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# The recreational use of natural health products and natural substances for psychoactive effects in New Zealand: a scoping review

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**MEDICAL AND  
HEALTH SCIENCES**

# Disclosure of interest



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HEALTH SCIENCES

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# Introduction

Natural health products (NHPs) refers to:

Herbal substances, natural substances used in traditional medicine, vitamins, minerals, pre- and probiotics, dietary supplements, plants or plant-based material etc.

Various NHPs and natural substances have a long history of use for psychoactive effects



**Opium poppy**

(*Papaver somniferum*)

Image: © Evelyn

[Simak/geograph.org.uk/](https://www.geograph.org.uk/)



**Kratom**

(*Mitragyna speciosa*)

Image: © Krisda

[Suwankarn/Adobe Stock Images](#)



**Datura**

(*Datura stramonium*)

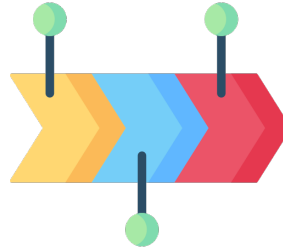
Image: © Pancrat

# Methods



## Search of:

- Biomedical databases:
  - Medline
  - Embase
  - Allied and Complementary Medicine Database (AMED)
  - PsycINFO
- Grey literature sources

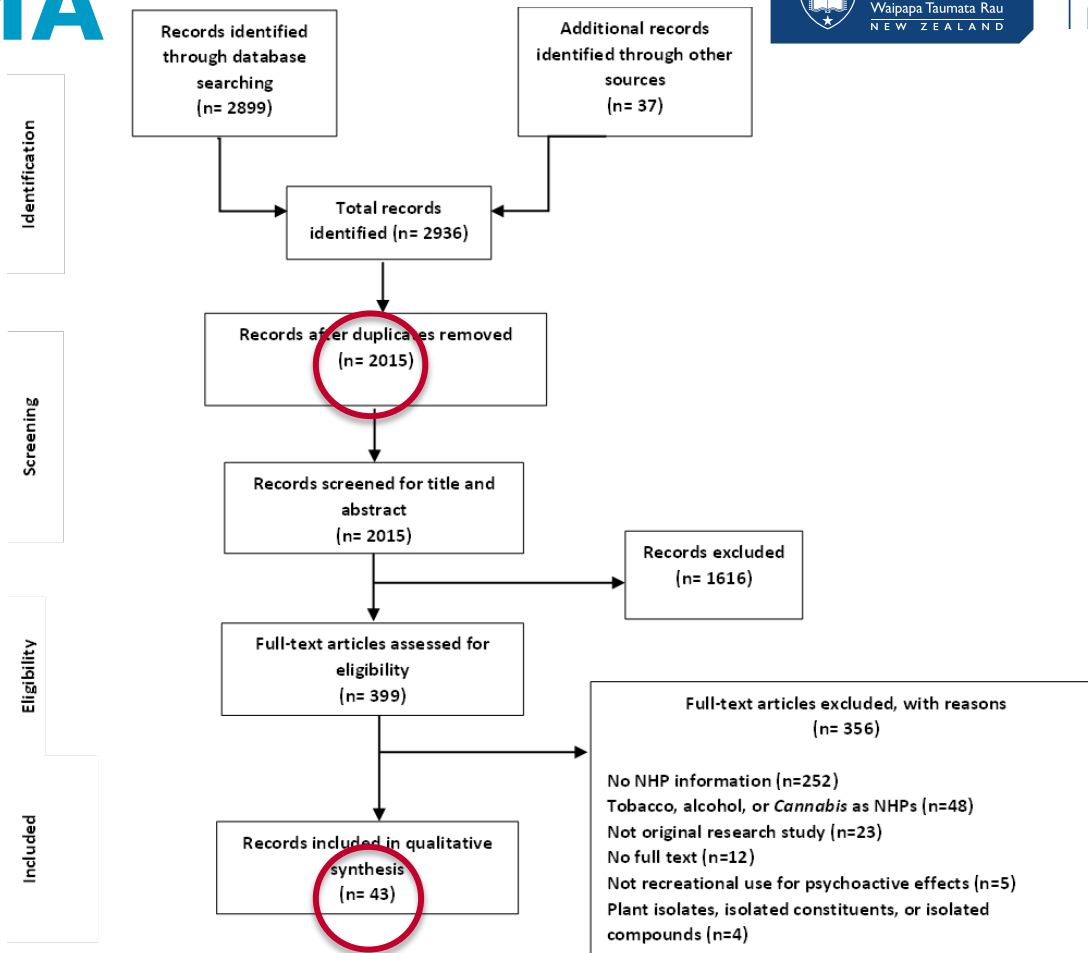


Searches were  
conducted  
systematically from  
inception to August  
2021



## Inclusion criteria:

- Original research studies (on any form of substance misuse in NZ), and
- Recreational NHP use for psychoactive effects



# Key findings



Some reports of use of hallucinogenic 'magic' mushrooms and *Salvia divinorum*, among others



Many terms used to describe the same NHPs



Various unclear definitions for 'recreational substance use'  
  
No definition provided for NHPs



Recreational use of NHPs not routinely asked about in substance misuse studies

# Discussion/ Conclusion

Limited studies and reports on the recreational use of NHPs/natural substances for psychoactive effects in NZ

Nationally representative and comprehensive data is lacking



## Final message:

- Some of these NHPs/natural substances are **unregulated and easily accessible** in NZ
- More up-to-date prevalence of use data is needed from large, nationally representative studies to inform regulatory changes and/or the provision of harm reduction information

Thank you

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