

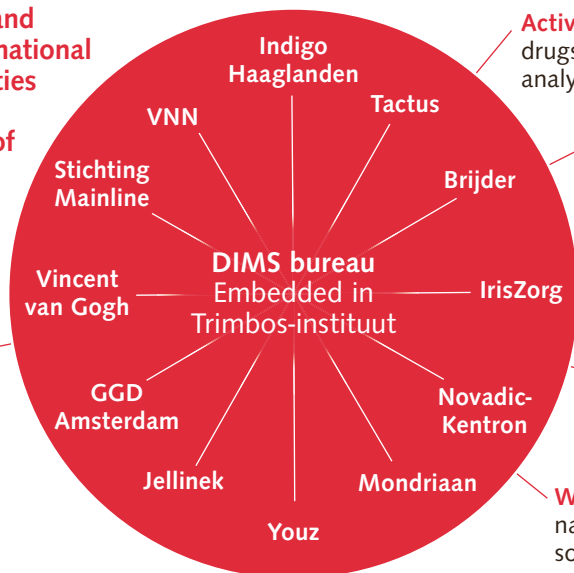
Annual Report 2018

Drugs Information and Monitoring System (DIMS)

What is DIMS?

The Drugs Information and Monitoring System is a national network of testing facilities that aims at gaining an insight into the market of controlled substances.

Commissioned by the Ministry of Health (VWS) and local authorities



Activities: DIMS examines the content of drugs, its associated health-related risks, and analyses trends.

Method: DIMS monitors the market in controlled drugs by offering consumers the possibility to have their drugs tested.

Application: The data collected are being used for education, prevention and policy interventions.

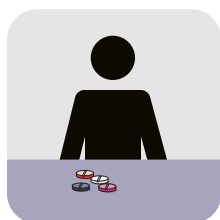
Education: The testing facilities serve a major educational purpose and provide information on effects and risks of drugs.

Warnings: DIMS occasionally warns on a national, regional or local level, or e.g. via social media for drugs involving extra risks.

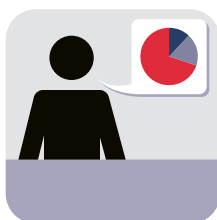
How does it work?



DIMS affiliated organizations hold weekly consulting hours.



Here, users are able to hand in drugs for analysis, anonymously and discretely.



If the sample can be determined, the composition is passed on directly.



If not, the sample is sent to the laboratory for further analysis.



A week later, the drugs have been analysed and the results are communicated.



Sometimes the result is so disturbing, that a warning or Red Alert is issued.

2018: Red Alert and internal releases

In 2018, DIMS issued no national Red Alerts but instead a regional one; in addition, several internal releases were issued, targeting only the DIMS-network and the visitors of the testing facilities.

Internal release

LSD paper trips containing an additional LSD-like substance

Regional Red Alert

Rotterdam/ North Brabant
Atropine found in samples sold as ketamine and cocaine.

Internal release

Tablets sold as ecstasy with logo Transformer, containing 240-296 mg MDMA.

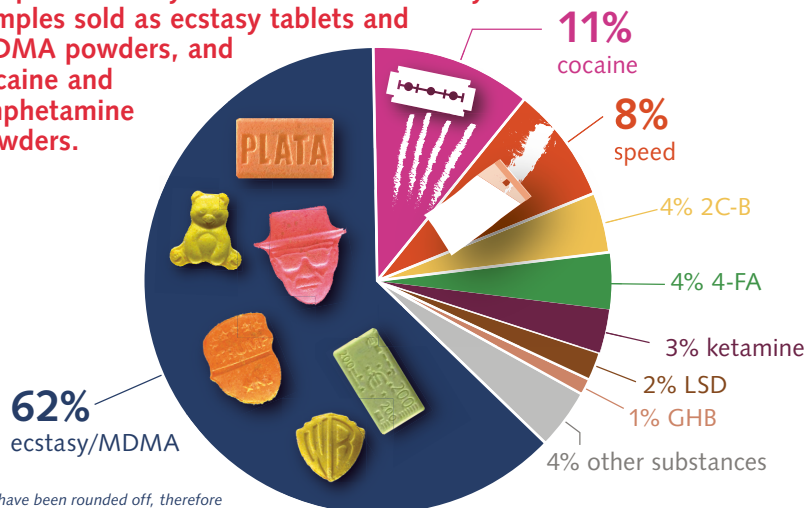
Internal release

PMMA in ecstasy. At several testing locations tablets sold as ecstasy with grey diamond imprint contained small amounts of PMMA.

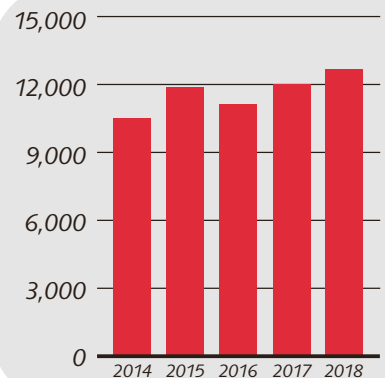
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Samples submitted to DIMS in 2018

In 2018, 13,540 visitors handed in 12,634 samples for analysis. This involved mainly samples sold as ecstasy tablets and MDMA powders, and cocaine and amphetamine powders.



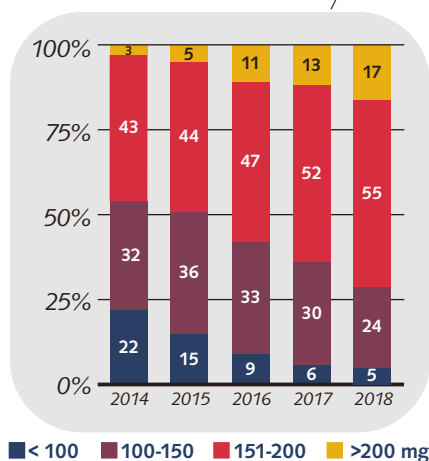
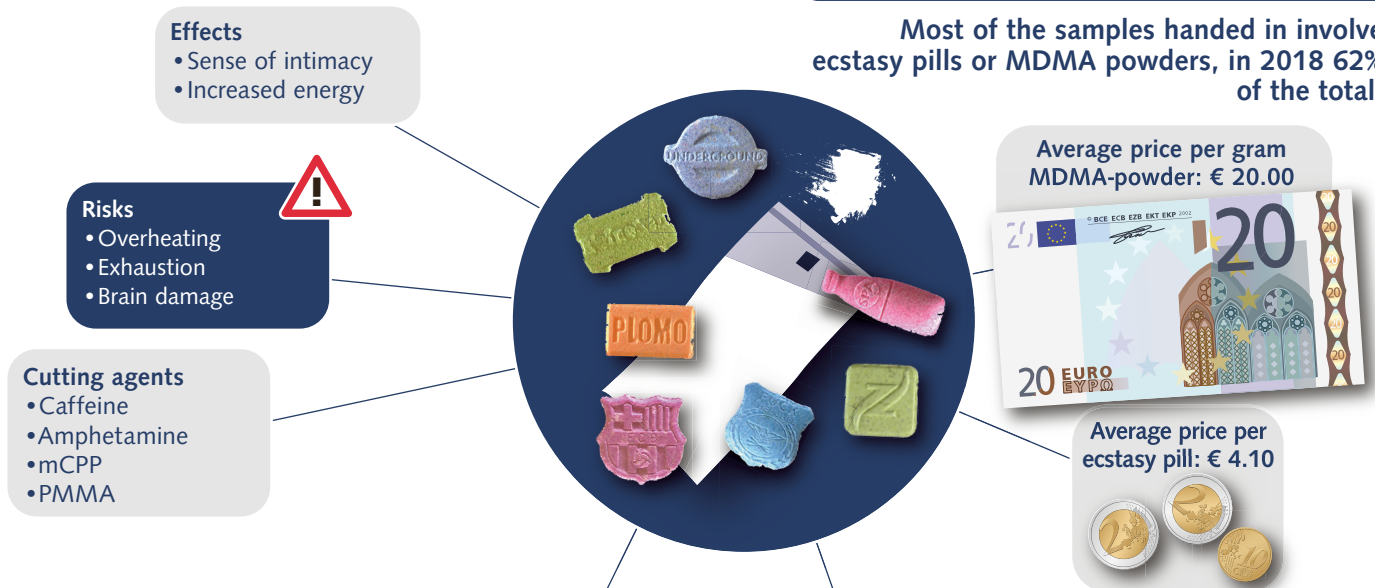
Values have been rounded off, therefore the percent of the total adds up to less than 100%



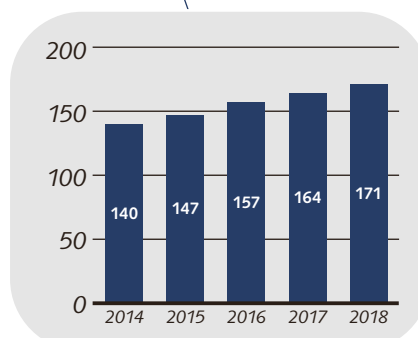
In 2018, the number of samples submitted to DIMS increased again.

Ecstasy/MDMA in 2018

Most of the samples handed in involve ecstasy pills or MDMA powders, in 2018 62% of the total.



72% of the samples handed in at DIMS contain over 150 mgs of MDMA, the strongest pill in 2018 contained 296 mgs of MDMA.



Average dosage of MDMA in ecstasy pills (in mgs).

Cocaine in 2018

In terms of number of submitted samples, cocaine is in second place with a share of 11%.

Average price per gram of cocaine: € 49.30

Risks

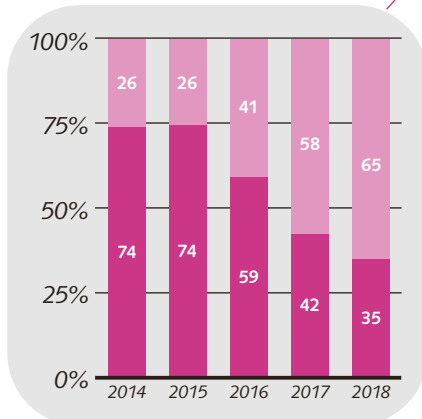
- Often cut with medicines
- Paranoia
- Damage smoking: lungs
- injecting: abscess
- snorting: nasal mucosa
- Dependency
- Exhaustion
- Cardiovascular problems

Cutting agents

- Levamisole
- Caffeine
- Phenacetine

Effects

- Increased energy
- Confident feeling

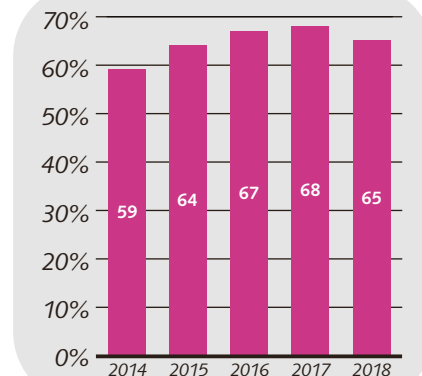


samples: ■ without levamisole ■ with levamisole

Cocaine is regularly being cut with levamisole, an anthelmintic for animals. From 2015, the percentage of levamisole in submitted cocaine samples decreases year by year.

Risks levamisole

- With high dose and regular use: impairment of the immune system
- Fever and flu-like symptoms, skin eruptions
- Nausea, diarrhea, vomiting
- Headache, confusion, dizziness



The average percentage of cocaine in cocaine samples increased over the last years, but decreased slightly in 2018.

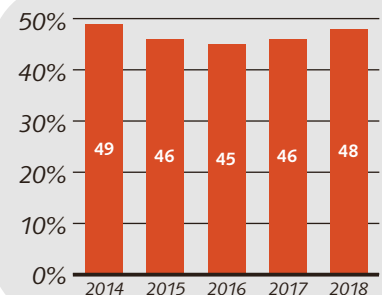
Speed in 2018

8% percent of all submitted samples is speed.

Risks

- Overheating
- Exhaustion
- Brain damage
- Paranoia
- Heavy physical strain

Average price per gram of speed: € 7,30



The average percentage of amphetamine in speed hardly varies from year to year. In 2018, this average was 48%.

Effects

- Increased energy
- Delays fatigueness
- Inhibits appetite

Cutting agent
• Caffeine

4-FA (4-fluoramphetamine) in 2018

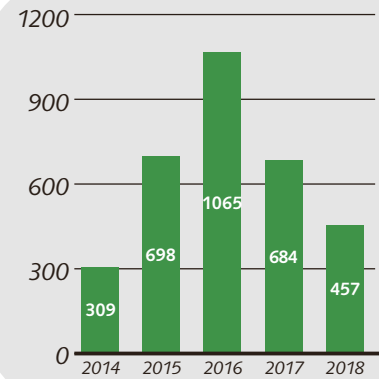
4-FA (also known as 4-fluoroamphetamine or 4-FMP) currently forms 4% of all samples that are handed in at DIMS and is submitted in the form of powders, tablets, crystals and capsules.

Effects of 4-FA

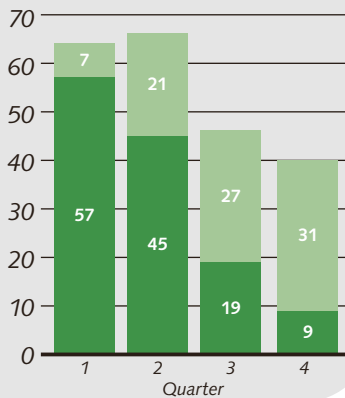
- Increased energy
- Euphoria
- Talkative
- Delays fatigue

Risks

- Exhaustion
- Nausea, vomiting
- Headache, confusion, dizziness
- Palpitations
- Brain damage



From 2013, a sharp increase of samples sold as 4-FA was seen. Since 2017, the year in which 4-FA was banned, this number decreased sharply.



■ 4-FA ■ 4-FMA

In 2018, lab analysed samples sold as 4-FA increasingly contained only 4-FMA (4-fluoromethamphetamine).

Ketamine in 2018

Of all samples handed in to DIMS, 3% percent consists of ketamine.

Average price per gram powder: € 23.90



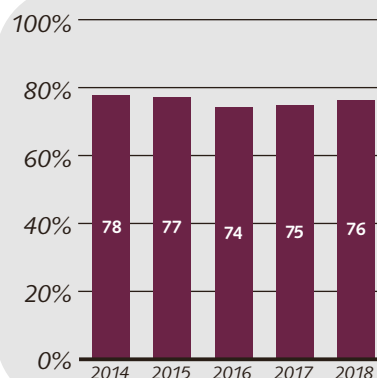
Risks

- Bad trip
- Nausea, vomiting
- Respiratory disorders
- Muscle stiffening or paralysis



Effects

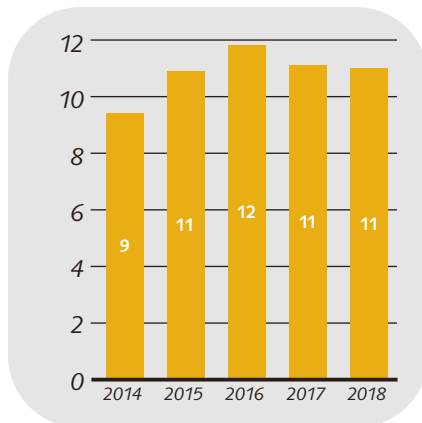
- Mind altering
- Out-of-body experience



The average purity of submitted ketamine samples has fluctuated around 75% for years.

2C-B in 2018

2C-B (4-bromo-2,5-dimethoxyphenethylamine) is commonly handed in as a pill but sometimes as a powder as well, covering 4% of all samples submitted in 2018. The effects strongly depend on the dose taken. 96% of the pills handed in as 2C-B contained 2C-B.



Average amount of 2C-B in pills submitted as 2C-B (in mg).



Average dosage pills
11 mgs in 2018

Average price per pill: € 4.20



Risks

- Bad trip
- Effects stronger than expected/overdose



Effects

- At low dose: euphoria, increased energy
- At high dose: hallucinogenic

LSD in 2018

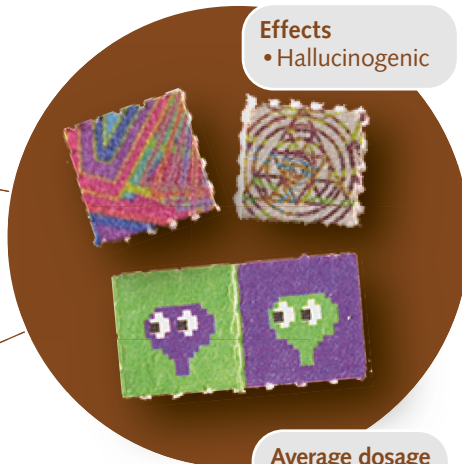
2% of the submitted samples consists of LSD. In 4% of the submitted LSD samples, substances other than LSD were detected.

Average price per blotter: € 6.50



Risks

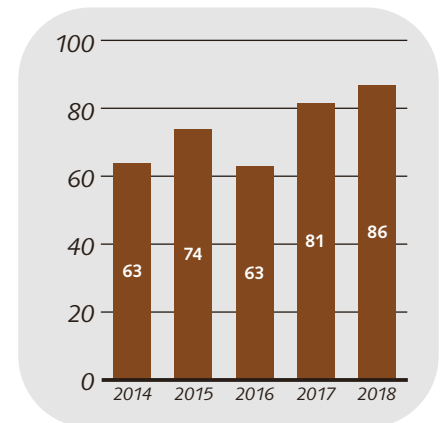
- Bad trip
- Nausea
- Flash backs



Effects

- Hallucinogenic

Average dosage
86 µgs in 2018



The average dosage of LSD varies largely over the years. In 2018, the average dosage was 86 µgs (chart in µgs).

GHB in 2018

GHB in liquid form covers around 1% of all substances handed in at DIMS.

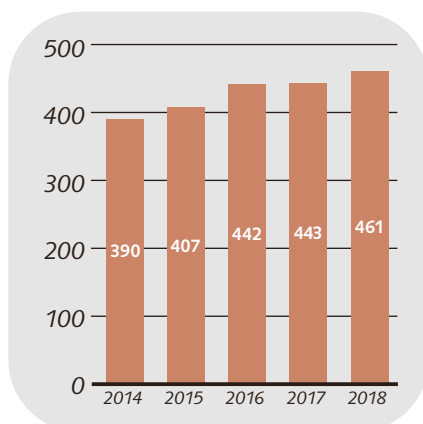
Effecten

- Euphoria
- Relaxation
- Loss of control

We gathered too little data to give a reliable average of price of GHB.

Risks

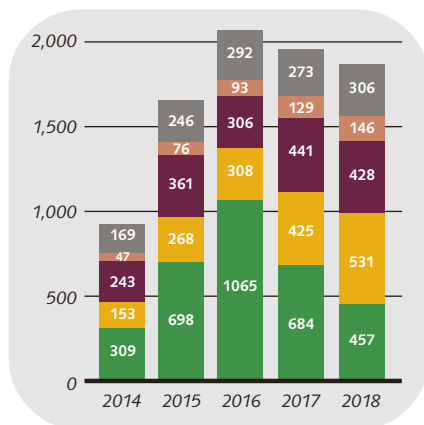
- Addictive
- Potentially life-threatening if combined with alcohol
- Risk of overdosing
- Burns mouth/esophagus



Average amount of GHB in samples submitted as GHB (in mg/ml).



NPS in 2018

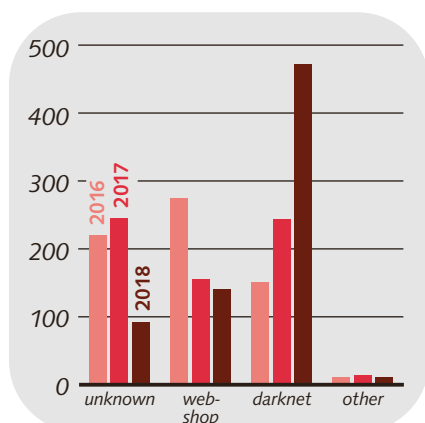


Number of samples related to new psychoactive substances (NPS), sold as:

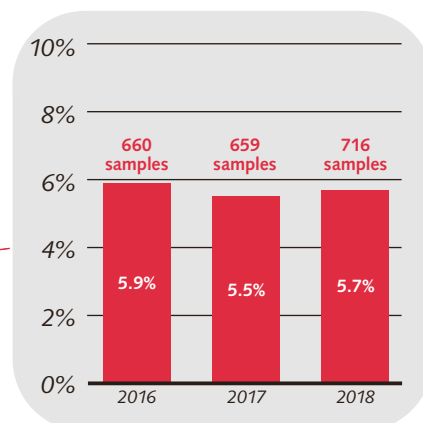
■ 4-FA ■ 2C-B ■ Ketamine ■ GHB ■ Other

Online purchases

A small but steady part of samples was bought online; more and more bought off the darknet.



Online bought samples, divided by internet source.



Number of samples submitted to DIMS bought online (%).

Product number: INF037

Text: Daan van der Gouwe and Ruben Vrolijk

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