

## **Implementing a national Prompt Response Network to improve health-led decision making and processes for emerging drugs**

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### **Background**

The rapid emergence of new psychoactive substances and changing trends in emerging drug use create dynamic potential for harm and require a prompt and informed public health response. Australia's response is complicated by a federated system of States and Territories. The National Centre for Clinical Research on Emerging Drugs (NCCRED) supported by the Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL), facilitates a national Prompt Response Network (PRN) that connects health, community, justice, education, research and government sectors to provide a lived experience informed and health-led approach to emerging drugs.

### **Description of intervention**

The PRN combines various initiatives to support a health-led response to emerging drugs. Members from established and emerging early warning, data sharing, and other prompt response systems meet quarterly for information sharing and topical presentations from subject matter experts. Jurisdictional Representatives from all States and Territories meet monthly to exchange information on emerging drug threats, incidents and trends. The Know public website collates Australia-wide drug alerts to provide a national overview of emerging drugs. The Know Community online platform supports the sharing of sensitive information, sector collaboration and knowledge exchange. Next steps include the development of a national database of emerging drug signal, and a consumer-led anecdotal reporting system in collaboration with AIVL to improve data reporting, collection and case analysis.

### **Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation**

As of May 2024, the PRN has facilitated 30 Jurisdictional Representative meetings. There have been 7 national PRN meetings with presentations on diverse topics related to emerging drugs. 51 drug alerts have been distributed to the PRN drug alert email list and The Know Community since December 2022. Twelve drug alerts have been republished on The Know website, on average 59 minutes after publication of original alert. There are also over 242 activated members on The Know Community from across all jurisdictions.

### **Implications for Practice or Policy**

The PRN provides a national mechanism that uses collaborative governance to facilitate a prompt, health-led response to emerging drugs. The PRN's ongoing development is informed by lived/living experience and leverages a whole of community approach to mitigate harms associated with non-regulated supply of emerging drugs.

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