

MONTH 2 REPORT

18 May to 30 June 2024

CheQpoint is a voluntary, free, and confidential drug checking service funded by Queensland Health, operated by QuiHN, QuiVAA and The Loop Australia.

Drug checking (also known as pill testing) is a harm reduction service that allows anyone who uses drugs to submit samples for chemical analysis and get reliable information about the contents of products they are intending to use.

CheQpoint offers optional health and harm reduction conversations with results to help people make more informed decisions about the drugs they are intending to use. For more information about our services, go to <https://www.quihn.org/cheqpoint/> or email cheqpoint@quihn.org.au.

- CheQpoint (Brisbane) opened on 19th April, 2024. We are open from 2:00pm - 6:00pm every Friday.
- CheQpoint (Gold Coast) opened on 5 July, 2024. We are open from 2:00pm - 6:00pm every Thursday.

We can analyse a small amount taken from pills, powders, crystals, liquids and blotters while people wait. We cannot analyse plants or fungus (e.g. cannabis or mushrooms), confectionery (e.g. gummies or cookies) or used drug paraphernalia (e.g. 'baggies' or injecting equipment).

Steroids cannot be analysed onsite. People who use steroids and other performance or image enhancing drugs can submit samples for testing as part of a research project conducted in partnership with Griffith University.

SERVICE OVERVIEW

In our second month at Brisbane, **46 people** attended **41 visits in total** (occasions where people came to have drugs tested).

We tested **82 samples** expected to be either '**psychoactive drugs**' (66 samples) or '**steroids**' (16 samples).

Table 1. Service delivery overview for month 2 at CheQpoint (Brisbane)

| Service delivery overview | | |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Visits to CheQpoint (all presentations) | number | range |
| Psychoactive drug presentations (visits) | 37 visits | - |
| <i>Number of people who brought in psychoactive drugs *</i> | <i>42 people</i> | <i>1-2 people per visit</i> |
| Steroid presentations (visits) | 4 visits | - |
| <i>Number of people who brought in steroids</i> | <i>4 people</i> | <i>1 person per visit</i> |
| Service delivery times (psychoactive drugs only) | time (mins) | range |
| Average wait time (arrival to drop-off) | 16 minutes | 1-85 minutes |
| Average time spent with client/s | 26 minute | 1-62 minutes |
| Samples presented for testing (82 samples) | number | range |
| Psychoactive drugs | 66 samples | - |
| <i>Average number of drug samples per visit</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>1-7 samples</i> |
| Steroids and other performance or image enhancing drugs [#] | 16 samples | - |
| <i>Average number of steroid samples per visit</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>1-10 samples</i> |

* Total number of visitors includes the primary client plus anyone that attended with them

[#] Steroids were analysed off-site as part of a research project to understand what methods are best to detect performance or image enhancing drugs

RESULTS

Most samples were analysed using Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy, except drugs expected to be LSD or similar compounds. For these, our chemists used an Ehrlich reagent test designed to identify the presence of indoles like LSD and its related compounds. In some cases, other reagent tests (e.g. Marquis, Mandelin, Liebermann's, Mecke) and fentanyl test strips were used in combination with FTIR to inform results. All samples were transferred to Griffith Analytical Facility for secondary laboratory analysis.

What we found

We analysed all 66 samples expected to contain psychoactive drugs. About two-thirds (69%) of all samples analysed were expected to be stimulant drugs like MDMA (29%), methamphetamine (20%), and cocaine (20%).

- The 'expected drug' was detected in 55 samples (86%) - this was the only ingredient we identified for 46 samples
- One or more unexpected psychoactive drugs were present in 4 samples (6%) - these included substitutes like 4-CMC (expected MDMA), a mixture consistent with 'tusi' (expected 2C-B), caffeine in cocaine, and 1,4-butanediol (expected GHB)
- Inactive ingredients (e.g. 'fillers' or binding agents) were detected with the 'expected drug' in 10 samples (15%)
- One sample expected to be methamphetamine contained no psychoactive substances (1.5%)
- Results were inconclusive for 5 samples (8%) - these required secondary analysis (laboratory results pending)

In four cases where we did not find any of the 'expected drug' present, all clients reported they would dispose of their drugs after receiving their results.

Table 2. Summary of results by expected drug type (month 2)

| All samples analysed on-site (66 samples) | | Onsite testing results (FTIR and Reagent testing) | |
|--|---------------|--|--|
| Expected drug type | Total samples | Expected drug detected | Other substances detected (e.g. unexpected psychoactive substances or inactive 'fillers') |
| MDMA | 19 | 18 | 1x 4-CMC (no MDMA detected)* 5x samples returned positive results for MDMA + inactive ingredients: 2x MDMA + MSM (a supplement) 1x MDMA + sucrose (sugar) 2x MDMA + cellulose (a binding agent) - 1x whole tablet, 1x turquoise powder sold as 'MDMA powder' |
| Methamphetamine | 13 | 11 | 1x inconclusive result (possible rock salt) - further testing required 1x sucrose (sugar) - no methamphetamine detected |
| Cocaine | 13 | 13 | 1x caffeine + some cocaine (note: primary drug was caffeine) 3x samples returned positive results for cocaine + creatine (an inactive filler) |
| Ketamine | 6 | 6 | 1x sample returned a positive result for ketamine + creatine (an inactive filler) |

| All samples analysed on-site (66 samples) | | Onsite testing results (FTIR and Reagent testing) | |
|--|---------------|--|--|
| Expected drug type | Total samples | Expected drug detected | Other substances detected (e.g. unexpected psychoactive substances or inactive 'fillers') |
| Alprazolam tablets (Kalma / Xanax) | 3 | secondary analysis required | Benzodiazepines occur at low concentration in tablets and may not be detected by FTIR We did get 1x low quality match for etizolam (a novel benzodiazepine) - secondary analysis required |
| 2C-B | 2 | 1 | 1x mixture consistent with 'tusi' (caffeine + ketamine + MDMA) - no 2C-B** |
| GBL | 1 | 1 | |
| GHB | 1 | Nil | 1x 1,4-butanediol (1,4-B) - no GHB detected |
| Heroin | 1 | 1 | |
| Diazepam tablets (Valium or Antenex) | 1 | 1 | 1x low quality match for diazepam + binding agent (lactose) - diazepam result confirmed by secondary analysis |
| DMT | 1 | 1 | |
| LSD | 1 | 1 | Onsite reagent test indicated that an indole [^] consistent with LSD was present |
| MDA | 1 | 1 | |
| Cannabidiol (CBD) | 1 | secondary analysis required | CBD tends to occur in low concentration in oil solutions and may not be detected by FTIR |
| Expected drug unknown (e.g. 'found') | 2 | n/a | 1x MDMA, 1x ketamine |
| All drugs | 66 | 55 | 'Expected drug' was not detected in 4 samples - no psychoactive substance detected in 1 sample Unexpected psychoactive drugs were detected in 4 samples Inactive ingredients detected with the 'expected drug' in 10 samples^{^^} |

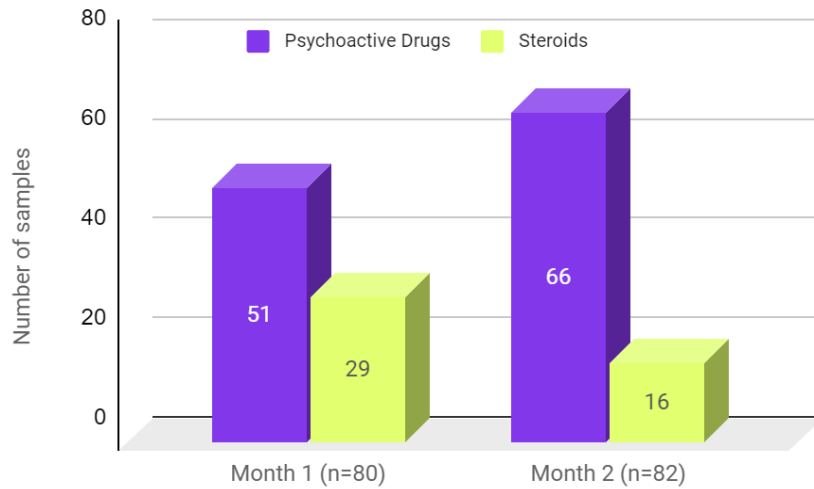
* Sample containing unexpected 4-CMC (no MDMA) was confirmed to be a scraping from a white / very pale green 'Tesla' tablet obtained from the 'dark web' in January 2024.

** 'Tusi' is usually a mix of dissociative and stimulant drugs, often miss-sold as 2C-B (but ingredients vary widely) - for more information see our 'Tusi notification' (26 July) online.

[^] 'Indoles' are psychedelic substances like LSD and related compounds.

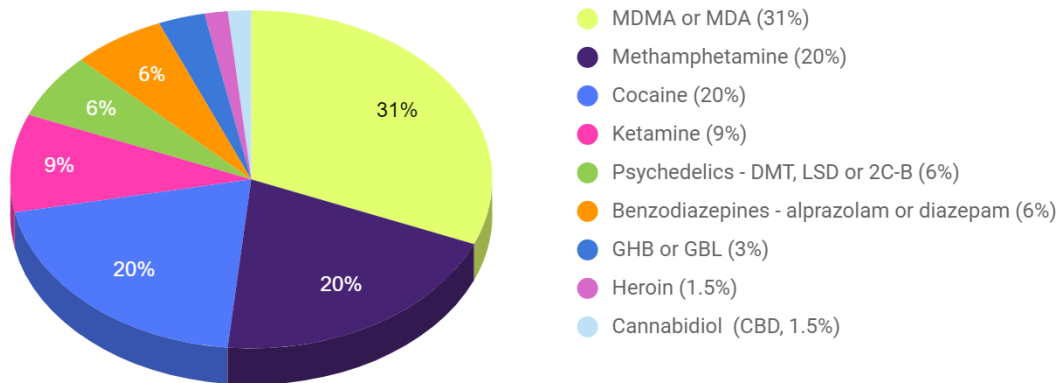
^{^^} Inactive fillers in powders / crystals included: MSM and creatine (supplements), sucrose (sugar) and cellulose (a binding agent). Binding agents in tablets included cellulose and lactose.

Figure 1. Overview of samples presented to CheQpoint Brisbane since April 2024 (by month)



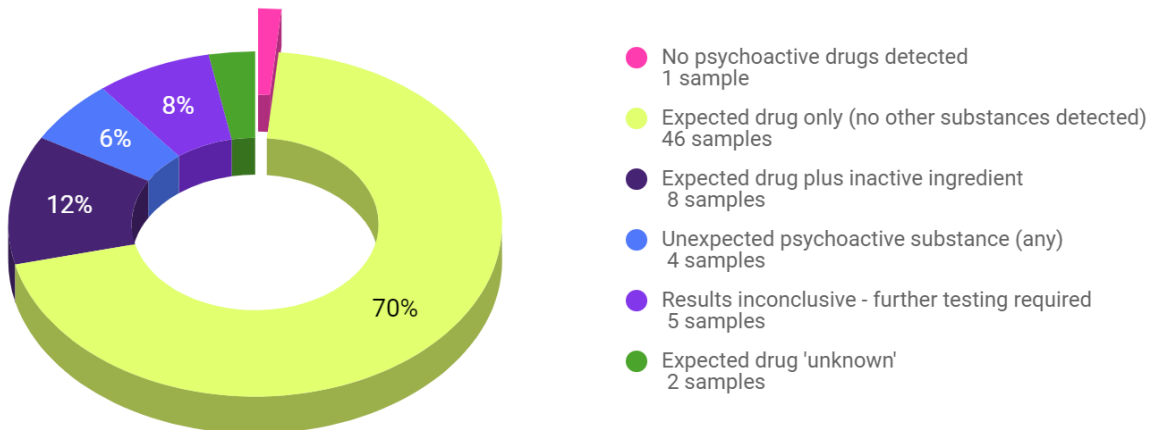
Total samples presented in months 1 and 2 (164 samples)

Figure 2. Summary of what people thought was in their drugs before we tested them (month 2)



Note: excludes 2 samples where clients were 'unsure' what was in their drugs (percentages based on a total of 64 samples)

Figure 3. Summary of what we found - results for all samples analysed onsite (month 2)



Percentages based on all samples analysed onsite at CheQpoint Brisbane (66 samples in total)