

## PARALLEL SESSION 3D

### Two Decades of pill testing in the Netherlands

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When ecstasy (MDMA) and other related drugs emerged in the Netherlands during the late 1980's, there was little scientific literature and research available to inform policy and practice. Consequently, responses by health education professionals tended to be based on faith rather than science. Among others the Jellinek Centre in Amsterdam recognised that it was vital to obtain knowledge about the content of pills being sold as ecstasy. Contacts with a laboratory of a Medical Hospital in Amsterdam led to the first analyses of this new drug, which was soon made illicit in 1988. Out of this cooperation with the hospital grew the DIMS (Drug Information & Monitoring System) of the Trimbos Institute. DIMS is financed by the Ministry of Health and coordinates 26 pill testing services throughout the country. These pill testing services are located in and managed by different Institutes of Addiction Care.

Nowadays DIMS monitors the drugs markets and sends out Red Alerts when dangerous, life threatening substances are around. In this way it even influences the market. The system is anonymous and only available for consumers. In recent years drugs seized at the entrance of the clubs are also included in the system. This presentation will provide the nature and extent of pill testing and also include an overview of the results of the Unit Synthetic Drugs (USD) who are combating organized crime.