

Mid-Term Review Challenges - Response on behalf of Students for Sensible Drug Policy

Challenge: Both the range of drugs and drugs markets are expanding and diversifying

Response:

Despite the commitment set out in 2019, drug markets continue to proliferate and the expansion of NPS have not slowed down. In fact, we can see that in specific contexts, the opposite is very much true.

In Europe, the recent and rapid expansion of synthetic cathinones has demonstrated the failure of the 2019 Ministerial Segment. Specifically, Europe has seen a widespread expansion of analogues of Mephedrone, or 4mmc, in the last years. The situation can be stood as a case study emblematic of the larger failure of the drug scheduling system. As demand of 4mmc among drug users has increased but precursors and close analogues have been increasingly difficult to access/produce, Europe has seen a rapid proliferation of new and largely unknown analogues to 4mmc arise; at first, this meant the rise in prominence of 3mmc, a close analogue, and now recently moved to 3cmc, 2mmc, 2cmc, ... , and so further.

Not only has this market rapidly expanded and diversified, but the newfound prevalence of many unknown Mephedrone analogues poses sharply increased risks to drug users, as these substances are all far less understood--if at all--than Mephedrone, and pose unique challenges for drug users to make informed decisions. Their metabolic tolerability, neurotoxicity, and long-term affects are all poorly understood. Consequently, the goal of limiting the proliferation of a diversifying drug market, as well as protecting the health of drug users, has failed.