

**Club
Health¹³**
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**The 13th International
Club Health Conference**

Abstract



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ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Sexually-transgressive behaviour in nightlife settings: results from a survey in Flanders

Sexual harassment and sexual violence in nightlife are an increasingly pressing global issue with serious ramifications for wellbeing, public health, human rights, and gender equality. The development of effective prevention and response strategies requires reliable data on the incidence, nature, contexts and effects of victimization. To this end, a survey was conducted with 750 Flemish residents (50% women aged 18-49 sample representative for the Flemish population along gender, age, and education level). It explored experiences with and responses to different types of sexually-transgressive behaviour for two time periods (last 12 months and during one's lifetime) and across different nightlife contexts. The findings reveal that experiences with sexually-transgressive behaviour are widespread across nightlife settings. Prevalence rates were significantly higher for women (86% of women experienced sexually-transgressive behaviour in nightlife in their lifetime and 44% in the last 12 months, compared to 46% and 22% of men, respectively) and young people (18-29-year-olds were victimized almost twice as often in the past 12 months compared to older age groups). Furthermore, while multiple strategies are used to cope with feelings of unsafety on a night out, incidents of sexual-transgressive behaviour are very rarely reported (only 2.5% of victims and 6% of witnesses reported incidents). The results further show that the reasons for not reporting such cases vary as a function of gender, age, and type of behaviour. These results have important implications for public policy and for the intervention design aiming to ensure a safe nightlife for all.

Embracing multi-method approaches for enhanced drug intelligence

Understanding the complex drug phenomenon—including supply, demand, security, and health—demands innovative, multidimensional research strategies. Single-method approaches are often insufficient, emphasizing the importance of a multi-method system that triangulates diverse data sources while integrating qualitative and quantitative findings. Enhanced drug intelligence supports dynamic surveillance in fast-paced environments like nightlife settings, facilitates risk identification through data integration, and enables the implementation of targeted interventions. Objectives: Our scoping review examines the existing landscape of multi-method and multi-data methodologies used in studies addressing the drug phenomenon. By mapping these approaches, the review explores their prevalence over time and evaluates the motivations driving their adoption. Key questions include: Are multi-method approaches truly as widespread and versatile as they appear? Do they substantively and/or significantly enhance understanding and decision-making in this field? Methods: The review adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines, with the a priori protocol developed in accordance with Joanna Briggs Institute recommendations. Searches were conducted in PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar for articles published between 1 January 2000 and 8 October 2024. Results: The review underscores the potential of the methodologies examined to address the multifaceted nature of the drug phenomenon. It evaluates their effectiveness, providing key insights into their future applications in real-time monitoring and rapid drug assessment across diverse settings, including nightlife. By doing so, this scoping review lays the groundwork for developing advanced multi-method models to enhance drug intelligence.

EMMA BARTON

Public Health Wales

Wales

Emma Barton, Bryony Parry and Lara Snowdon

What works to engage men and boys in violence prevention?

Historically, initiatives to prevent violence often presented violence as a “women’s issue” and focused on teaching women and girls to “protect” themselves, largely neglecting the role of men and boys. In recent years there has been a global shift, with efforts to engage men and boys in violence prevention growing rapidly. Yet there is little understanding on what works to engage men and boys in violence prevention programmes in Wales. To understand what works, the VPU have produced a toolkit for engaging men and boys in violence prevention. The toolkit comprises of three elements: (1) a report on key findings from eight test and learn projects that were commissioned by Plan International UK, (2) a review of 39 programmes in Wales, and (3) an interactive infographic. Overall, the toolkit offers a comprehensive core set of considerations devised for professionals to work positively with men and boys in violence prevention. These considerations include taking a gender transformative approach, using an intersectional lens, ensuring cultural relevance, and using a trauma informed approach. These considerations are considered crucial in the development and delivery of violence prevention programmes aimed at engaging men and boys, in the night time economy and beyond. Men and boys have a vital role to play in the prevention of violence, as allies and ambassadors.

EMMA BARTON

Public Health Wales

Wales

Bryony Parry, Lara Snowdon and Alex Walker

Engaging men as prosocial bystanders in the nighttime economy: behavioural insights research for sexual harassment prevention

Sexual harassment is a form of gender-based violence frequently supported by misogynistic attitudes and beliefs that promote harmful or violent behaviour. Through a series of #SafetoSay campaigns, the Wales Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) aimed to encourage pro-social bystander behaviour to prevent sexual harassment in South Wales' nighttime economy. Evaluation of the campaigns indicated that some men found the messaging problematic and responded negatively. As such, further work was undertaken to understand the experiences of men in the nighttime economy, to ascertain the facilitators and barriers to prosocial bystander behaviour. Interviews and focus groups conducted with 48 men explored motivations, values and beliefs holding behaviours in place which may be impacting on willingness to intervene. The research identified five personas capturing barriers and motivations, for different groups of men, to active bystander behaviour in nightlife settings. Collaborating with Public Health Wales' Behavioural Science Unit, barriers and motivators were mapped against the COM-B model to identify needs related to capability, opportunity, and motivation. Understanding active bystander behaviour using behavioural science methods can help to support campaign and intervention development by eliciting rich insight into the target audience and behaviour change techniques (BCTs). This presentation will introduce the five personas: 'safety in numbers', 'gut reaction', 'world as a dangerous place', 'protected bubble', and 'too much to lose', consider the physical, psychological, social, reflective, and automatic barriers associated with each persona and discuss BCTs that could be adopted to improve the targeting and relevance of campaigns and interventions to prevent sexual harassment.

Trimbos Institute

Netherlands

Marloes van Goor and Roos Capel

The Pro's and Cons of Online Prevention

Online (social) media platforms offer a convenient way to quickly reach younger audience with information on substance use risks. Young adults heavily rely on online platforms for information, and to engage with like-minded peers. They also turn to social media for health-related queries, drawn by factors like accessibility, peer influence, anonymity, and visual content. However, while online media provide easy and anonymous access to drug-related information, concerns arise regarding its reliability. Users might encounter inaccurate or harmful content, depending on their interests and peer groups. Online prevention activities can offer a counterweight to misinformation, biased and normalising content (suggesting that 'everyone' uses drugs). However, it could also reach a demographic for which drug prevention messages are not relevant, which could inspire curiosity in viewers: a result that should be avoided. In this presentation, we will discuss the online presence established by the Trimbos Institute over the past decade. Under the brand "Drugs and Partying," the institute runs a website and social media accounts (Instagram and TikTok). Keeping up with the ever-changing online landscape is essential, specifically to be able to connect with several generations of young adults. Our online presence is internationally unique in the way we directly target and engage them. But it does come with its challenges and lessons learned. In this presentation we will discuss the possibilities and challenges associated with drug prevention activities through social media.

LENA BOONS

Leuven Institute of Criminology

Belgium

We Care A Lot: insights and strategies on health prevention at big events and festivals

Festivals are all about experiencing music together - singing, dancing, and celebrating. To make sure everyone -visitors, crew, artists, and others - feels safe and can fully enjoy the event, safety comes first. That's why major Belgian festivals launched We Care A Lot, a project focused on prevention and awareness.

It covers topics like alcohol and drug use, hearing protection, safe sex, and consent. By working together with medical teams, security and police, festivals take proactive steps to reduce risks and create a safer, more inclusive environment. We Care A Lot is about shared responsibility. Visitors are encouraged to take care of themselves and each other. And if something goes wrong, help is always available - without judgment.

This keynote explores key health and safety challenges at large events and shares insights from We Care A Lot. What are the biggest obstacles? What actually works? And how can event organizers take action?

JULIE CALUWAERTS

Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Belgium

Lucas Melgaço

Who Gets to Feel Safe? Care Teams, Sexual Harassment, and Shifting Approaches to Safety at Public Gatherings

In a response to growing concerns around (sexual) harassment, substance-related harm, and social exclusion in settings of public gatherings, event-organisers have increasingly implemented *care* and/or *awareness teams* in nightlife, festivals and other urban events. These initiatives are often established as a response to public pressure, alarming statistics on sexual violence and harassment and the growing demand for inclusive and trust-based safety infrastructures. Those teams are non-policing, on-site collectives aspiring to offer emotional support, preventative interventions, and assistance. They are often paired with the creation of *safe(r) spaces*, rooted in feminist, anti-racist and LGBTQ+ community movements, aiming to create inclusive, low-threshold environments for those exposed to harm during going out. Together, these practices reflect a shift toward community care and harm reduction, moving beyond and in contrast with more traditional securitized or more *surveillance-heavy* approaches to safety. This contribution draws on two ongoing research strands: (1) preliminary findings from ongoing interviews with professionals involved in the organization, the effective practice and coordinators of care teams as well as field observations in different contexts of going out in Belgium conducted as part of Master's thesis in Urban Studies (by Smilla Desmet, VUB) and (2) qualitative insights from the *EU-funded GATHERINGS project*, including focus groups with citizens and socially vulnerable event-goers in Austria, Bulgaria and Greece. Findings indicate that care-based approaches are often perceived as more approachable and supportive than traditional security measures, particularly by those who experience barriers to seeking help in conventional policing contexts. This presentation speaks to several key themes of the Club Health Conference, including night life safety, harm reduction, mental health, diversity and inclusion, and violence prevention. It aims to contribute to international debates on how we design safer nightlife and other *going out* environments without reproducing exclusion or compromising freedom.

Implementing STAD in The Netherlands: key insights from professionals in the nightlife setting

In The Netherlands, drug use and excessive alcohol use in the nightlife setting poses a significant societal challenge. Consequences of such use not only affect the individual, but also other patrons within the premises and the surrounding environment. Examples include vandalism, aggression, (sexual) harassment, as well health-related incidents such as hearing damage, physical injuries and loss of consciousness. To target these concerns, the Swedish STAD (STockholm prevents Alcohol and Drugs problems) intervention has proven to be effective in reducing alcohol-related harm through the use of a multicomponent approach. In the coming four years, the Trimbos Institute, along with two other national organizations, will lead the adaptation, further development, implementation, and research of the STAD intervention in The Netherlands, tailoring it to the Dutch nightlife context. Successful implementation will depend on the collaboration and support of key stakeholders, including police, local enforcement, municipal policymakers, bar staff, and prevention workers specializing in Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) training, who will provide valuable input and resources for the intervention's success. In this presentation, key findings will be shared from preparatory interviews conducted with stakeholders across the nightlife setting. These have provided us with insights into their attitudes, perceived obstacles and opportunities regarding collaboration in a multicomponent approach. The findings will be taken into account when implementing the STAD intervention in The Netherlands, promoting the chances of effectively reducing alcohol and drug-related harm in nightlife.

ANEMIE COONE

HOGENT

Belgium

Preventive initiatives towards a safer nightlife: what works?

The EUPC, (European Prevention Curriculum) disseminated by the EUDA (European Union Drug Agency) and the different European member States, is a curriculum developed for Decision, Opinion and Policy makers (DOPs) in the drug prevention field and this to improve the effectiveness of prevention interventions. It is based on several international tools such as the United Nations International Standards and the European Drug Prevention Quality Standards (EDPQS). It gives an insight in the basics of prevention science and describes what works and doesn't work in (drug) prevention. In this talk, we will outline some environmental based interventions, described in the EUPC, that address the nightlife setting. Next to this, we will have a look at the roles of the different involved stakeholders in a collaboration towards a more healthy and safer nightlife. We think about stakeholders in the field of law enforcement, social work, local governments etc. We will have a look in what works in the drug prevention field, targeting the nightlife setting, described by the EUPC and other international tools (cf. Frontline Politeia).

How does participation in music events impact social well-being among homeless young adults who use psychoactive substances?

Homeless young adults (HYA) with problematic psychoactive substance use are disproportionately at risk to experience challenges relative to social well-being (e.g. belongingness, social exclusion). Few of them consult psychosocial services and rather tend to rely on personal resources to promote their well-being. Yet, research is centred on their difficulties and little remains known about how HYA address these challenges. Literature suggests that music is an important resource that helps young adults promote their global well-being, yet its role among HYA remains underexplored. In addition, anterior research is largely focused on individual musical activities like music listening, while failing to consider social activities, including participation in music events. This study aimed to describe and understand how participation in music events relate to the well-being of homeless young adults, while paying particular attention to the social dimension of well-being. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with 15 homeless young adults to explore the links between music and social well-being. Following a thematic analysis, results revealed that beyond the risks of PS use that are often associated with festive events, music events can also promote social cohesion, a sense of belonging and reduce isolation among highly marginalized individuals. Taking part in music events can also facilitate the management of social stressors by exposing young adults to positive social encounters. A better comprehension of the role of music events on the social well-being of homeless young adults could reduce the stigma associated with their participation in music events and guide the development of adapted interventions.

Safer Nightlife in Numbers

The Vienna Club Commission's 2023 survey on safety in Viennese nightlife provided key insights through descriptive statistics. Building on this foundation, this project carried out an advanced analysis of the 2,200 survey responses, exploring correlations and creating visually engaging outputs. Additionally, focus groups of local experts and party goers convened to gain qualitative insights from diverse perspectives. The results inform overall safety strategies in Vienna, as well as inform ongoing measures as well as the recent amendment to Vienna event law which requires a mandatory 'Awareness Concept' for events. The study addresses two research questions: What factors contribute most significantly to feelings of (in)security among at-risk groups in Vienna's nightlife? Which strategies are perceived as most effective and demonstrate empirical efficacy? Key objectives include identifying patterns in the survey data, understanding the factors influencing safety perceptions, and exploring interventions to enhance nightlife safety. The mixed-methods approach integrates statistical analysis, regression modelling, and thematic analysis of focus group discussions. The project aspires to support the VCC's mission of fostering a safe and inclusive nightlife culture by providing evidence-based strategies and recommendations. Insights gained will inform long-term educational programs and initiatives aimed at reducing harm and improving safety for all participants in Vienna's vibrant nightlife. Moreover, the outcomes will be positioned to inspire broader international efforts to enhance urban nightlife.

STEVEN DEBBAUT

Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Belgium

Tom Decorte, Cis Dewaele and Frédérique Bawin

THE XTC-EXPO: An immersive experience and public research on XTC regulation

Belgium, a major global MDMA producer, faces ongoing concerns about illicit MDMA production and use, and related individual, societal and environmental harms. In response, the citizen movement SMART on Drugs launched the “XTC-EXPO” in Ghent as an immersive public research project to explore alternative regulatory approaches. Building on Dutch initiatives, the XTC-EXPO featured three scenarios for MDMA retail — via a smartshop, a pharmacy, and a club/festival setting — plus a fourth space depicting the illicit status quo. Visitors, including policymakers and health professionals, engaged with each scenario’s interactive design. Researchers employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to gauge public acceptance, capture perceptions of risks and benefits, and foster dialogue on MDMA regulation. Educational resources informed participants about harm reduction, health risks, and policy frameworks. This presentation outlines the key findings of the XTC-EXPO, highlighting how immersive experiences can encourage nuanced public debate on drug regulation. We will discuss how participants evaluated feasibility, stakeholder buy-in, and the potential impacts on public health and safety. Finally, we reflect on the implications of these findings for evidence-based drug policy reform in Belgium and beyond.

MATTHIAS DERMOUT

Flow

Belgium

Adriaan Doutrepont

Enhancing Safety and Well-being in Nightlife: Flow's Care Team Approach in the Overpoort, Ghent

Flow, in collaboration with the City of Ghent, operates a care team in the bustling Overpoort nightlife district during peak student party nights. The Overpoort, home to a wide variety of bars and clubs, is the city's most frequented student nightlife area. To ensure a safer and more supportive environment, Flow deploys a team of eight professionals who work closely with the local police from 11 PM to 5 AM, staffing a first aid post and patrolling the street. Our team provides on-the-spot care for those in need, offering first aid and harm reduction, ensuring broken glass stays off the street, and engaging with students who require support. In more serious situations, we contact emergency services. During police interventions, Flow positions itself within the perimeter, ensuring crowd control and preventing potential escalations. In addition to the oral presentation at the conference, we would like to offer participants the opportunity to visit the Overpoort in person during one of these nights. This will provide first-hand insight into our work and the dynamics of nightlife safety management in a real-world setting.

NATASHA DEWULF

Ghent University

Belgium

Pieter Leloup

Perceptions of security guards in nightlife settings among young people: an exploratory study of image, professionalism and compliance.

While considerable research has been conducted on young people's perceptions of the police, much less attention has been given to how they perceive their relationship with private security guards. In the context of nightlife, however, young people frequently interact with so-called bouncers or doormen. The question of how young people view and understand the roles, authority, and interventions of these security guards remains largely unexplored. This preliminary study investigates the relationship between young people and security guards in the nightlife scene in Flanders. A total of seven focus groups and two interviews were conducted, involving 52 participants aged 14 to 23. The findings provide new insights into how young people perceive the presence, behaviour, and interventions of these security actors, as well as the extent to which they comply with them. Additionally, the results highlight the working conditions and challenges faced by security guards themselves. Because of this, we offer several policy recommendations, emphasizing that the perceived legitimacy of security guards' roles directly impacts their ability to effectively perform their tasks.

ADRIAAN DOUTREPONT

Flow

Belgium

Matthias Dermout and Carl Vandebotermiet

Creating Safe Spaces and Managing Nightlife: Ghent's Approach to Safety, Sexual Misconduct, and Harm Reduction at the Gentse Feesten

The Gentse Feesten, a ten-day free festival, brings unique challenges to Ghent's city centre. With 1.7 million visitors in 2024 and no controlled entry points, crowd management is essential. Most festival areas close at 2 AM, except for Trefpunt (5 AM, 8 AM on the last day) and Vlasmarkt (8 AM, 10 AM on the last day). The city works with police, the Red Cross, fire brigade, public transport, and "Sfeerbeheer" peer monitors to ensure safety. Since 2022, Ghent has supported a Safe(r) Space between Trefpunt and Vlasmarkt to prevent sexual misconduct. Flow, focused on creating a safe, positive environment, will discuss the space's setup, staff selection and training, and collaboration with police, hospitals, and "Sfeerbeheer." They will address who uses the Safe(r) Space and the best ways to support them. Flow will also discuss its approach to managing public spaces using harm reduction methods for drug-related issues. By involving peers, "Sfeerbeheer" can de-escalate nearly 90% of incidents. Flow's insights come from work in Ghent's nightlife district and recreational parks, overcoming challenges from federal restrictions and private security rules. This presentation will showcase Ghent's proactive approach to festival safety, including methods for handling sexual misconduct and drug-related concerns at this open, citywide event.

HAZEL LINCY EBENEZER

Health Diplomats

India

Delon Human

Saving Lives Like Sweden

Even after decades of tobacco control, an estimated 1.3 billion people still use tobacco. Tobacco kills up to half of its users, with nearly 8 million people dying worldwide each year due to tobacco-related causes, and 200 million years of life are lost. Global public health has set as a goal a 'smoke free' future by 2040, where 5% or less of the adult population smoke in any given country. Most countries fall woefully short of this target. There is one exception, the country of Sweden. Thanks to the Swedish way of making alternative smoke-free nicotine products widely accessible, acceptable, and affordable, this country's smoking prevalence has fallen to 5.4%. In short, Sweden has been able to successfully combine tobacco control and harm reduction strategies. This report is a call to the WHO and global public health to study the harm reduction strategies so successfully employed by Sweden. The report examines the tobacco control objective of 'smoke free' and the current methods employed to achieve this goal. It further identifies relevant sources of data and the public health metrics needed to measure success. Sweden's blend of tobacco control and harm reduction strategies are examined and compared to the EU's tobacco control performance and selected other countries. Lastly, a recent consumer perception study in Sweden is highlighted, to show the importance of a whole-of-society approach and a deep understanding of consumer behaviour, to successfully address the challenge of the tobacco epidemic.

The Club Machinery

This article delves into the vibrant and dynamic world of partying in clubs. “The club machinery” is a metaphor suggested to unpack the complexity of what is happening in the nightlife setting, seen from a sociological viewpoint. In the UK, “The nighttime economy” is developed as a central term to explore the nightlife context and captures many important aspects. However, it does not capture all of what the nighttime setting is about. In this article, the aim is to develop the “The club machinery” as a metaphor to explore the nightlife in a way that expands the nighttime economy perspectives and include more sociological and cultural aspects. This article is based on data from the Oslo Nightlife study. In this nightlife study (conducted in 2014 and 2017), approximately 1100 persons were interviewed with questionnaires outside nightclubs, and in addition, qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted later with 35 young adults. Knowledge from different parts of this study is used to draw the picture of “The Club machinery”. In this article, the nightlife is viewed from different angles, and many different parts of the Club machinery is described to elaborate on what the club setting is all about. Not only the different parts (gears) of the machinery, but also what makes the machinery work. For instance, experiences from the Covid-19 pandemic have highlighted the importance of alcohol in clubs. “The club machinery” is described as a machinery with many different gears and explains the complexity of the nightlife setting beyond the nighttime economy.

Substance use, mental health, sexual harassment, and violence among staff at licensed premises – a cross-sectional study

Introduction: The nightlife environment poses significant risks for substance use, sexual harassment, and violence, affecting both guests and staff. Since 1996, STAD has implemented community-based interventions to reduce substance use-related problems, but the frequency of sexual violence and its impact on the mental health of nightlife staff in Stockholm remains understudied. This study investigates the prevalence of substance use, sexual violence, and their association with mental health among nightlife staff.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey of 658 nightlife staff participating in responsible beverage service training was conducted between 2019 and 2020. Questions addressed substance use and related problems (AUDIT, DUDIT), sexual violence, and mental distress (GHQ-12). Data were analyzed descriptively and using linear regression.

Results: Past-year illicit drug use was reported by 33.5% of respondents, with 51.4% and 19.6% experiencing alcohol- or drug-related problems, respectively, higher among women. Sexual harassment by colleagues was reported by 18.8% (verbal/non-physical), 15.1% (physical touching), and 2.4% (sexual abuse), with these experiences being more common among women. Violence, such as being threatened with a weapon (9.1%) or beaten (9.2%), was more common among men. Mental distress symptoms were reported by 16.1% of participants. Factors predicting mental distress included being female ($P<0.001$), experiencing alcohol-related problems ($P<0.001$), and experiencing unwanted sexual comments by a colleague ($P=0.034$).

Conclusions: Nightlife staff face significant risks of substance use, sexual harassment, and violence, which are associated with mental distress. Preventive measures targeting this group are critical to reduce these risks and support their well-being.

KAT FORD

Bangor University

Wales

Karen Hughes

Catherine Sharp and Lara Snowdon

Experience of being a bystander to violence in Wales: confidence and skills to respond and willingness to undertake training from a cross-sectional survey

Increasingly there has been a focus on challenging the social norms that support violence by encouraging the public to act as prosocial bystanders. Such approaches have been implemented within nightlife environments. However, there is limited evidence on how many people witness violence, their confidence and skills to respond, or their willingness to participate in bystander intervention training. Secondary analyses of cross-sectional data from the Time to Talk Public Health panel in Wales (June-July 2023). 1,053 unpaid respondents (aged 16+) completed the survey online, telephone, or face-to-face. Respondents were asked about witnessing seven types of violence in the past year, their confidence and skills in responding, and their willingness to attend bystander training. Over a third (35.9%) had witnessed any violence in the past year, with exposure varying by violence type from 4.0% witnessing sexual violence towards women to 23.0% observing verbal aggression between young people. Exposure had mixed relationships with respondent demographics, with witnessing sexual harassment was higher amongst females than males. Around a third reported having confidence and skills to intervene as a bystander for each violence type. Confidence in responding to verbal aggression among young people was higher among those exposed to it in the previous year. 65.9% reported that they were likely or very likely to attend face-to-face bystander training. Bystander interventions have been shown to be successful in nightlife settings. Further work is needed to boost the public's skills and confidence as prosocial bystanders, particularly as many are willing to attend training.

‘Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue’ – 2024 festivals update and instrument evaluation

Healthcare problems at music festivals are exacerbated by a high prevalence of drug and alcohol use, emphasizing the need for mobile, effective and fast analytical methods, to support harm reduction. Drug trends from last summer’s music festivals revealed a rise in the use of 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) and cocaine mixtures. Of note, xylazine was identified alongside other substances in different formulations – pink powder, blotters and white powder. Furthermore, substances such as 2,5-dimethoxy-4-bromophenethylamine (2C-B) and ketamine were seized in sprays, while a tryptamine analogue was seen in drops, indicating novel practices and highlighting possible evolving risks. The assessment of new portable instruments will be briefly discussed, while a new portable gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) system (Griffin G510x, Teledyne Flir) will be evaluated against its previous version (Griffin G510). A total of 215 street samples, some problematic for the G510 alongside various hallucinogens, benzodiazepines, and mixtures were analysed. Moreover, 58 samples were tested on-site at two major British music festivals. The G510x identified 72 % of the substances, showing improved detection capabilities compared to the G510 unit. While improvements reduced the analysis time and increased the sensitivity, some challenges persisted with a few mixtures and LSD samples – which continue to pose problems due to their very low concentrations. Nevertheless, the new portable instruments prove to be efficient for on-site analysis of illicit drugs. Their user friendly interface, low maintenance and short analysis time allow for fast and accurate results useful in harm reduction.

CARLA GARCIA

Crew 2000 Scotland

United Kingdom

Karenza Moore

"Take Ket? Let's Chat!" An overview and evaluation of a ketamine harm reduction campaign with Young People Who Use Drugs (YPWUD).

Ketamine use among 16-24-year-olds in England and Wales has tripled since 2017, while the number of ketamine users seeking treatment across the UK today is more than eight times higher than in 2014/2015. Social drug research is increasingly centring Young People Who Use Drugs (YPWUD) voices and experiences, echoing Youth Studies much-needed shift towards researching with young people, rather than about them. The Take Ket? Let's Chat! harm reduction resource and campaign centred the voices and experiences of the young people who participated in Safer Partying, a three-year mixed method study of UK and European Electronic Dance Music (EDM) cultures and spaces (raves, clubs, afterparties) post-pandemic (July 2021-July 2024). Safer Partying – a collaboration between Newcastle University and Crew – included an in-depth online targeted population survey (TPS) (n=527), a thematic analysis of a UK-Italy ketamine knowledge-sharing expert focus group with twelve harm reductionists, alongside participant observations at 45 (hard) techno events in the UK and Europe. Findings formed the basis for co-creating the Take Ket? Let's Chat! Resource which was 'tried and tested' in situ by and with young people at EDM events. After the successful Take Ket, Let's Chat! launch in September 2024, a second research project is underway from January 2025 to extend and evaluate the resource and campaign to include UK students who take ketamine. The student-focused campaign will be evaluated via participatory creative evaluation workshops and an online and in-situ TPS with students and relevant student union workers and university staff. This paper presents our evaluation findings.

MANUEL GARCÍA-RUIZ

CIES-Iscte Lisbon

Portugal

Spectacularized nocturnality: the eventification and touristification of the night through culture-led massive events

In recent decades the night has been increasingly instrumentalized within urban strategies aimed at its economic and symbolic valorisation. This process driven by policies of urban regeneration and tourist attraction has led to the eventification and touristification of the nocturnal landscape through festivals light spectacles and other ephemeral activations. This presentation will analyse the effects of these events on the construction of new nighttime narratives the appropriation and re-signification of urban spaces and the emerging tensions between the commodification of the night and its pre-existing social uses. Drawing from an ethnographic and comparative approach the discussion will explore cases from various global cities highlighting how the spectacularization of nocturnality reshapes the relationship between culture economy and territory within the context of aesthetic capitalism.

Night life of a city: An in situ pilot study of behavioural patterns of nightclub patrons in Zagreb

To ensure a safe nightlife environment, it is necessary to examine the nightlife context, determine the characteristics of their patrons, and assess the risks they face. Thus, the aim of this pilot study was to explore the behavioural patterns of nightclub patrons in Zagreb, and to evaluate whether in situ methodology is appropriate for the Croatian context. Data were collected in situ in six nightclubs in Zagreb, each featuring different programs and music genres. Depending on the size of a nightclub, every third or fifth person entering the club was approached and invited to participate in the study. If the person agreed (participation rate was 72.5%), a tablet was used to record their answers. In total, 372 participants (54.5% male $M_{age}=25.5$ $SD_{age}=5.76$) answered questions regarding their nightclub-going habits (i.e., frequency of going out, preferred music genres, average expenses, transportation methods from the venue), as well as their use of tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS). The average time to complete the questionnaire was 5 minutes, and participants were compensated with a taxi voucher for their participation. The results of this pilot study provide insights into the behavioural patterns of nightclub patrons in Zagreb which will be further discussed. This study also indicated that in situ methodology is a viable and effective approach for data collection in Croatian context.

JOHANNA GRIPENBERG

STAD

Sweden

Jennica Jonsson and Patrick Widell

Violence prevention in the Stockholm nightlife – the STAD approach

Brief overview: The STAD-collaboration in Stockholm has been ongoing since 1995 and is nowadays a formal written agreement between 7 stakeholders (the police, the municipality, the nightlife industry etc). The goal is to prevent violence and problems in connection to alcohol and drugs in the nightlife setting. The STAD approach has three elements, cooperation, training and enforcement. During the years, we have targeted more areas with the approach and today we also include the gym business, football arenas and the high school graduation event business. This session will discuss how community mobilization and actions within the network can affect violence and problems related to alcohol and other drugs. Presentation 1 (of 3) (17 min) The nightclub setting is a huge arena for people to connect and have fun. Good food, drinks and dance in combination with lots of people in a small area downtown has a lot of challenges. The STAD-collaboration in Stockholm wants to have a safe entertainment district and has been ongoing for 30 years. A study showed significant decrease in violence, 29 % by using Responsible Beverage Service. This presentation will discuss in what way lower intoxication among patrons can affect violence and be cost effective. The presentation will explain how collaboration, training and enforcement can be key activities to get a safer environment for both nightlife staff and patrons.

AYLA HAANAPPEL

Jellinek prevention

Netherlands

Isabel Wiltenburg and Ferdgie Imambaks

Nightlife Care Network: accessible support for Amsterdam's nightlife

The Nightlife Care Network (NCN) is a new initiative offering accessible support for individuals navigating nightlife's joys and challenges. While nightlife fosters connection and self-expression, it also raises difficulties. Issues such as problematic drug use, sexual harassment, and loneliness are common in nightlife settings and often overlap. The NCN offers consultation hours for nightlife consumers and workers, addressing a range of challenges or providing guidance on a monthly basis. The NCN is unique because it combines expertise in addiction care and substance use (Jellinek), social safety and inclusivity (Night Mayor Foundation Amsterdam), and support for mental health, loneliness and financial concerns (Neighbourhood Support Team Amsterdam/Centram). Consultations are led by professionals who, next to their own profession, bring direct experience in nightlife, creating a relatable and accessible environment that lowers barriers for seeking support. Individuals can (anonymously) make an appointment, or drop-in, for tailored advice or support. The NCN also signposts to relevant organizations if needed. Preliminary findings from the NCN pilot phase show the initiative supports individuals with concerns about drug use, mental health, loneliness and (sexual) harassment. Marginalized and at-risk groups have particularly benefited from the very accessible service, finding solutions through advice, referrals or a listening ear. By operating outside nightlife hours and bridging nightlife with local health services, the NCN highlights the value of embedding accessible local services in this unique domain. This presentation explores the NCN's development, collaboration model, and initial outcomes, showcasing its potential to enhance safety and wellbeing in nightlife settings.

Exploring parental influence on adolescent pre-drinking behaviour

Introduction: Pre-drinking, defined as the consumption of alcohol prior to social outings, has emerged as a prevalent trend among adolescents in Flanders. This phenomenon, driven by socialization, drunkenness, and cost-saving, presents a multitude of concerns. It is associated with peer pressure, increased alcohol-related health risks, and violations of underage drinking laws. Moreover, individuals who pre-drink tend to consume more alcohol during subsequent outings, exacerbating the risks of intoxication and associated complications. While parental behaviour has been shown to influence risky drinking behaviours in adolescents further research is necessary to explore its specific role in pre-drinking behaviour and to develop targeted interventions promoting responsible drinking habits among adolescents. The purpose of this study is to identify the determinants of adolescent pre-drinking behaviour with a focus on parental influence, including parenting styles, attitudes, and perceived peer norms, to inform preventive interventions targeting parents. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted, in which parents of adolescents aged 13–17 were surveyed using structured online questionnaires. The study measured variables including demographics, alcohol-related behaviours, and parenting practices. Concurrently, focus groups were conducted to further explore parents' strategies for addressing their children's alcohol use. **Results:** Preliminary survey analyses revealed that parental attitudes, communication strategies, and perceived norms regarding alcohol use play a role in parents' attitudes towards adolescent alcohol use. Focus groups highlighted that parents often lack awareness of alcohol legislation, with social norms heavily influencing their perspectives. For example, many parents assume that if other parents allow alcohol consumption, it must be acceptable, or they believe that their child will have access to alcohol elsewhere regardless of their own stance. Respondents emphasized that peer discussions help to dispel these uncertainties. Parents find reassurance in discovering that others hold similar views and appreciate the opportunity to receive evidence-based insights on parenting and promoting healthy alcohol-related behaviours from a scientific perspective. **Conclusion:** These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions that enhance parental awareness, provide accurate information on legislation, and facilitate opportunities for parents to connect and share perspectives.

BERT HAUSPIE

HOGENT University of Applied Sciences and Arts

Belgium

Nicky Dirkx

Care teams by night: exploring the role of care teams in the context of a safer nightlife

The concept of 'care teams' is increasingly gaining ground in nightlife and at music festivals. It can be considered as a response to one or more aspects within the framework of a safer nightlife such as gender-based violence, sexual harassment, discrimination, spiking, use of (il)legal substances, etc. Nevertheless, care teams appears to be implemented in many different ways. Therefore the 'care teams by night' project aims to focus on the role of these initiatives regarding a safer nightlife. More specifically, there will be a focus on a better understanding of the concept of care teams and what initiatives are already being used in practice, including how these initiatives are embedded. Furthermore, the research has the specific aim of studying the perception of and experience with care teams among various relevant actors, such as partygoers, care team workers and other nightlife stakeholders. Finally, the research will focus on good practices and which success factors play a role, in order to be able to provide tools to the nightlife sector and intermediaries for the implementation of care teams in nightlife. During the presentation, the background and research design will be explained in more detail. In addition, the opportunity will be taken to explore the concept of care teams within the context of a safer nightlife among the audience, including their perceptions and experiences around this research topic.

EVELYN HEARNE

Liverpool John Moores University

United Kingdom

Perceptions of safety and experiences of prejudice and violence against LGBTQIA+ people in heteronormative nightlife settings: Preliminary Findings

We present preliminary findings of our study which explores staff and patrons' perceptions of safety and experiences of prejudice and violence against LGBTQIA+ people in heteronormative nightlife settings in a UK city. Whilst acceptance and inclusivity of LGBTQIA+ people within UK society, policy, and law has increased over time, LGBTQIA+ people still remain at higher risk of hate crimes, victimisation, and violence. A UK survey of 1166 LGBT+ people found that 64% of respondents had experienced violence or abuse related to their minority sexual identity. Recent nightlife research carried out by colleagues at Liverpool John Moores University reported 71% of LGBTQIA+ survey respondents had experienced sexual violence on a night out, compared to 54% of heterosexual/cisgender respondents.

Various interventions in nightlife settings have aimed to reduce sexual violence, including awareness raising, personal safety campaigns, and bystander training. However, there is limited evidence on the implementation or effectiveness for LGBTQIA+ patrons. A recent study found that bystanders' willingness to intervene across different nightlife contexts, shows that some LGBTQIA+ participants reported avoiding heteronormative nightlife venues due to previous negative experiences of discrimination or wanting to avoid negative sexual attention 'normalised' in these venues.

Adopting a qualitative approach, our study specifically aims to: understand LGBTQIA+ staff and patrons' perceptions of safety in heteronormative nightlife settings; explore experiences of violence towards LGBTQIA+ people in heteronormative nightlife settings; determine if bar staff in heteronormative nightlife venues are adequately informed and trained in personal safety and bystander interventions; and explore differences between staff and patrons' perceptions of safety and experiences of violence against LGBTQIA+ people in heteronormative nightlife venues.

ERICH JOSEPH

Clubcommission Berlin

Germany

Enhancing Occupational Mental Health in Nightlife Settings – The 'Mental Health in Clubs' Initiative

Background: The nightlife industry is a cornerstone of cultural expression and economic activity, yet its workforce often encounters unique occupational challenges. Irregular hours high emotional demands and limited access to structured support systems contribute to increased stress and mental health risks among club workers. Addressing these concerns is essential for fostering a sustainable and healthy nightlife environment.

Objective: This presentation aims to share insights from the 'Mental Health in Clubs' project focusing on the development and implementation of evidence-based interventions to enhance mental well-being and organizational resilience within club settings.

Methods: In collaboration with Charité Berlin the German Psychological Society and Fern Universität in Hagen we conducted a comprehensive analysis involving focus groups surveys and direct interventions across various club environments. The study identified key stressors and tailored solutions to address mental health challenges faced by club staff.

ALEXANDRA KARDEN

checkit! - Suchthilfe Wien gGmbH

Austria

Tobias Fragner and Igor Grabovac

A Qualitative Study of User Perspectives on Drug Checking in Vienna: Motivations, Barriers, and Harm Reduction Impacts

The evolving landscape of illicit drug markets necessitate effective approaches to harm reduction and addiction prevention for people who use drugs (PWUD). In response, integrated drug checking services, which combine chemical analysis of substances with psychosocial interventions, have been introduced in Austria and numerous other countries. Previous studies highlighted the positive impact of drug checking on substance use intentions and behaviours, particularly in festival settings, but research on stationary services and those involving multiple settings remains limited. This study evaluated Vienna's multi-modal drug checking program, which offers mobile services at music events and in clubs, stationary services at a counselling centre, and a pharmacy-based service. Each model is tailored to meet the needs of different subgroups of PWUD. In 2024, a comprehensive evaluation was conducted to assess the effectiveness and reach of these services, including a qualitative study involving semi-structured interviews with 22 participants: 12 current users of at least one drug checking modality and 10 PWUD without prior drug checking experience. Interviews explored participants' motivations for using the service, perceived benefits, and access barriers, in addition to examining the impact of service design, psychosocial interventions, and communication of results. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the interview data. The findings will be presented at the conference. This research will inform the optimization of services by identifying best practices tailored to different groups and settings. The findings have the potential to enhance the effectiveness and reach of these harm reduction services and contribute to the development of best practices for drug checking programs.

BRIAN KELLY

Indiana University

United States

Mike Vuolo

Club drugs and social withdrawal among young adults

While nightlife scenes remain important sites of social life for young adults, young people also increasingly report experiences of social isolation, social anxiety, and loneliness. Alcohol and other drugs have long played important roles in nightlife as well as young adult social processes more generally, but psychoactive substances also have been used instrumentally to mitigate negative emotions. As such, while substances associated with nightlife may produce positive effects such as social bonding, they also may facilitate adverse coping from experiences of social isolation. The relationship between feelings of social isolation and the use of club drugs (such as ecstasy, ketamine, cocaine) has not been very well studied. Furthermore, as the pandemic shutdowns of 2020 produced disruptions to social life, the relationship between social isolation and substance use may have intensified in the wake of these disruptions. Using nationally representative NSDUH data from the U.S. spanning 2017 through 2023, we examine how experiences of self-reported social withdrawal intersect with the use of club drugs. In addition, we identify whether the pandemic has played a moderating role and deepened the relationship between Regression models are utilized to assess the association between self-reported social withdrawal and club drug use, as well as the moderating impact of the pandemic. To distil out the specific effects of social isolation, the models also account for underlying mental health alongside additional important covariates. Intervening on social isolation may be important for reducing harm among young adults who use club drugs.

NICKI KILLEEN

Health Service Executive

Ireland

A New Era: Drug trends and developments in Ireland since Club Health 2017

Nicki will discuss the latest drug trends health challenges and developments in nightlife settings based on results from the HSE Safer Nightlife Programme as well as from targeted research and data obtained from the European Web Survey on Drugs 2023. Nicki will provide experiences from both a policy and management perspective as well as from a service provision lens having delivered interventions at Ireland's largest festivals and dance events. The progression of the Safer Nightlife Programme was a significant milestone for Irish drug policy as it was the first time that analysis was conducted to rapidly identify drug trends to inform public health responses in Ireland.

The pilot programme was developed in 2022 as a response to an identified gap in service provision with an aim to provide harm reduction interventions to people who use drugs in nightlife settings. These groups are otherwise not reached through traditional structures in Ireland and have limited access to harm reduction supports. Through the pilot interventions have been provided at 10 licensed festivals since 2022 with 8 of these events also including the provision of 'back of house' analysis to inform harm reduction engagements risk communications and local monitoring activities. To date over 100 volunteers have been recruited and trained to provide the service over 180 hours of harm reduction interventions have been delivered 476 drugs have been submitted for analysis with 7 of these being new drugs never detected before in Ireland.

A unique element of the project is the adaptation of law enforcements role to improve health-led responses. Lessons will be shared on working with new stakeholders such as law enforcement to achieve public health objectives. In addition Nicki will highlight the on-going work since Club Health Dublin to improve nightlife responses research and early warning structures locally.

COLLEEN LANE

Corewell Health

United States

Ryan Doyle

Don't Get Whipped: The High Cost of Nitrous Oxide

Nitrous oxide (whippets or laughing gas) was first developed in the early 19th century as an anesthetic for dental and surgical procedures. However, almost as soon as its initial discovery as a medical tool, nitrous oxide was also used recreationally among upper class. The substance was inhaled out of balloons or gas canisters to cause euphoria, giggling, and light-headedness. By the 1960s and 1970s nitrous oxide or “Whippets” became more popular among the counterculture or psychedelic movement in the United States. In the 1990s and 2000s we saw the availability to purchase whippets online spike the popularity of use at raves, music festivals and parties. The risks associated with the use of nitrous oxide is not as commonly discussed as other substances common among party scenes such as cocaine, ecstasy or methamphetamines. However, the use of nitrous oxide is not risk free. Long term use is associated with neuropathy, hypoxemia and sometimes irreversible damage. We will present two cases of patients who presented to our outpatient Addiction Medicine Specialty clinic, both presenting with clinical manifestations of neuropathic impairment. They were diagnosed with suspected severe vitamin B12 deficiency associated with chronic heavy nitrous oxide use. We will discuss their history of substance use, physical findings, laboratory findings, and what medical intervention were recommended to improve their outcomes. We will present how to better provide harm reduction counselling to patients using nitrous oxide, and better screen for use in our clinic setting.

KAT LEDDEN

PsyCare Ireland & Trinity College Dublin

Ireland

John Kelly, Stephen Galvin and Michael Ledden

“PsyCare” in Ireland A mixed methods study of in-field peer-led support for psychological distress and substance use at Irish music events

Background PsyCare Ireland offers non-judgemental peer-peer harm reduction and welfare supports at Irish music festivals. International research suggests 1-1.5% of event attendees will need a welfare service, with no Irish data available to-date.

Objectives Quantify and describe presentations to an in-field PsyCare service, across four Irish festivals in 2023. Analyse self-reported substance and polysubstance use.

Methodology Anonymised PsyCare Ireland Guest Databases across four Irish festivals in 2023 were retrospectively analysed in SPSS. Descriptive quantitative analysis was performed on categorical data, with qualitative analysis of open-ended text case descriptions. Ethical approval was granted by TCD Research Ethics Committee.

Results Of 13,700 event attendees, 192 Guests presented (1.4%). Males/females presented equally most were 18-25 years old (74%). Presenting issues were intentional substance use (66%), other reason (22%), other mental crisis (11%), accidental/unwanted substance intake (0.5%). Leading primary substances were MDMA/ecstasy (35%), and ketamine (30%). Polysubstance use was common (21.85%), predominantly with alcohol. Complex cases required interagency collaboration 22 involved Medics, 3 underage Guests were escalated to police/Event Control. One Guest required suicide intervention outside service opening hours three team leaders assisted. Most Guests returned to the festival in better condition (42%) case conclusion qualitative data was missing in 44% of cases.

Conclusion This study underlines the need for welfare services at Irish music events, with demonstration of significant reduction of harms. Limitations include probable underestimation of polysubstance use and missing data, with challenging operating conditions and dependence on Guest self-reporting. Future research is pending on 2024 data.

MARIA GIAEVER LÓPEZ

Observatorio Noctámbul@s

Spain

Sexualised violence and use of drugs in nightlife contexts: from fear culture to preventive feminist strategies

Summary: Sexual violence manifests in various forms, encompassing a broad spectrum of behaviours and practices rooted in a patriarchal, binary, and hierarchical social structure. Numerous evidence show how, in nightlife settings, sexualised violence against women and LGBTQI+ individuals occurs within a specific climate of impunity, normalisation, and silencing.

This presentation by Observatorio Noctámbul@s establishes a theoretical framework for understanding sexualised violence in nightlife from a feminist and gender perspective. Within these spaces, particular dynamics involving drug consumption, sexuality, and the use of space shape how mechanisms of power and control are reproduced and collectively understood, contributing to inequalities in accessing and enjoying nightlife. Additionally, the social and media portrayals of sexualised violence are influenced by a variety of myths that generate narratives and interventions based on fear and focus on female responsibility. These narratives perpetuate sexual terror and fail to address the structural nature of sexualised violence. The goal of this presentation is to deepen our understanding of how sexualised violence functions through specific dynamics in nightlife environments that encourage its normalisation and impunity, ultimately enabling the development of more effective and transformative strategies. Additionally, it aims to deconstruct prevalent myths about sexualised violence and reassess the narratives that shape social discourse and prevention strategies, which often contribute to the perpetuation of gendered and sexual violence.

A novel analytical approach for fast and reliable analysis of psychoactive substances in various drug checking settings

A growing number of services, especially in Europe, now provide valuable harm reduction measures through integrated drug checking (IDC). The EU Early Warning System (EWS) now monitors 1000 new psychoactive substances (NPS) with an increasing number of highly potent Nitazene derivatives and semi-synthetic cannabinoids in 2024. Thus, for the purpose of (mobile) drug checking, fast and reliable methods for the analysis of a broad spectrum of substances and their wide therapeutic range are necessary. Our current research is therefore focusing on the development of combined spectroscopic and mass spectrometric approaches utilized for drug checking. In specific, the suitability of a novel, direct mass spectrometric method carried out on a portable Ion-Trap mass spectrometer was assessed. For this purpose, a set of reference standards and street drug samples were analysed with this novel DSAP (direct sampling atmospheric pressure) ionization method and the results were compared to those already acquired using established drug checking methods, including HPLC-UV, HPLC-ITMS, ATR-FTIR and HRMS. The findings of this investigation support the suitability of this methodology for the identification of classic and novel psychoactive substances with an analysis time of less than one minute.

JOÃO MATIAS

European Union Drugs Agency

Portugal

Cristiana Vale Pires

Nightclubs, modern drugs, and transgressive gender performativity: a socio-historical analysis of the emergence of drug prohibitionism in Portugal

This abstract examines the socio-historical use of “modern drugs” (morphine and cocaine) and the post-war bohemian nightclub culture in Lisbon during Les Années Folles. The period between the post-First World War and the establishment of the Estado Novo dictatorship in Portugal in 1926 was marked by political instability and profound cultural tensions between conservative moral standards and modernist lifestyles. In this context, drug use (beyond alcohol), bohemian nightlife, and more fluid and transgressive gender performativity shaped the urban lifestyle of privileged young adults. Conservative voices perceived post-war modernism as a threat to the hegemonic morality and the patriarchal family structures, associating nightclubs and the use of drugs with moral and sexual degradation, particularly among women. This backlash ultimately led to the closing of nightclubs and the criminalization of opioids, cocaine, and other “modern drugs” for non-medical purposes on 9 December 1924, aligning the national drug policies with the international drug control treaty signed in the International Opium Convention in 1912. Paradoxically, most drug-related problems described in Portugal were cases of iatrogenic addiction. Drawing on media, literary, and scientific sources, we will present the drug use patterns, drug-related harms, and societal reaction representations of people who used drugs during Les Années Folles. By bringing history back, we aim to build a critical and comprehensive perspective regarding the dynamic interplay between nightlife, drug use, societal changes, and their historical (dis)continuities.

FIONA MEASHAM

University of Liverpool

United Kingdom

Poppers, the impermissible pleasures of clubbing and the politics of exemption

This paper explores the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics, self-reported 'poppers' use and sexual behaviours against a backdrop of UK policy change and ambiguity surrounding their legal status. In 2024, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs recommended a unique, government-instigated, legal exemption from the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 for poppers being sold to gay men as sex aids, whilst upholding the offence if sold to those same gay men for recreational purposes such as clubbing. A response to ACMD is expected from the new Drugs Minister in early 2025. Data gathered from 11,566 respondents from the annual English Festival Study 2014-23 were analysed regarding self-reported recreational drug use, demographic characteristics and sexual behaviours. Gay men were significantly more likely to report poppers use and particularly for those reporting past-year participation in anal sex. Providing a critical analysis of recent trends in UK drug policy and comparing issues surrounding the criminalisation of GHB/GBL with poppers, the author highlights how differential discrimination occurs within drug control where targeted exemption meets the politics of protected characteristics in UK law. The presenter will argue that poppers, therefore, provide a unique example in drug policy of how an apparent liberalisation of legislative control could bolster the overarching drug prohibition regime while maintaining the appearance of rationality and fairness, by attempting to separate permissible (sexual) from impermissible (clubbing) pleasures in UK leisure.

EVELIEN MEIJER

Jellinek

Netherlands

Antenna 2023 - From nightclubs to sports fields: substance use in Amsterdam's recreational domains

The Antenna research tracks substance use among young adults in Amsterdam since 1993. The study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data. The year 2023 marked the first survey at amateur football clubs in the city, offering fresh insights outside the traditional nightlife scene. The findings challenge a few long-held assumptions about youth and substance use, especially regarding alcohol. It shows that the leisure domains of sports and nightlife overlap. The qualitative interviews with trendsetting clubbers also reveal notable findings. New trends are emerging in the use of substances that may signal a shift in young people's consumption patterns, despite a continued appetite for partying. On the other hand, there is persistent alcohol use, the continued interest in new substances like 3-MMC and the rise of vapes. The full implications of these findings will be revealed during the session.

FERNANDO MENDES

IREFREA Portugal

Portugal

Paulo Anjos, Diana Carrasqueira and Beatriz Sousa

Impact of Interculturality and Tourism on Recreational Nightlife

This investigation aims to assess how tourism, ERASMUS, and international students impact Coimbra's nightlife, as well as their influence on the dynamics, behaviours, and perceptions of local entities. For this purpose, we will collect the opinions of residents on perceived changes to nightlife due to tourism growth, analyse how business owners and workers of nightlife venues have adapted their businesses to the needs of tourists, identify impacts on the sociocultural, economic, and environmental levels, and lastly, examine the role of public policy in regulating of tourist nightlife.

This study employs a qualitative methodological approach, conducted through semi-structured interviews with Coimbra's local entities (health, security and supervision forces, social action and community, local commerce, education, student associations, local and regional administration, residents, business owners, and tourists). The interviews will be conducted in person, whenever possible. If this mode is not feasible, we will conduct the interviews virtually (namely, through the Zoom platform) or in writing.

PIETER OOMEN

Trimbos Institute

Netherlands

Manuela Monti, Raoul Koning and Mireia Ventura

Accuracy of LSD quantification at drug checking services: insights from a multi-laboratory ring study

The psychoactive effects of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) are highly dose-dependent, making accurate dosage information critical for harm reduction. In recreational settings this information is often lacking, increasing risks of adverse effects. Drug checking services (DCS) aim to address this by providing service users with chemical analyses and insight into the drug market. The Trans-European Drug Information (TEDI) network plays a crucial role in standardizing drug checking practices and sharing data and expertise across European services. The need for quality control among DCS is especially apparent in the case of LSD, as service users often expected higher LSD content of submitted samples than the analytical results indicate. To assess the accuracy and reliability of these analyses, a ring study was conducted among five Swiss laboratories employing various quantitative techniques. Blotters at two concentrations and one methanolic solution were centrally prepared, with homogeneity and stability assessed prior to distribution. Results showed excellent LSD stability and homogeneity on blotters. Quantitative analyses of the laboratories were largely within 10-15% of the median. An observed underestimation of content was traced to the purity of the reference standard (87.5%), as confirmed via quantitative NMR analysis. These findings show that variability between analytical techniques likely does not explain anecdotal reports from DCS visitors of lower-than-expected LSD dosages. Instead, misconceptions about dosages may play a significant role, with potential implications for harm reduction messaging. This study underscores the reliability of DCS while highlighting the need for further research into user perceptions and behaviors regarding LSD dosage.

BRYONY PARRY

Public Health Wales

Wales

Lara Snowdon, Emma Barton and Alex Walker

Wales Without Violence: Using Behavioural Science to Support Professionals Implementing a Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention

Violence is increasingly recognised as a public health issue, and there is growing focus on the need to identify, understand and influence behaviours to achieve the ambitions of public health policy and practice. In Wales, legislation including the Serious Violence Duty and the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act 2015, supports a public health approach to violence prevention. Building on this legislative foundation, the Wales Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) and Peer Action Collective Cymru published the Wales Without Violence Framework, as a guide for professionals seeking to prevent violence among children and young people using a public health approach. Following its publication, the VPU hosted multi-agency engagement events for those involved in delivering on legislation, in partnership with the Behavioural Science Unit (BSU), Public Health Wales, to explore using behavioural science in the adoption of the Framework's nine principles. Using the principles as a focus enabled partners to specify the behaviours that underpin a public health approach, allowing for an exploration of the barriers and facilitators for achieving them. By using the Capability, Opportunity Motivation and Behaviour (COM-B) model and Theoretical Domains Framework, the VPU has developed a behavioural science-informed implementation plan for the Wales Without Violence Framework, which aims to elicit the professional behaviours needed for implementing a public health approach to violence prevention. Further, the behavioural insights have supported the VPU to identify system-wide actions that Wales

DANIEL PETTERSSON

TAK bars and restaurants

Sweden

Johanna Gripenberg

Violence prevention in the Stockholm nightlife – Clubs against drugs

Presentation Clubs Against Drugs is a network in Stockholm where clubs, pubs, hotels and other licensed premises work together with authorities to prevent drug use and drug dealing in and around the entertainment district in the city centre. The presentation will describe how the network is built up, different stakeholder´s activities, why the business engage and how we build relations. We will also show results of the latest study and media campaign.

Sexual violence in nightlife and positive bystander intervention in an English city

Background: Nightlife environments are high risk settings for sexual violence and bystander intervention programmes are being developed in response. However, more research is needed to understand nightlife-related sexual violence, and factors that influence bystander interventions. This study examined nightlife patron's experiences of sexual violence and associated factors and relationships between attitudes towards, awareness and experience of sexual violence, and confidence to intervene.

Methods: Cross-sectional on-street survey of nightlife patrons (N = 307, aged 18+) on a night out in an English city. Surveys (7.30pm-1.30am Wednesday-Saturday) established sexual violence awareness, myth acceptance, and experience, and confidence to intervene. Participant's socio-demographics, nightlife alcohol consumption, and frequency of nightlife usage were collected.

Results: 58.0% had ever experienced sexual violence whilst on a night out. In adjusted analyses, sexual violence was higher amongst females (adjusted odds ratio [AOR] 4.0 $p < 0.001$), and regular nightlife patrons (AOR 2.1; $p < 0.05$). The majority agreed that they would feel confident asking someone who has experienced sexual violence if they are okay/would like support (92.2%). In adjusted analyses, confidence to intervene was higher amongst those who agreed that sexual violence was an issue in nightlife (AOR 3.6; $p < 0.05$), however it reduced as sexual violence myth acceptance increased (AOR 0.5; $p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Sexual violence is a pertinent issue in nightlife. Programmes aiming to address nightlife-related sexual violence must address the wider social norms that promote sexual violence, and ensure patrons understand the extent and significance of the issue, to increase confidence to positively intervene.

DOMINIQUE SCHORI

Drug Information Center (DIZ)

Switzerland

The rise of cathinones in Swiss nightlife

In recent years, cathinone derivatives such as 4-MMC or 3-MMC have become increasingly popular throughout Europe, especially in party settings. The substances have evolved from a niche product to a permanent component of nightlife. These new psychoactive substances are associated with unknown risks due to the low level of research. The presentation highlights the trend using data from drug checking in Zurich. Both substance-related data (test results) and personal data (specific questionnaire for people who consume cathinones) will be considered. Possible hypotheses for the increase in cathinone derivatives will be discussed in the presentation. The presentation will also provide practical insights into the challenges associated with people using cathinones. Finally, a critical look is taken at the efforts to ban NPS such as cathinones as well as the associated consequences for users.

JOCHEN SCHROOTEN

VAD

Belgium

Spiking realities: Challenging myths and shifting the focus from fear to respect in nightlife culture

As humans, our fundamental need for connection drives much of our behaviour. Yet, the path to healthy relationships is complex, and substances like alcohol and other drugs often become intertwined with social interactions. This presentation delves into how the misuse of substances can lead to drug-facilitated sexual assault, highlighting the critical need to shift away from fear-based narratives surrounding spiking. This talk will present data from a recent study conducted in A&E services in Ghent hospitals regarding spiking and drug-facilitated sexual assault. The surprising outcomes challenge the media's tendency to reinforce the myth of spiking. Instead, we advocate for empowering clubbers through connecting values such as openness, honesty and respect. By emphasizing personal responsibility and mutual care, we can cultivate a nightlife culture where healthy relationships can thrive. This keynote will share recommendations from a recent international research project and showcase effective interventions in addressing gender-based sexual violence. These interventions, rooted in the core values of connection, offer a path forward that transcends the limitations of focusing solely on spiking incidents.

DANIELLE TALAE MOFRAD

STAD

Sweden

Lotta Persson

Violence prevention in the Stockholm nightlife – the STAD training

Violence prevention in the Stockholm nightlife – the STAD training It is important to train key persons. In this presentation we will give you an overview of our different ways of training nightlife staff, police and municipal inspectors. The training is both online and physical. We will also present the evaluation of the different training programs and discuss key factors to get a satisfied class.

CRISTIANA VALE PIRES

Kosmicare and Faculty of Education and Psychology of the Catholic University of Portugal

Portugal

Helena Valente, Bruna Viático and Joana Castro

Gender stereotypes related to drug use in nightlife environments - a qualitative analysis in 5 European cities

This abstract is based on qualitative research implemented in the scope of the EU project CRISSCROSS (crisscrossproject.org, funded by the CERV project of the EC). This research aimed to identify: 1) the experiences of gender-based violence and discrimination and drinking and drug use environments 2) gender stereotypes related to drug use in nightlife environments and 3) priorities for prevention and harm reduction intervention in recreational contexts. In this presentation, we will discuss, in specific, the topics 2) and 3). The study implemented an exploratory and innovative gender approach based on the implementation of the focus group with three gender groups of young people (cismen, cismen, and trans and non-binary people) in the [18-24] age group and professionals (working in the drug, gender, and nightlife fields). We implemented four focus groups in the five European cities represented in the project consortium – Porto (Portugal), Barcelona (Spain), Milan (Italy), Luxembourg, and Dublin (Ireland) (compounding a total of 20 focus groups and 102 participants). The focus group was based on elicitation techniques using images, news headlines, and scientific data to stimulate the discussion, analyse representations and stereotypes, and explore the tacit knowledge of the topics under discussion. The data analysis was performed with the software MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2022. Regarding the data analysis strategy, we used a gender analysis approach where the main themes were disaggregated by gender (cismen, trans and non-binary people, and cismen) and profile (young adults and professionals) to identify gender-specific experiences, perceptions, and priorities. The content analysis of the topic “gender stereotypes related to drug use in nightlife environments” revealed six main themes, in specific: “drug use and the increased sexual vulnerability of women” “women don´t need drugs to have sex and men use drugs to “hunt” “drug use, disinhibition, and increased confidence” “drinking and gender double standards” “victim blaming in nightlife environments,” “spiking and the myth of rape drugs.” By performing a gender analysis, we found relevant gender-specific experiences in particular in what concerns the embodiment of fear of women and trans and non-binary respondents, the sexualization and social degradation of women who use drugs, the use of drugs to increase sexual confidence (particularly among young men and trans and non-binary people) the gendered perception and reaction to drunkenness and cautionary tales related to spiking and the myth of rape drugs. The differences found are related to gendered socialization processes that will inform gender performances and drug use patterns in nightlife environments of young people and, consequently, their perceptions of risk, risk behaviours, and protective strategies. This study has relevant contributions to prevention and harm reduction interventions addressing drug use in recreational settings.

RUBEN VAN BEEK

Trimbos institute

Netherlands

Marloes van Goor and Britt Bilderbeek

The Red Alert app: a successful harm-reduction intervention

For 8 years, Trimbos institute has been hosting the Red Alert app (drugsredalert.nl). This app notifies users when dangerous drugs are detected on the drug market. Users receive push notifications with warnings about extremely dangerous (blacklist) or life-threatening drugs (red alert). The app provides information about the drugs (mostly pills sold as ecstasy): name, color, content in milligrams, photos, details about the warning, and advice on what to do. The app uses data from the Dutch Drugs Information and Monitoring System (DIMS), a national network of testing facilities aimed at gaining insights into the drug market. The app also provides an overview of these testing facilities in the Netherlands, harm-reduction information, and first aid tips for drug-related health incidents. In this presentation, findings will be shared from a recent study among 650 app users. We've found that 85% of the people who recognized a pill from the blacklist, stated they would not take the pill or would take a smaller dose. For a red alert pill, this percentage rises to 94%. Additionally, after recognizing a pill from the blacklist or red alert, users warn others, dispose of the pill or search for more information about it. Users also warn their friends, extending the reach beyond just the app user. Therefore, the app is a successful harm-reduction intervention.

CARL VANDEBOTERMET

City of Ghent

Belgium

Laura Boone

Transforming Nightlife: Preventing Sexual Harassment in Nightlife. Insights from Stad Gent and Leda Collective

Sexual harassment in nightlife and at events is a pressing issue that requires comprehensive and proactive strategies. To tackle this issue, the city of Ghent has implemented a 360° strategy, focusing on prevention and immediate response. This strategy includes a public awareness campaign to create a collective care culture. Also, for nightlife staff a toolbox and additional trainings to recognize, act, and refer incidents of sexual harassment were developed. Thereby stakeholders gather in the task force sexual harassment, where they reflect on this topic and evolve measures.

Complementing this strategy is the establishment of care points at events, where trained staff provide direct assistance to victims. A key component of this approach is the tailored training program developed by LEDA.Collective. This training for nightlife staff is adapted to the specific needs of each venue, ensuring relevance and effectiveness. By working closely with nightlife organizations, LEDA.Collective ensures that staff are well-equipped to handle sexual harassment, contributing to a safer environment for all. The presentation will explore the implementation of these methods, presenting findings that highlight the importance of a multifaceted approach to preventing sexual misconduct. The discussion will also address the challenges faced and the lessons learned, providing valuable insights for future initiatives. By sharing these experiences, the presentation aims to contribute to a broader debate on how to create safer nightlife environments and events, ultimately fostering a culture of respect and safety.

MICHAEL VUOLO

Ohio State University

United States

Renata Glavak Tkalić and Anja Wertag

A Systematic Review of Articles on Substance Use in Nightlife Settings Utilizing In Situ Data Collection

With substance use common within the nightlife economy, understanding prevalence of and risks associated with use within such settings is important for improving public health and safety, while continuing to support recreation and enjoyment. A critical method for attaining relevant data is in situ data collection, permitting real-time collection directly within nightlife settings. We conducted a systematic review of studies of substance use in nightlife settings. We identified 55 English-language articles meeting the following inclusion criteria: (1) collected in situ in or around nightlife venues (2) published 2014-2023 with post-2010 data collection and (3) with substance use as the analysed outcome. Several findings emerged. First, a major in situ advantage is collection of biomarkers (56% of articles). Second, articles were from the U.S. (35% 27% New York City), European countries (24%), Australia or New Zealand (25%), or Brazil (16%, all São Paulo), with other world regions absent. Third, nearly all studies collected data outside venues, with qualitative studies as an important exception such venues were wide-ranging or a “nightlife area” was targeted, although Electronic Dance Music venues were a common venue type. Fourth, while common to consider alcohol (including pre-drinking), there was less consistency across studies in other substances reported (e.g., illicit drugs NPS). We also considered other important aspects of data collection, such as respondent ages, sample sizes, response rates, participant selection techniques, and additional covariates assessed. We discuss the implications of our review for the future of in situ data collection on substances within nightlife settings, including recommendations.

CAROL WALKER

Sciensano

Belgium

Lies Gremeaux and Bert Hauspie

Bridging gaps between policy and practice : The critical contribution of participatory research to drug policy development in recreational settings

There is significant variability in implementing measures aimed at reducing alcohol- and drug-related incidents in nightlife and recreational settings. Mainly, the lack of consensus and conflicting opinions on best practices pose barriers to shaping effective policies. This research, focusing on Belgian music festivals, explored the benefits of involving stakeholders in policy development and examined how diverse sources of scientific evidence could facilitate dialogue in a field marked by differing perspectives. This research employed a two-phase methodology. In Phase 1, multiple types of evidence were collected at several Belgian music festivals, including an online survey of festival attendees, wastewater analysis, drug seizure reports, health incident data, and qualitative observations. In Phase 2, preliminary results were shared with stakeholders from harm reduction, health services, law enforcement, and event management. Focus group discussions facilitated dialogue, assessed stakeholders' needs, reconciled differing perspectives, and identified opportunities and barriers for collaboration and consensus building. Key findings emphasized the value of stakeholder participation in interpreting research findings to support policy development. Priority actions identified included : reinforcing a harm reduction strategy in national drug policy, reaching consent on a research agenda and monitoring, conducting impact evaluations, clarifying legislative frameworks, improving collaboration through coordination functions, and access to updated training programs. The feasibility of these needs was subsequently discussed in an expert meeting with stakeholders involved in political decision-making. This research demonstrates the feasibility of participatory research in addressing drug use in recreational settings. Sustaining this approach could advance policy development and secure stakeholder support across sectors.

ADAM R WINSTOCK

NHS London

United Kingdom

Neurodiversity on the dancefloor

Neurodiversity is one of the most unrecognised but increasingly spoken about and misunderstood mental health conditions. Effecting approximately 10% of the population including 4 to 5% of adults it's not a deficit it's a different of processing the world outside and within. There is a strong multimodal link between ADHD, particularly when it's untreated and substance use. The link between neurodiversity and the dance floor is just as complex. There are aspects of neurodiversity that support the creativity and novelty of nightlife economies, and it is likely that there is overrepresentation of dance music artists and promoters with ADHD. Clubbers may find clubbing a safe place, finding solace and anonymity as they meld into the chaos of movement, light and sound, where nonverbal communication trumps the spoken word. But it can overwhelm others. Some find drugs. What can start as hedonistic drug experimentation can end as problem drug use or self-medication. The dancefloor is a place to celebrate difference. People with neurodiversity may thrive in environments better suited to their needs. Inclusive nightlife should bring communities together. Those with ADHD may need specific harm reduction strategies to optimise pleasure and minimise the risk of medication-drug interactions. Empathy for the diverse needs of a neurodivergent population is good for everyone. In this talk I will try to explain why and how we can achieve it. PS I get to wear my psychiatrist's hat in this one.

GARY WOOTTEN

Hitched Communities

United Kingdom

How Street Angels roaming welfare teams can pinpoint support with tracking technology

ROC Angels is an umbrella organisation that supports a range of Street Angels welfare initiatives for vulnerable people at night time across the UK and internationally. They have developed innovative partnerships to maximise the effectiveness of these volunteer teams to work effectively with night time stakeholders (such as the police, health service, specialist services, door staff and licence holders) to promote safety, reduce harm and signpost effectively to services. One of these partnerships is with an app called Walk Safe (walksafe.io) which tracks Street Angels teams to enable the public to reach out for help, whilst offering a wide range of other safety features. This presentation will focus on two new Street Angels projects led by Hitched Communities in the Northwest of England, also being evaluated by the University of Chester, and share the story of the projects and how they are making an impact in the areas at night time. It will talk about the innovative features of the Walk Safe app and offer stories of how Street Angel partnership work contributes to Purple Flag accreditation, and ultimately the welfare of the public.

FLAVIA ZIMMERMANN

EURHED

Malta

Jacqueline Borg

The Paceville Asymmetry Theory - Interventions in Maltese Nightlife Incidents

"The effort of advocating for survivors is disproportionate in comparison to the relative ease of harming them in the first place". A qualitative report on psychosocial support interventions for nightlife users in Malta who experienced gender violence, assault, and adverse substance use requiring urgent healthcare. This report shows cases requiring significant restorative actions for survivors due to multisectoral, institutional challenges.

Spiking, DFSA and chemsex: epidemiology, characteristics and laboratory analysis

This master thesis discusses the epidemiology, characteristics, and laboratory analysis of spiking, drug-facilitated sexual assault (DFSA), and chemsex. Spiking is the intentional administration of substances to incapacitate a victim without their knowledge, while DFSA includes all forms of non-consensual sexual activity facilitated by intoxication, whether self-administered or covertly introduced by the perpetrator. Chemsex, a form of sexual activity involving drug abuse to enhance sexual experience. To elucidate the epidemiology, the characteristics and laboratory analysis, a literature search was performed. Victims of spiking are predominantly young women aged 18-25 and these events often occur in clubs or bars. DFSA typically involve victims aged 18-30 and the perpetrators are commonly men of Western origin known to the victim, with incidents frequently occurring in private homes or public spaces. The drugs most commonly used in these crimes include alcohol, cannabis, MDMA, cocaine, and opioids, while chemsex mainly involves date rape drugs such as gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB), ketamine and flunitrazepam. Significant regional variations in the drugs used are observed, these emphasize the need for more sensitive and broad toxicological screening methods to enable detection of a wide range of substances and their metabolites. Techniques such as GC-MS, LC-HRMS, and LC-MS-MS are recommended for their high sensitivity. This thesis concludes that enhanced sampling protocols, better education for emergency responders, and continued research are essential to improve the detection and support for victims of these crimes.

KAREN CRITCHLEY

Liverpool John Moores University

United Kingdom

Trends of Drug Testing on Arrest in a metropolitan county in North West England

The Drug Interventions Programme (DIP) has an overarching aim to identify and engage with adults in the criminal justice system who use drugs and divert them into appropriate treatment where a range of interventions can be delivered in order to reduce acquisitive crime. A key route into DIP is Drug Testing on Arrest (DToA), where adults are tested for specified Class A drugs (crack/powder cocaine and/or opiates) in police custody. Between April 2021 and March 2024, there were 10,746 completed drug tests carried out by a police force in North West England of which, two-thirds (67%) were positive for specified Class A drugs. Just under three-fifths (56%) of the positive tests were cocaine metabolites only, while two-fifths (40%) were both opiates and cocaine metabolites, and 4% were opiates only. Of the adults who tested positive, around one-third (34%) had been arrested for Misuse of Drugs Act offences, followed by theft (24%), other offences (14% including miscellaneous crimes, motoring offences, and stalking and harassment), and burglary and violence against the person (both 9%). Men accounted for the majority of positive tests (83%), and adults aged 30-39 years accounted for the largest proportion (38%), while those aged 50+ years accounted for the smallest (14%). DToA data utilised in Combating Drugs Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships, including police, treatment providers, commissioners and public health practitioners, identifies trends and at-risk groups, which can inform local strategies and interventions to reduce drug-related harms on people who offend and use drugs, as well as local communities.

RENATA GLAVAK TKALIĆ

Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences

Croatia

Bruno Škovrlj, Anja Wertag, Michael Vuolo, Mara Šimunović, Desirée Colombo, Katarina Perić Pavišić, Ines Sučić

Developing virtual reality intervention with 360-degree video in the project Nightlife: A study in real and virtual context REAL NIGHTS

Project Nightlife: A study in real and virtual context – REAL NIGHTS, funded by NextGenerationEU, has two main objectives: 1) to determine the extent and patterns of substance use in nightclubs, and 2) to test the applicability of virtual reality (VR) technology in reducing harm from risky behaviours, such as alcohol and drug abuse. Research has shown that alcohol (ab)use is related to various adverse outcomes in nightlife settings, and exposure to alcohol-related cues has been found to influence alcohol craving. A common approach to studying alcohol craving involves exposure to alcohol-related cues in non-realistic settings. In this project, we developed a VR intervention based on cue exposure, with the aim of assessing whether such an intervention would be effective in eliciting cue-induced alcohol craving. We utilized 360-degree video in VR, which allows a highly engaging and immersive experience for the participants, as it may enhance the effectiveness of cue exposure due to the inclusion of multiple stimuli, such as visual and auditory. Scenarios were designed, and scenes were filmed for three different nighttime social situations where alcohol use frequently occurs: a nightclub, a bar, and a house party. Participants, when exposed to VR environments, will be able to choose between four musical styles (pop, rock, EDM, and trap/folk dance music) and three types of alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, and hard liquor). A total of 16 amateur actors and 60 extras participated in the filming of VR environments. The developed interventions will be implemented in the experimental part of the research. Participants will experience VR environments across three separate sessions, during which their alcohol craving will be assessed among other outcome variables.

OSCAR HUGO ESPIN GARCÍA

National Autonomous University of México

México

Self-care and substance use in the electronic music scene of Mexico City

This presentation is product of a multi-method qualitative study based on an ethnographic approach to drug use in nightlife, as well as a semi-structured interview. An observation guide and an interview guide were designed. The study explore the substance use and self-care practices at electronic music parties in Mexico City. Results: It was identified that psychoactive substance use occurs in these nightlife venues. The most common legal psychoactive substances are alcohol and tobacco, and their sale is unrestricted in these venues. Regarding illegal substances, cannabis and THC vaporizers are the most evident in the environment however, synthetic drugs such as MDMA, LSD, cocaine, poppers, ketamine, and new psychoactive substances such as 2CB and Tusi are also used. It has been observed that the most common form of self-care is hydration at some parties water is free throughout the night and identified that some attendees wear ear protectors to prevent hearing damage.

DANIËLLE KETELAARS

Novadic-Kentron

Netherlands

The Normalization of Drug Use Among Young Adults: Insights from the SKIP Monitor

The perception that drug use is becoming normalized is growing in the Netherlands, particularly within nightlife and festival settings. These environments often serve as hotspots where experimentation and social acceptance of drug use are more pronounced. This is raising concerns about the broader implications for public health and safety. Using Parker et al.'s (2002) five dimensions of normalization—access and availability, experimentation, regular use, social accommodation, and cultural accommodation—this study examined the extent and nature of drug normalization among young adults aged 16-27. A large-scale quantitative cross-sectional design was used, gathering digital survey data from over 11,000 young adults in East Brabant in 2021 and 2024. This comprehensive dataset allowed for an in-depth analysis of normalization, highlighting significant variations across subgroups and settings. Nightlife and festivals, in particular, were identified as environments where normalization is amplified, driven by social norms and the cultural framing of drug use. This presentation offers a detailed analysis of drug normalization, alongside practical recommendations. By developing tailored interventions that consider the specific risks and cultural factors of these settings, policymakers and professionals can more effectively mitigate drug-related harm and promote safer, healthier nightlife experiences.

MARK LUTWAMA

COSF - UGANDA

Uganda

Robinah Nakabiito

Rainbow after dark

Background. LGBTQ+ individuals often face discrimination, harassment, harsh conversion therapy and violence in night life spaces, hindering their ability to socialize and express themselves freely . This research was done in countries of Africa.

Objectives/aims. To develop and implement evidence - based strategies for creating safer, more inclusive and equitable nightlife environments for LGBTQ+ Patrons .

Methods. We conducted surveys and focused on groups with LGBTQ+ Community members and we identified safety concerns and equity gaps. 2. We collaborated with night life establishments, community organizations and volunteers and we developed a tailored safety protocol. 3. We implemented training programs for staffs and volunteers on LGBTQ+ Cultural competency , conflict resolution and harm reduction. 4. We established safe space designations and visible signage indicating LGBTQ+ inclusivity.

Outcomes/results. 1. There was reduced incidents of harassment and violence. 2. Increased sense of safety and belonging among LGBTQ+ Patrons was observed. 3. There was improved staff knowledge and responsiveness to LGBTQ+ needs. 4. Enhanced community engagement and partnership. **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.** Intersectional , trauma-informed, and community -based approaches inform this project, recognizing the complex needs and experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals. **IMPLICATION S.** This study contributes to the development of inclusive and safe night life spaces, promoting social justice and well- being for LGBTQ+ communities.

FILIPA SANTOS

Research and Innovation Department, VillaRamadas International Treatment Centre
Portugal

Eduardo Ramadas and Tânia Caetano

Change & Grow® therapeutic model: Impact on self-control, impulsivity, self-confidence and resilience in addiction treatment

Given the role of nightlife in facilitating social drinking and drug use, these settings can pose significant risks for addiction, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to support at-risk individuals. Substance use disorders are complex conditions characterized by compulsive drug-seeking behaviour, loss of control over substance use, and significant physical, emotional, and social consequences. This study aims to evaluate the Change & Grow® therapeutic model developed and implemented by VillaRamadas on key psychological variables commonly associated with addiction. Forty-six inpatient participants with drug or/and alcohol addiction were assessed in the first (T0) and last (T1) weeks of treatment using the Brief Self-Control Scale (BSCS), Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (BIS-11), General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) and Resilience Scale (RS). The Wilcoxon signed-ranks test was used to study differences between the two time points. Participants' ages ranged from 20 to 65 years ($M = 37.44$, $SD = 13.08$), with treatment duration varying from 42 to 165 days ($M = 125.76$, $SD = 16.97$). Self-control, assessed using the BSCS, showed a significant improvement following the intervention ($z = 4.204$, $p < .001$). Impulsivity, as measured by the BIS-11, significantly decreased post-intervention, with notable reductions in attentional impulsivity ($z = -2.493$, $p = .013$), motor impulsivity ($z = -3.426$, $p < .001$), and non-planning impulsivity ($z = -3.180$, $p = .001$). Self-confidence, measured by the GSES, also significantly improved ($z = 3.054$, $p = .002$), as did resilience, measured by RS ($z = 3.464$, $p < .001$). The Change & Grow® therapeutic model shows promising results in improving self-control, reducing impulsivity, and building self-confidence and resilience, providing a valuable approach to supporting individuals at risk of substance-related harm.

BEATRIZ SOUSA

IREFREA Portugal

Portugal

Diana Carrasqueira, João Cascalho and Alexandre Durães

The Impact of Nighttime Recreation Closing Times on the Quality of Life of Communities

This study aimed to collect information and opinions from the Portuguese population regarding the perceived impact of recreational nightlife venues such as bars, clubs, and urban gardens in residential and commercial areas, specifically considering the closing hours of these businesses. The goal was to understand the impact and consequences on the safety and quality of life for the community, as well as the community's perception of the adequacy of business hours. The responses to the questionnaire allowed for the identification of the consensus, or lack thereof, regarding the introduction of legislation and its effects on the community and local commerce. This study included 705 participants (58.9% women, total participants aged between 16 and 81). The majority of participants (89.1%) have lived in their area of residence for over four years, and 53.1% frequent nightlife venues. Despite 66.5% not living near nightlife establishments, 51% reported having problematic incidents due to late closing hours. Most (77.4%) support imposing limits on closing hours, with 45.7% indicating that 00:00 to 02:00 is the ideal timeframe. Almost all (94.1%) believe that venues with unlimited closing hours are associated with increases in noise, violence, substance abuse, and insecurity. The majority (84.4%) believes that restricting business hours would benefit the community without harming the local economy (68.3%) and would promote well-being and public safety.

Nightlife: A Study in a Real and Virtual Context (REAL NIGHTS) – Project presentation

Nightlife, apart from being an important aspect of social activities and an integral part of culture, is associated with various health and social issues including risky behaviour such as alcohol consumption and illicit substances (ab)use. Monitoring such behaviour is important for developing interventions for safer nightlife environments. Thus, the main goals of the REAL NIGHTS project are 1) to determine the extent and patterns of substance use in nightclubs and 2) to test the applicability of virtual reality (VR) technology in reducing harm from risky behaviours and enhancing the well-being of nightlife attendees through experimental research. Data collection is planned on around 500 nightclub attendees in Zagreb, Croatia via an application developed for the needs of this project. Subsequently, some of these nightclub attendees will be invited to participate in the experimental part of the research including an intervention in a VR environment with realistic, pre-recorded scenes of situations where substance use typically occurs, such as nightclubs. A mixed experimental design will be employed, comparing those in the intervention and control groups across multiple dependent variables, such as substance use, mental health, and subjective well-being, measured at various time points. The results of this project are expected to contribute to the health and well-being of individuals participating in nightlife and could be used as a basis for harm reduction programs.

No alcohol at night – experiences of Polish boroughs

Background Drinking alcohol generates a number of problems, including those related to public safety. That is why in many countries, including Poland, preventing actions are taken, also by local communities, to reduce problems related to drinking alcohol in public places. One of the proposed strategy is a ban on selling alcohol at night. In Poland, this solution was introduced in 2018, giving municipal governments the option of limiting the sale of alcoholic beverages in stores between 10pm and 6am. Methods A statistical analysis of data from 2 sources – (1) the local government survey „Activities of local governments in the field of prevention and resolution of alcohol-related problems in 2018” conducted in 2019, 2) an online survey addressed in 2024 to local authorities. Results Data from a study conducted in 2019 showed that 6.6% of municipalities decided to introduce this restriction in the first year of the new regulations being in force, but among cities with the largest number of alcohol sales outlets, every third municipality implemented the restriction. The question we wanted to answer was what local authorities see as benefits and problems arising from the implementation of the restriction. The assessment of the changes implemented was definitely positive - limiting the night sale of alcohol has brought the expected results in increasing the sense of security of the inhabitants of communes that have adopted the ban. The positive results of the restriction also encourage other cities and municipalities to adopt restrictions on the sale of alcohol at night.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

EVA BLOMME

Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs

Belgium

Drug prevention through social media – collaborating with peer influencers

After cannabis, cocaine is the most commonly consumed illicit drug in Europe. Cocaine availability is reported to be at an all-time high and snorting cocaine is increasingly perceived as normalized in settings like nightlife and even in certain work contexts. In 2024 VAD/Druglijn launched a selective prevention campaign to address this. With targeted ads on social media and through collaboration with peer influencers VAD/Druglijn helps people who have questions about their cocaine use to get further information and self-help. At the same time the campaign offers a counter-narrative to the perception that cocaine “is an integral part of nightlife”.

In this round table panel, Robin (peer influencer) and Eva (VAD) discuss their collaboration and their experiences with the campaign. Robin elaborates how he engages with his followers about drug use from his perspective as an online peer and integral part of the scene. Eva clarifies the scientific foundation from which the campaign starts and highlights the benefits and challenges of using social media for drug prevention.

JACOB CHAGNON

Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP) International

Germany

“Make Toilets Toilets Again!” Reflections on an infrastructural approach to safer consumption/spaces in nightlife.

Background: "Make Toilets Toilets Again!" is a combined service provision/advocacy initiative aimed at creating dedicated consumption spaces in nightclubs. It combines current nightlife best-practice with the logic of supervised consumption sites, while culturally engineering further harm reduction ('HR') knowledge/provision into existing urban rituals and demonstrating how HR can be a creative, playful process. Project: Currently, substance use in clubs often occurs in restrooms (quasi pre-existing dedicated consumption spaces), which compromises safety and accessibility for all patrons, especially women who typically face longer wait times. This project entails outfitting clubs/events with dedicated consumption spaces equipped with classical nightlife HR resources (e.g. info materials, drug checking services, trained peers/professionals). However, it also aims to reclaim/preserve the urban ritual of 'going to the toilets' for consumption and to play with form, calling for partnerships between local HR orgs and artists to create imaginative models of 'safer consumption' spaces for nightlife--akin to Mainline's 2022 MDMA legalization art models. Outcomes: The initiative aims for multiple outcomes: --Enhance efficacy of current HR efforts by placing staff and resources directly where partygoers consume --Increase the visibility of drug education, further mainstream HR through fun, collaborative, and engaging public demonstrations --Recognize toilets as current consumption spaces, while transitioning towards artistic and visionary models of safer spaces --Engage and align with the broader policy environment of decriminalization, regulation, and health services --Facilitate both local actor partnerships and innovative research/data collection methods --Enhance accessibility of actual toilets for disadvantaged groups (e.g. women facing queues, groups with mobility issues)

LISA HANZE

Voodoo Village

Belgium

Tiny Devriendt

Taking steps towards health promotion in the Belgian festival scene

Voodoo Village, a Flemish festival with a decade of experience, has evolved into a pioneer in health promotion within the Belgian festival sector. Drawing from practical experience and empirical insights—particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic—a wellbeing-focused DNA has emerged. This approach not only reduces overstimulation but also inspires attendees to adopt a more conscious attitude towards their wellbeing and daily choices. The program includes healthy food options and adaptogenic drinks through ‘The Lab’, holistic workshops such as sound healing and breathwork in ‘The Oasis’, and one-on-one sessions in the Oracle Zone, offering services like breathwork, reiki, and coaching focused on personal growth. In the Sanctuary, we provide a sensory-free space with professional support for recovery and reflection, complemented by relaxation areas where visitors can escape the festival's intensity. An aftercare hotline ensures follow-up care, while digital detox zones promote mindfulness and social connection. The ‘Safe & Sound’ association coordinates all preventive measures, while mobile ‘Safe Souls’ teams actively provide care and guidance on-site, referring visitors to appropriate support when needed. Recently, we appointed a Wellbeing Manager to further strengthen and professionalize our vision. In addition, we are exploring new partnerships, such as with VAD and Quality Nights, to develop a comprehensive health and prevention policy. With these initiatives, Voodoo Village continues to build a sustainable, wellbeing-focused festival economy that inspires and supports visitors in their physical, mental, and social health.

The need for consent promotion in reducing sexual violence in nightlife

The night-time economy (NTE) sector is a vibrant and influential part of our society. However, the NTE is also the environment in which most instances of sexual violence (SV) occur. Studies consistently show that of those who experience (SV) during their lifetime, 50% report that the event occurred while they interacted with the NTE (Quigg, et al, 2020). The role of alcohol plays a central role in NTE victimisation, with perpetrators often exploiting intoxication as a tactic to incapacitate victims or target those who have become incapacitated. This is particularly evident in Irish studies within the university NTE where incapacitation has been identified as the most common tactic used against students (HEA, 2022). This study also uncovered that only 20% of students feel safe socialising in their college town, while Active* Consent research found that less than half of students felt safe from sexual misconduct while socialising at night (Burke et al, 2020). Despite prevention campaigns (e.g. Ask for Angela, bystander intervention training), there remains significant gaps in educating NTE staff, performers, and patrons about how to create safer NTE environments. Bystander training programmes have been evaluated with NTE employees, and results show positive associations with rape myth attitudes, and bartenders' willingness to intervene (Powers & Leili, 2018). However, these programmes largely focus on empowering staff and do not directly influence customer behaviour, where most sexual violence originates. While bystander intervention is needed to respond to SV in the NTE, true progress requires a cultural shift where the expectation to practice consent is embedded as a norm in nightlife. This discussion will consider barriers and opportunities for consent promotion as a way of achieving this culture change.

ARANTXA POLAK

NEWNet

Netherlands

Social safety and work ethics in nightlife settings

This panel discussion explores the blurred boundaries between professional and private behaviour in informal work settings, particularly in nightlife environments. It contrasts the clear distinction of roles in other sectors like healthcare, law, or accountancy, where professionalism is emphasized, with the more relaxed expectations in event and nightlife industries. In these settings, professionals such as bouncers and bartenders may experience different attitudes from clients, ranging from casual humor to flirtation, behaviours that would typically be inappropriate in more formal contexts. This is an attempt to highlight how the personal and professional roles of nightlife workers can become intertwined, leading to potential challenges. It addresses how workers' attitudes towards interpersonal relationships in the workplace may vary, with some feeling comfortable with informal connections, while others struggle to establish clear boundaries. Factors like substance use, inappropriate humour, exploitation, and power dynamics complicate this environment. This also considers the role of young people in nightlife, where they often develop their identities and social groups, further contributing to the complex social climate. There is clearly a need for safe spaces for workers in such settings, emphasizing the importance of managing these blurred boundaries to avoid personal conflicts spilling into the professional sphere.

Abstract Book

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