based on structure (e.g. salts, derivatives, isomers, analogues etc.), which may capture NPS
- Health Canada is taking a more concerted effort to consistently draft new schedule entries in this manner, and to also capture substances with similar pharmacological effects
- For example, in July 2015, Schedule II was amended to make more explicit the controlled status of synthetic cannabinoids by adding a definition to specify cannabinoid receptor Type I agonists

## ***Food and Drugs Act (F&DA)***

- To protect consumers from health hazards and fraud in the sale and use of drugs
- Individuals could be prosecuted for violations of the F&DA if the NPS meets the definition of “drug” in the F&DA

## Risk Communication Efforts

- As use of NPS increases, increasing numbers of adverse effects are being reported to provincial/territorial drug use networks and municipal/regional health authorities
- The public and the media are looking to competent authorities for accurate information on the status and risks associated with drugs
- Health Canada has issued general public advisories about the serious health risks associated with NPS ([www.healthy Canadians.gc.ca](http://www.healthy Canadians.gc.ca))

# Challenges Ahead

## Scheduling process is reactive

- Often takes several months to complete the federal regulatory process
- Canada continues to explore options for more proactive approaches

## Further efforts to establish risk communication strategies

- E.g. Increased dissemination of information to youth who have the perception that NPS are safe and/or legal

## Additional Data Sources

- Development of tools and resources to leverage “first responders”, e.g., poison control centres, law enforcement, emergency room staff, paramedics, etc., who may be first to see a new NPS
- Better sharing of international data

- The NPS phenomenon is global
- Multilateral efforts to collect and share information are vital to continued success in combating NPS

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