

Testing and Monitoring Illicit Substances in Different Settings

The Rapid and Precise Intelligence on Drugs (RAPID) drug monitoring system began in 2019 as an attempt to disrupt a moribund policy environment focussed on individualised drug checking. Advocates and opponents were dead-locked about whether drug checking was sending “the wrong message”. Although drug checking has been in operation in the European Union for some time, only two Australian jurisdictions (ACT and QLD) allow individualised drug checking. In Victoria, RAPID has introduced research methods to bring research-informed harm reduction strategies into this arena, whilst also abiding by drug laws. RAPID is a test-bed for different ways to collect and analyse data to document the illicit drug market. This seminar reports on the work of RAPID to monitor Victoria’s drug market, while the policy debate over individualised drug checking continues. The discussion will have implications for surveillance strategies with marginalised populations, trends in population-level early warning systems, the laws pertaining to drug checking and the relationship between research and Government practice.

Thursday July 27 2023
12pm - 1pm (AEST)

Seminar Room 515
Level 5, 207 Bouverie St
Carlton, VIC 3053

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A/Prof John Fitzgerald

Associate Professor Fitzgerald is an expert in Alcohol and Drug Policy. He has disciplinary expertise in ethnography, social science research methods, continental philosophy, discourse analysis, network analysis and health promotion.

Between 2009 and 2012 John took leave from the University to join the leadership at VicHealth, the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. John returned to The University of Melbourne to continue his research and teaching.

Since 2019 John has led multi-disciplinary research into illicit drug early warning systems. In 2020 his second book, *Life in Pain: Affective Economy and the Demand for Pain Relief* was published by Springer.