
Citywide – Drugs Crisis Campaign
Current Trends in Drug Use - 18th November 2020

Street tablet use in Ireland: A Trendspotter study on use, markets, and harms. (2020)

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Methodology:

- The study adopted the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) Trendspotter methodology and was undertaken between May and September 2019.
- Bearing in mind the aims of the study and the research objectives, the following methods were used:
 - Collection of bibliographic and other data:
 - An online survey (questionnaire addressed to national experts)
 - Presentations at an expert meeting
 - Focus groups set up at an expert meeting.



What are street tablets?



The main categories of drugs that Irish harm reduction services usually receive reports on in relation to street tablets are:

- **Benzodiazepines:** A class of psychoactive drugs prescribed for panic disorder, general anxiety disorder, insomnia, and alcohol withdrawal. Examples of benzodiazepines include diazepam, alprazolam, and flurazepam.
- **Z-drugs:** A class of non-benzodiazepine hypnotics, such as zolpidem, zopiclone, and zaleplon. As with benzodiazepines, Z-drugs are commonly used as a front-line treatment for insomnia.
- **Gabapentinoids (pregabalin/gabapentin):** A class of drugs licensed for the treatment of epilepsy, postherpetic neuralgia, fibromyalgia, neuropathic pain, and general anxiety disorder.



Use and patterns of use of street tablets²



People who use and motivations for use:

- People who use opioids
- Prison population
- People with complex and multiple needs
- Young people



Harm associated with the use of street tablets



A number of physical, mental, and social harms are associated with the non-medical use of pharmaceuticals. As previously mentioned, drugs which are commonly misused in tablet or capsule form in Ireland include benzodiazepines, Z-drugs, and gabapentinoids.

Individual harms in Ireland

- Non-fatal emergency hospital cases involving medications
- Intentional drug overdoses involving pregabalin or gabapentin
- Drug-related deaths involving medications



Recommendations from 'Street tablet use in Ireland: A Trendspotter study on use, markets, and harms.' (2020)



- Metrics should be meaningful: Non-fatal emergency hospital cases involving medications
- One size does not fit all:
- Consider market satisfaction as a means of market control:
- Data monitoring and sharing.



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Download the Trendspotter report from:

<https://www.aldp.ie/resources/downloads/>

Thank you!