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MEDIA RELEASE

Designer drugs: The new face of a workplace safety issue



Designer drugs are not captured in most current workplace screening programs, yet present the new face of drug abuse and an increasing workplace safety issue.

T2013 Conference Chair and Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety – Queensland (CARRS-Q) Director Professor Barry Watson said many organisations already have alcohol and other drug screening programs that test employees’ urine and oral fluid to evaluate whether they can safely perform at work. Yet new designer drugs are arriving at an unprecedented rate, and are much more difficult to detect, presenting a constant challenge for drug monitoring programs.

“Despite illegal blood alcohol concentration limits being in place for over 40 years, and the dangers of drug driving becoming increasingly recognised, impaired driving remains one of the major causes of death and injury on our roads and in our workplaces.

“Being a step ahead in the detection of impairing drugs is crucial for workplace health and safety programs and will be the topic of a special session at the T2013 international conference in August,” Professor Watson said.

T2013: the 20th International Council on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety Conference will be held from 25-28 August at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre and will bring together over 400 delegates from around Australia and overseas, drawn from the areas of public health and safety, traffic and transport psychology, public health, law, medicine, economics, law enforcement, public policy, education, pharmacology, toxicology, forensic science, human factors, and alcohol intervention and rehabilitation.

The Designer Drugs Session to be held in conjunction with the conference will profile synthetic cannabinoids as the new face of drug abuse, investigate the epidemiological background on the latest new drugs in Europe, present case studies on driver intoxication, and unveil new ways for screening and confirmation of the presence of these new drugs in drugged drivers.

Session presenters will include:

- Marilyn A. Huestis, PhD - Chief, Chemistry and Drug Metabolism, Intramural Research Program, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, USA and Chair of the ICADTS Illicit Drugs and Driving Workgroup
- Steven W. Gust, PhD - Director, International Program, National Institute on Drug Abuse, USA
- Barry Logan, PhD - President, American Academy of Forensic Sciences

The T2013 Conference will provide an update on world-wide developments in impaired driving, key geographic regions of emerging issues and at risk populations by international keynote speakers including:

- Pablo Martinez Carignano, Road Safety General Director of the Buenos Aires City Government;
- Dr Leilei Duan, Director of the Injury Prevention Division, National Centre for Chronic and Non-communicable Disease Control and Prevention, China CDC;
- Dr Kazuko Okamura, Senior Researcher, National Research Institute of Police Science, Japan; and
- Dr Ralph Hingson, ICADTS Past President; and

- Dr Wolf-Rudiger Nickel, ICADTS Immediate- past President.

Held triennially around the globe, the ICADTS Conference has achieved a long-standing and highly-regarded reputation as the leading international meeting in the field of alcohol, drugs and traffic safety.

The full scientific program will be released on the conference website www.t2013.com later this month. Online registration is now open, and earlybird registration closes on 24 May.

The Australasian Road Safety Research, Policing and Education Conference (www.rsrpe2013.com.au), one of the most important road safety conferences in Australasia, will immediately follow T2013 in the same Brisbane venue from 28-30 August 2013.

“The consecutive timing of the forums will make an important contribution to the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety and present exciting professional development opportunities for researchers, practitioners and policy-makers,” Professor Watson said.

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High resolution logos and images are available on request.