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New Psychoactive Substances – A Global and Asian Perspective

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The global perspective

What are new psychoactive substances (NPS)?



New psychoactive substances* are substances of abuse, either in a pure form or a preparation, that are not controlled by the international drug conventions, but which may pose a public health threat.

* The term “new” does not necessarily refer to new inventions but to substances that have newly become available in specific markets.

What are attributes of NPS?

- Not controlled by the international drug control conventions
- Have recently become available
- Mimic the effect of traditional drugs
- Associated with serious health risks
- Little or no history of medical use



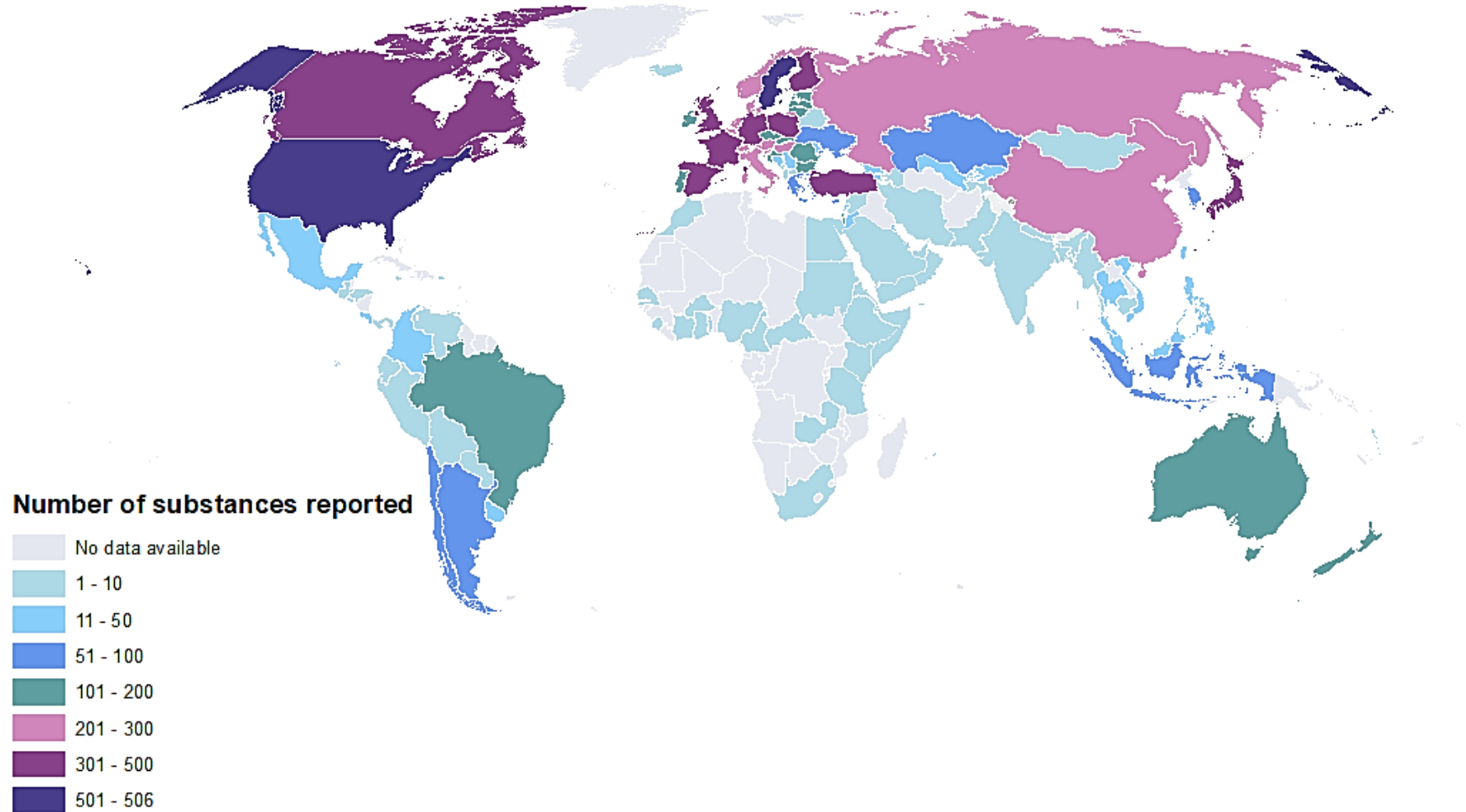


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Global emergence of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

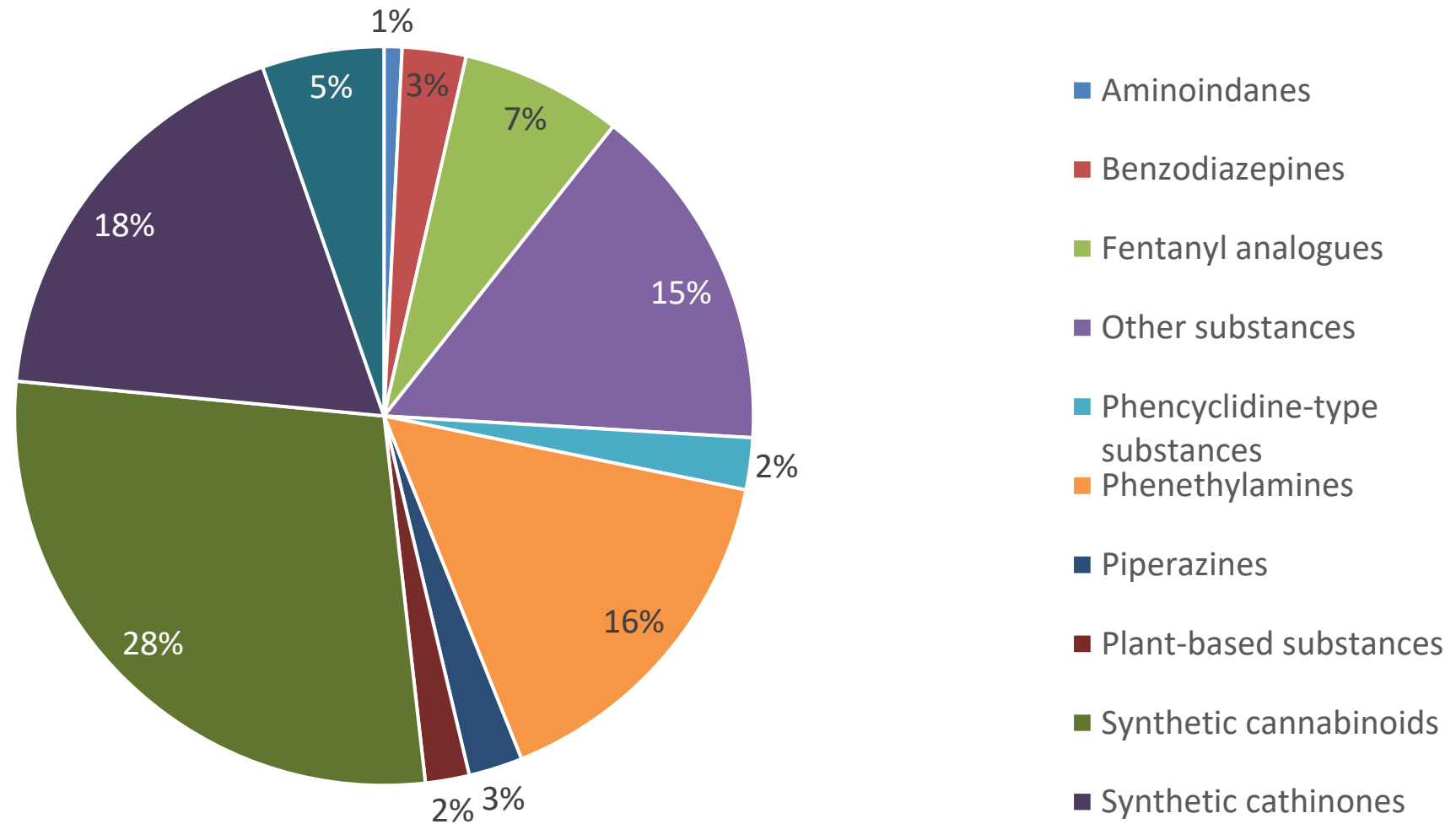
Currently 1,145 unique substances have been reported to UNODC by 137 countries and territories.



The boundaries shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dashed lines represent undetermined boundaries. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

How to classify over a 1000 substances?

Structural classification facilitates development of analytical methods for identification and characterization, national legislation

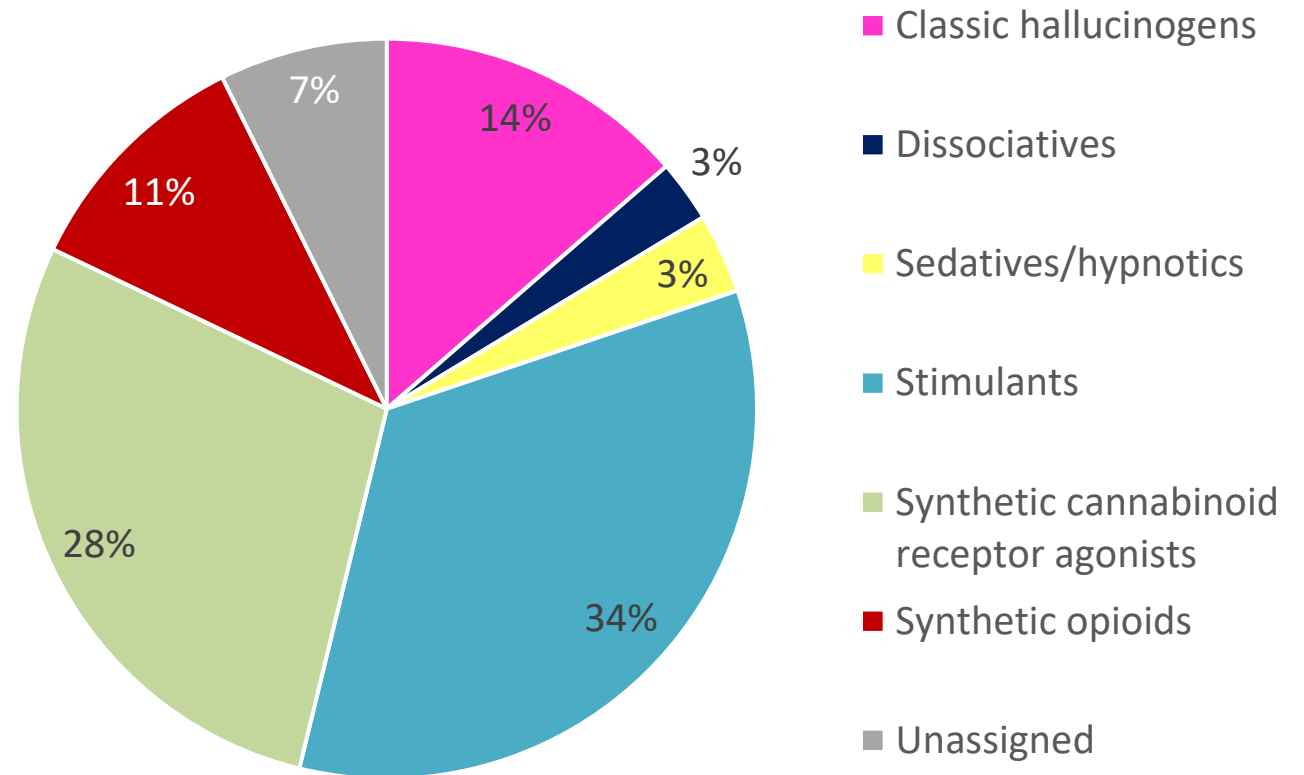


Source: UNODC Early Warning Advisory on NPS, 2022.

Note: *Data are preliminary and based on the analysis of 1,145 NPS from 137 reporter countries and territories up to 16 June 2022.

Classification by effect group

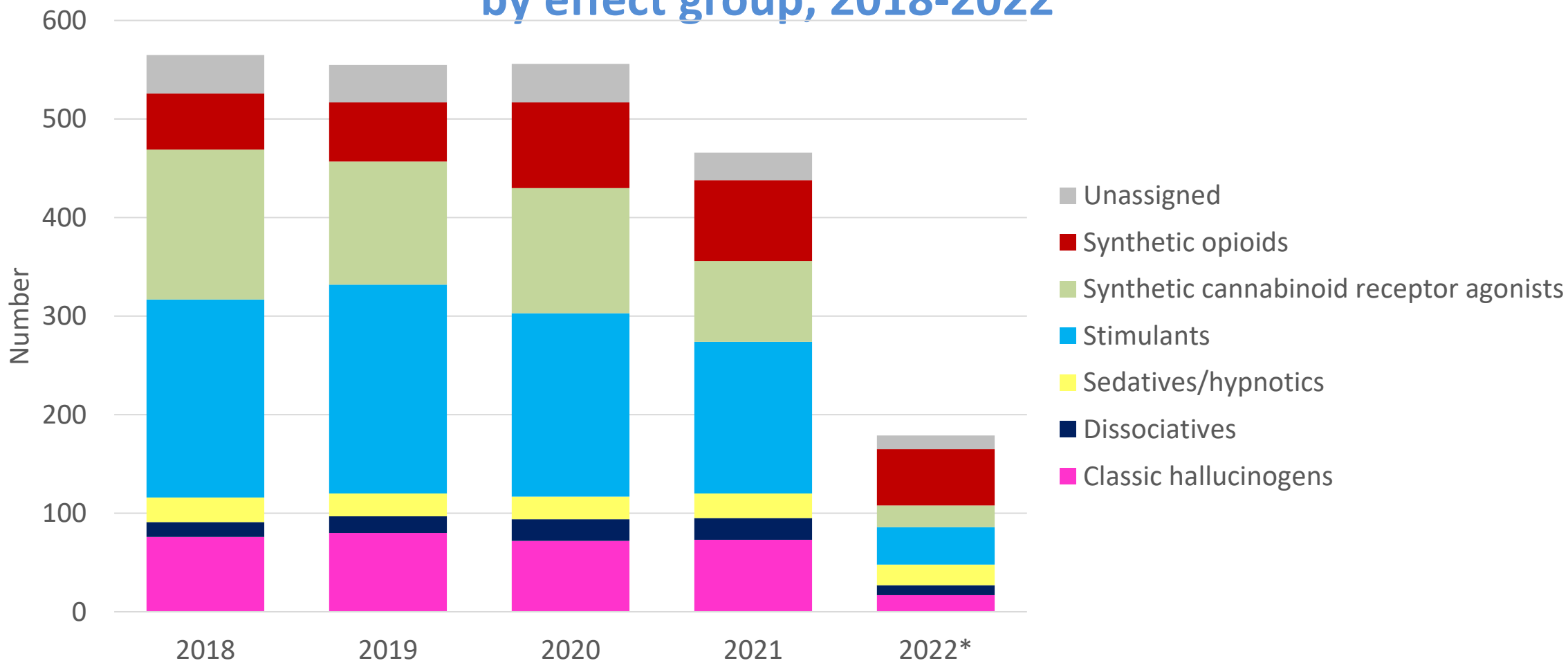
Effect-based classification allows for greater understanding of the drug market



Source: UNODC Early Warning Advisory on NPS, 2022.

Note: *Data are preliminary and based on the analysis of 1,145 NPS from 137 reporter countries and territories up to 16 June 2022.

Unique NPS reported annually to UNODC on a global level, by effect group, 2018-2022*



Source: UNODC Early Warning Advisory on NPS, 2022.

Note: *Data are preliminary and based on the analysis of 900 NPS from 115 reporter countries and territories up to 16 June 2022 (Annual differences in number of NPS and reporter countries).

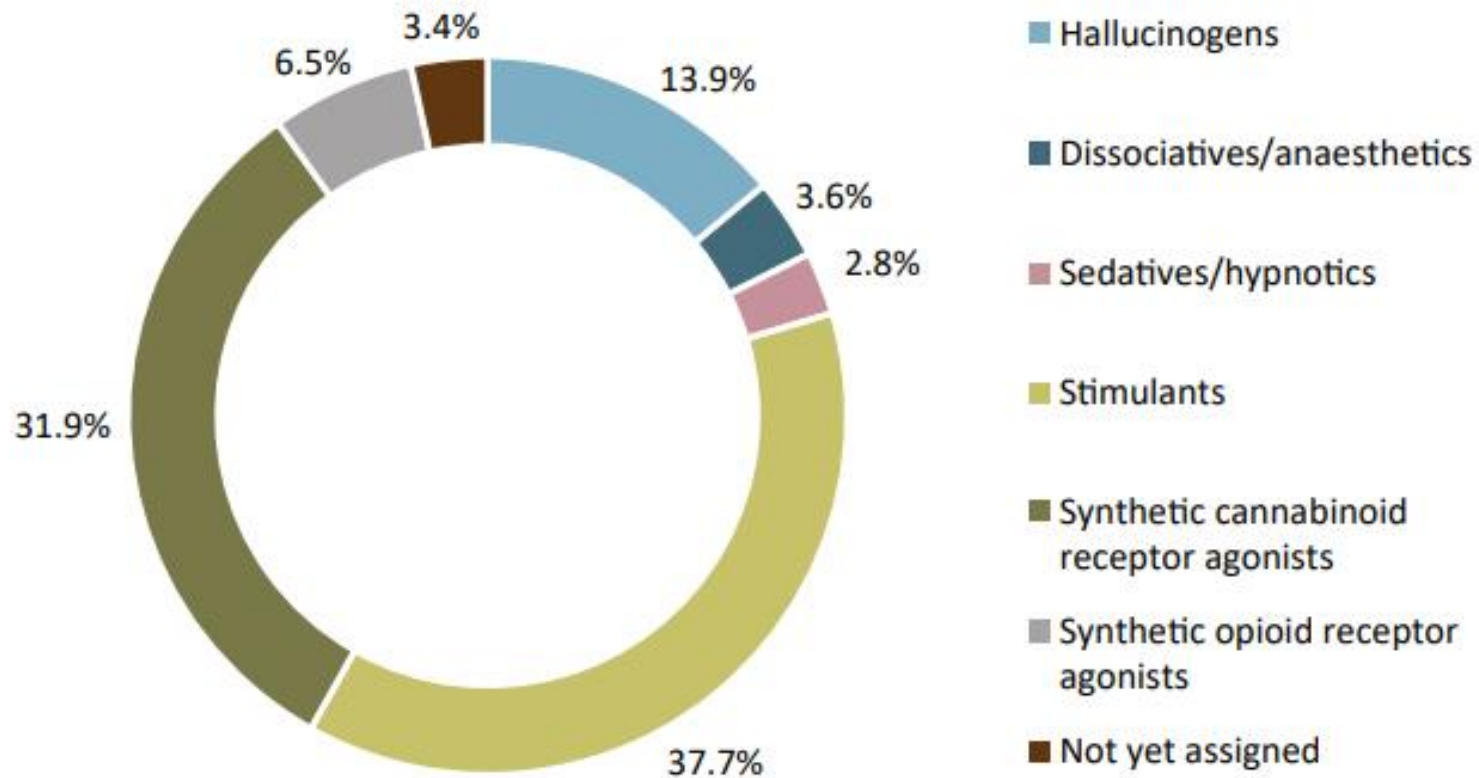


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The Asian perspective

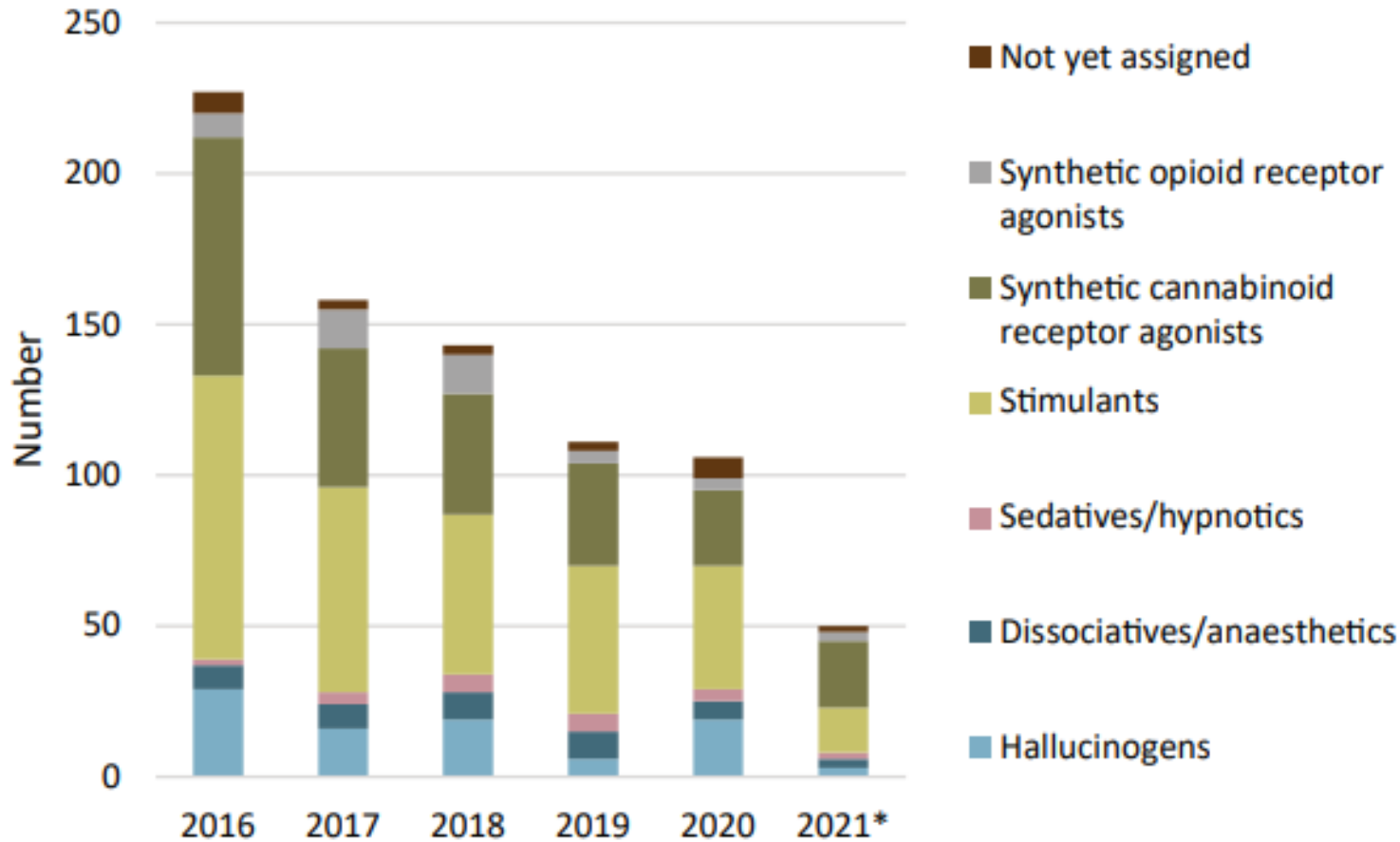
Proportion of NPS in East and Southeast Asia, by effect group, up to December 2021*



Source: UNODC Early Warning Advisory on NPS, 2022 in: UNODC, Synthetic Drugs in East and Southeast Asia (May 2022).

Note: *Data are preliminary and based on the analysis of 496 synthetic NPS.

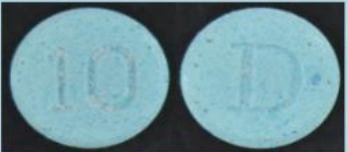
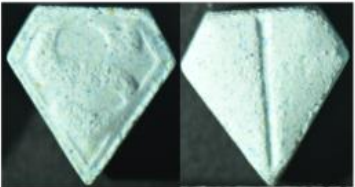

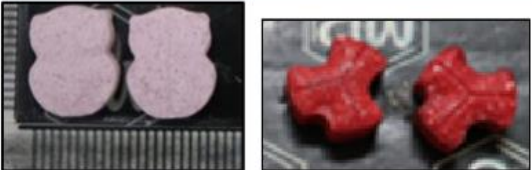
NPS reported annually to UNODC in East and Southeast Asia, by effect group, 2016-2021*



Source: UNODC Early Warning Advisory on NPS, 2022 in: UNODC, Synthetic Drugs in East and Southeast Asia (May 2022).

Note: *Data are preliminary and based on the analysis of 496 synthetic NPS.



Examples of synthetic drug tablets sold as “ecstasy” with substances other than MDMA present, analysed in Southeast Asia, 2021

| Photo | Reporting country | Weight of tablet | Other substance(s) present (per cent of substance content where available) |
|---|-------------------|------------------|---|
|  | Singapore | 180 mg | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diazepam • Methamphetamine |
|  | Singapore | 240 mg | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-Fluoro-MDMB-BUTICA • Caffeine • Methamphetamine • Eutylone • Ketamine |
|  | Thailand | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methamphetamine (12.09-18.92%) • Ketamine (8.03-9.23%) <p><i>Note: No MDMA present.</i></p> |
|  | Thailand | N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ketamine (0.22-2.67%) • Methamphetamine (0.67-1.90%) |

Sources: Official communication with CNB of Singapore and ONCB of Thailand, March-May 2022; ONCB, “Latest situation on synthetic drugs and responses to the threats in Thailand”, presented at the Global SMART Programme Regional Workshop, November-December 2021.

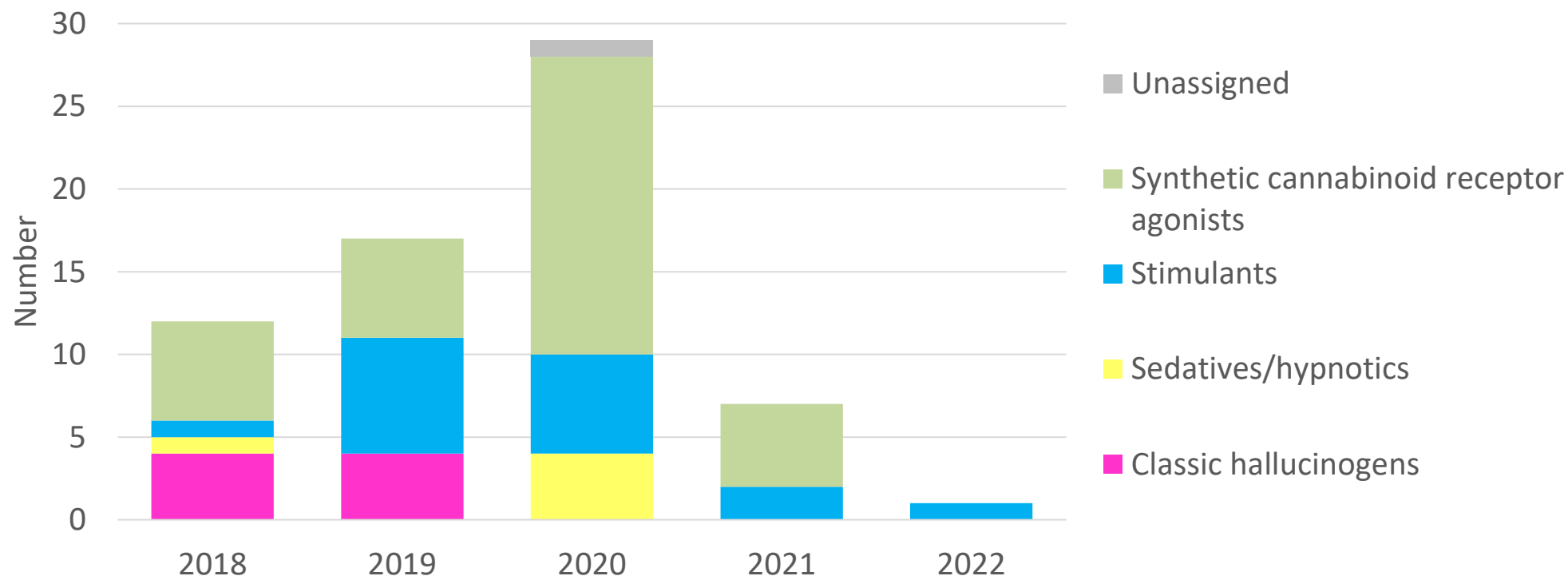


Emergence of ‘happy water’ in SE Asia

| No. | Images | Forensic profile | Number of samples |
|-----|--|--|-------------------|
| 1 |  | MDMA (2.26%), ketamine (5.40%) and caffeine | 2 |
| 2 |  | Methamphetamine (46.18%) and diazepam (24.59%) | 3 |

Source: Official communication with ONCB of Thailand, May 2022.

NPS reported annually to UNODC in Central Asia, by effect group, 2018-2022*



Source: UNODC Early Warning Advisory on NPS, 2022.

Note: *Data are preliminary and based on the analysis of 46 NPS from 3 reporter countries and territories up to 16 June 2022 (Annual differences in number of NPS and reporter countries).

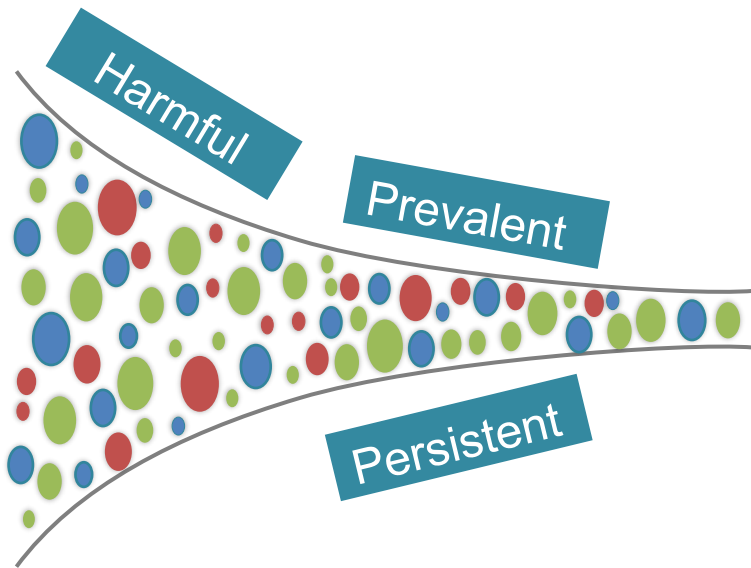


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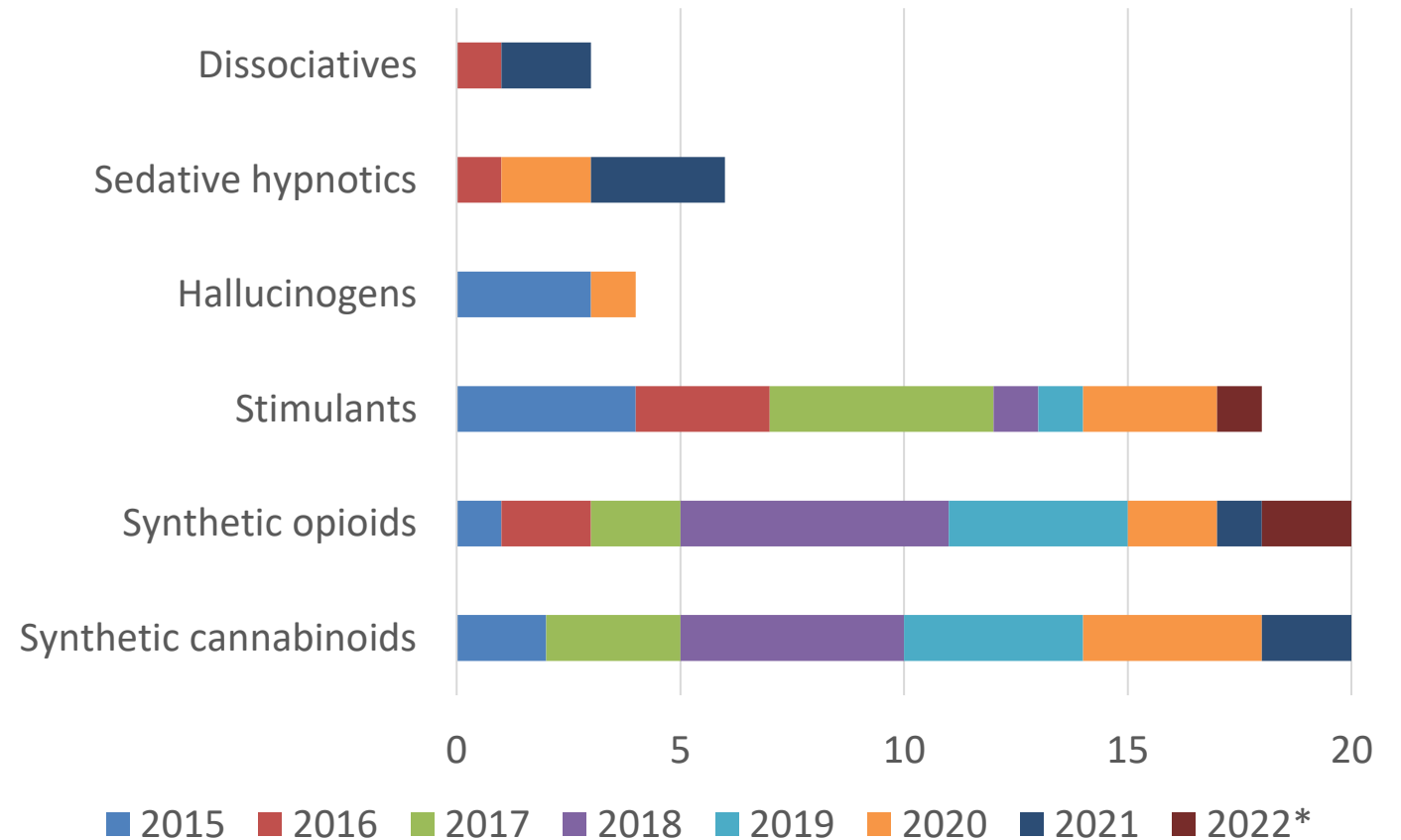
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Legal responses

International Scheduling Decisions 2014 – 2022*



- **71 substances and 10 precursors scheduled between 2014-2022***
- **Significant impact on work of forensic laboratories**



*Note: Scheduling decision on Eutylone and the three precursors Norfentanyl, 4-AP and 1-boc-4-AP will enter into force on 23rd of November 2022.



Possible legal approaches

<https://syntheticdrugs.unodc.org/syntheticdrugs/en/legal/index.html>

Individual Listing

Have limited numbers of NPS emerged and would you like to implement individual listing of substances?

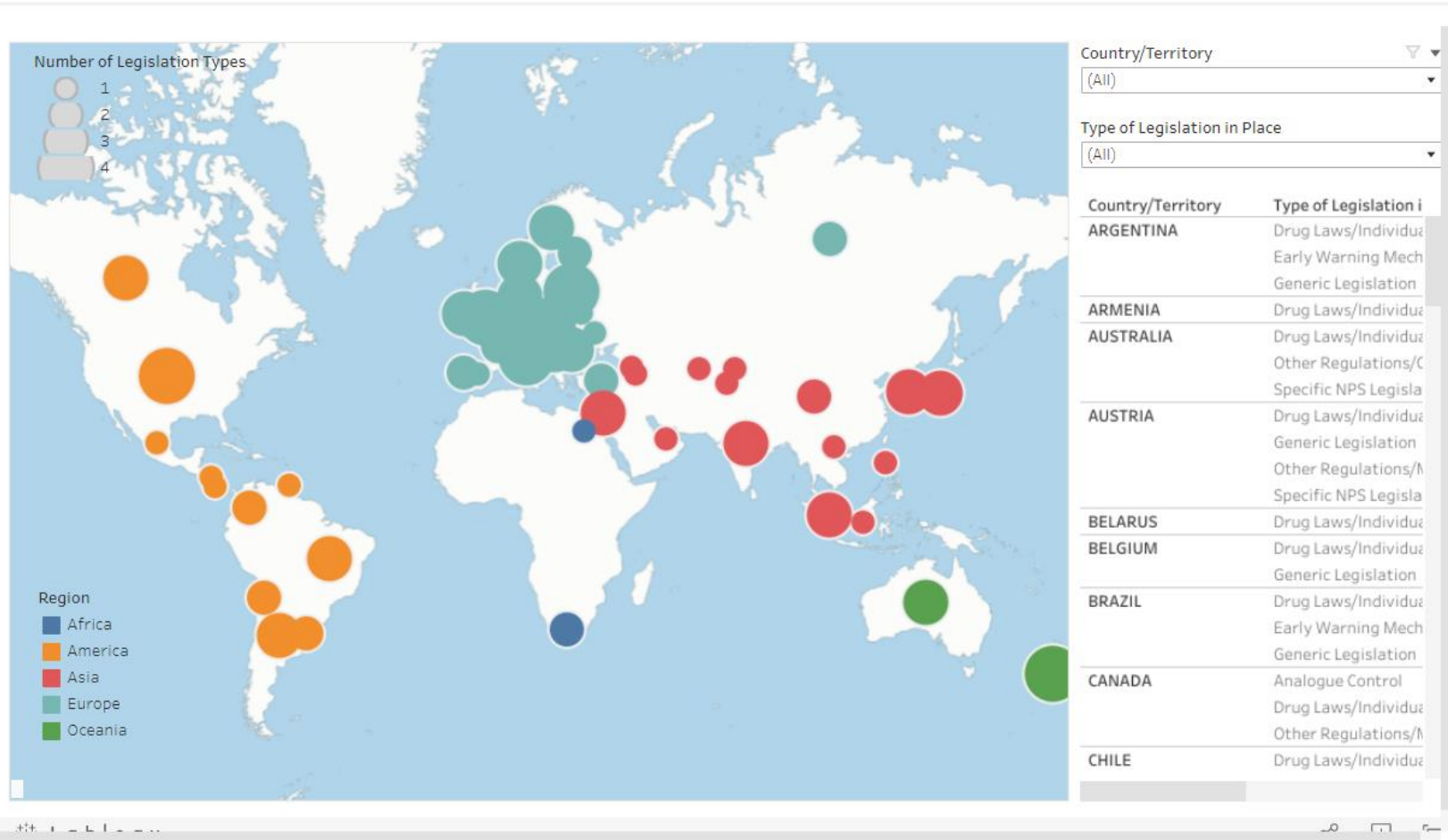
Have many NPS emerged and are you interested in implementing legislation that looks at classes or groups of substances?

Has there been a rapid emergence and proliferation of NPS and would you like to respond quickly?

- Generic Legislation
- Analogue Control
- Specific NPS legislation

- Temporary Bans
- Rapid Procedures

Legislative approaches by country



Website:

<https://www.unodc.org/LSS/Page/NPS/LegalResponses>

and

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/scientists/ewa/data.html>

* The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



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Early Warning

UNODC EWA NPS Portal



UNODC Early Warning Advisory on New Psychoactive Substances

Home About

UNODC Early Warning Advisory (EWA) on New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

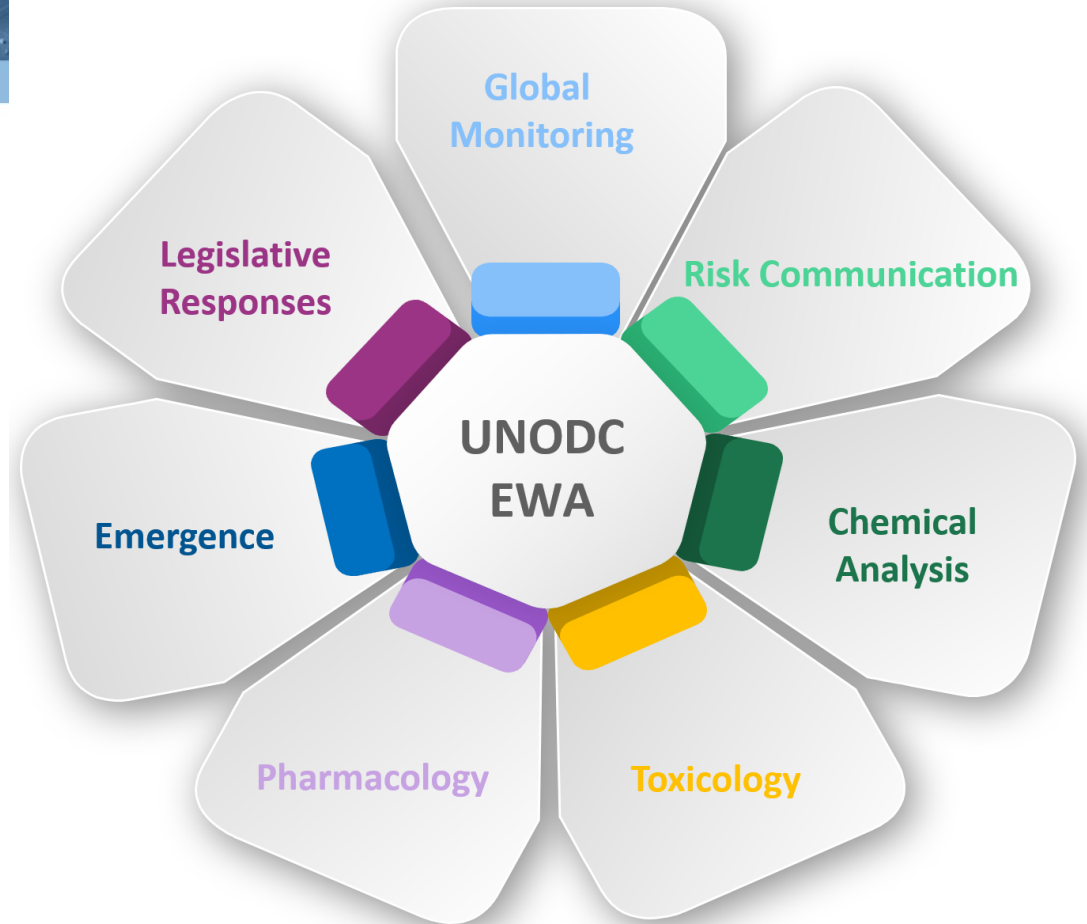
The EWA provides access to basic information on new psychoactive substances. Specific information on NPS including trend data, chemical details on individual substances, supporting documentation on laboratory analysis and legislative responses can be accessed by [registered users](#) only.

What are NPS?
New psychoactive substances have been known in the market by terms such as 'legal highs', 'herbal highs', 'bath salts', 'research chemicals'

NPS Substance Groups
NPS differ greatly in terms of their adverse effects, the ways in which they are abused and their historical background

NPS Data
Data on global emergence, geographic spread and health implications of NPS

[Latest News on NPS \(view all\)](#)



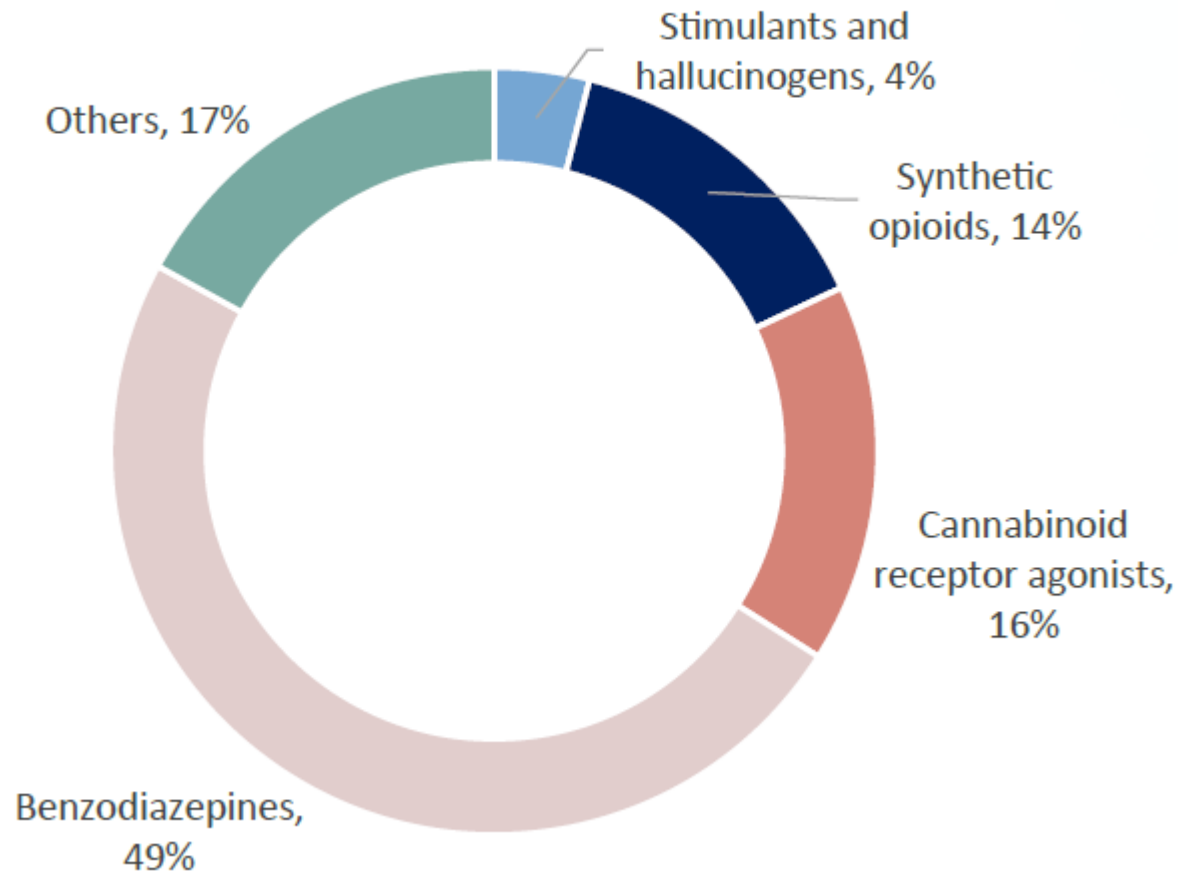
Website

<https://www.unodc.org/LSS/Home/NPS>



UNODC EWA Toxicology Portal

Figure 6. Effect groups of NPS associated with fatalities




Toxicology Portal


UNODC-TIAFT collaboration

- ❖ NPS Use Data
- ❖ Substance Combinations
- ❖ Sharing of Toxicology Data
- ❖ Symptoms
- ❖ Information on Harm
- ❖ Threat Assessments

Recent manuals and publications

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GLOBAL SMART UPDATE



Afghanistan's 'tablet K' – a forensic insight into an emerging synthetic drug market


EN

VOLUME 26
January 2022

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Current NPS Threats

Volume IV
November 2021



Number of substances reported

- No data available
- 1 - 10
- 11 - 50
- 51 - 100
- 101 - 200
- 201 - 500
- 501 - 500

Figure 3. UNODC Early Warning Advisory NPS Portal database
Data: Number of NPS reported by country/territory, 2021*

UNODC Early Warning Advisory Toxicology Highlights

- Over 1100 NPS from 133 countries and territories have been reported to the UNODC Early Warning Advisory on New Psychoactive Substances
- Benzodiazepine-type substances are a primary NPS threat, identified in 69% of toxicology cases
- Poly-drug use continues to be a major feature of toxicology reports, particularly in cases concerning fatalities and driving under the influence of drugs

2021

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Synthetic Drugs in East and Southeast Asia

Latest developments and challenges

2022



Global SMART Programme

Please find more publications here:

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/scientists/publications-smart.html>



Thank you!

UNODC - Making the world safer from drugs, crime and terrorism

Email

unodc-globalsmart@un.org

Websites

www.unodc.org/unodc/en/scientists/index.html

www.unodc.org/unodc/en/opioid-crisis/

www.unodc.org/nps