

# Drug Free Australia's series - exposing pill testing misinformation

Episode 1 – It's the ecstasy, stupid!!

# Their narrative

- Pill Testing Australia falsely claims that pill deaths are from **adulterants** and **impurities** in party pills

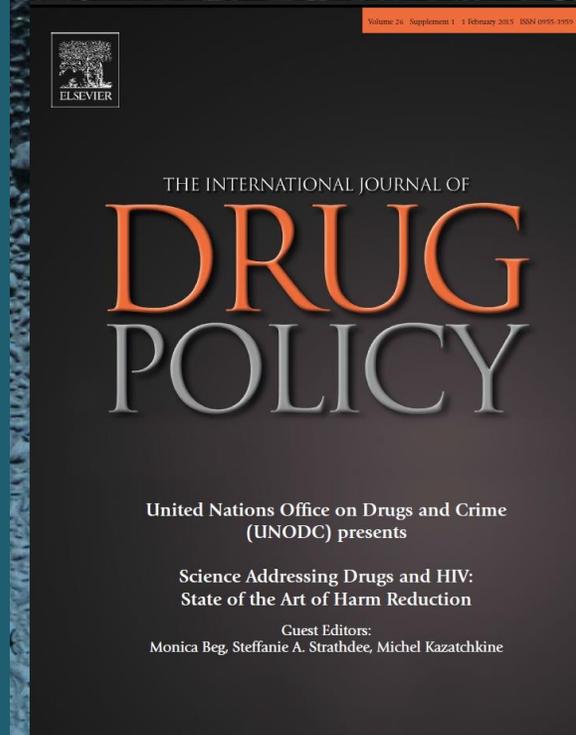
“There are more than half a dozen different techniques available for identifying the ingredients of the pill including detecting the presence of **dangerous contaminants.**”  
Dr Alex Wodak, The Catholic Weekly 24 January 2019



<https://www.catholicweekly.com.au/pill-testing-arguments-for-and-against/>

# The Science

- Two scientific analyses of coroners' reports on ecstasy (MDMA) pill deaths in Australia
  - The first is a subset of the second larger study with . . .
  - 392 ecstasy deaths between 2000 and 2018
    - no deaths from impurities identified
    - 5% of deaths had another drug mixed in the pill
    - this indicates that ecstasy is causal in 95% of deaths
    - 'bad batch' deaths almost non-existent in Australia
      - only 3 Chapel Street Melbourne deaths (2017)
    - so it is likely, on the probabilities of ecstasy causing the other 95% of deaths, that 99% are caused by it



<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31865118/>

# Their practise

- From Pill Testing Australia's evaluation – p 11
  - After testing a pill is given a white, yellow or red card
  - An ecstasy pill containing no other drug is white-carded
    - Yet it is ecstasy that kills most Australians

Diagram 3: Classification and reporting of detected substances

WHITE:	Where a substance was analysed, and was the same as what the patron anticipated that it might be
YELLOW:	Where a substance was analysed, and there was a significant disparity between the result and what the patron anticipated that it was
RED:	Where a substance was analysed, and revealed the presence of a substance known to be associated with increased harm / multiple overdoses/ death Where a substance was analysed and returned an ambivalent result, or functional groups known to be associated with significant harm

- Conclusion: There is no defensible rationale for pill testing

## Report on the ACT GTM Pill Testing Pilot: a Harm Reduction Service

Prepared by the Safety Testing Advisory Service  
At Festivals and Events (STA-SAFE) Consortium

June, 2018

The STA-SAFE consortium consists of:

Harm Reduction Australia  
Australian Drug Observatory, Australian National University  
Noffs Foundation  
DanceWize, Harm Reduction Victoria  
Students for Sensible Drug Policy Australia



# Pill testing series

- In this series

1. It's the ecstasy, stupid!!
2. How ecstasy causes death
3. More deaths the result
4. The UK's bad experience
5. Better equipment useless
6. Call out your politicians

# Next episode

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