

14th May 2010

IAEM Welcomes Decision to Ban *Head Shop* Products

The Irish Association for Emergency Medicine warmly welcomes the Minister for Health & Children's decision this week to ban, with immediate effect, a range of products currently freely available in *Head Shops*. Those working in the country's Emergency Departments (EDs) are very much aware of the enormous increase in young patients attending EDs with the toxic and psychiatric effects of these products. They mimic many of the dangerous drugs available illegally and have resulted in a significant number of patients having permanent sequelae.

The Association believes that it is important that this welcome step is rapidly followed by action to ensure that such products do not continue to be available via the internet. Furthermore, there needs to be a major crackdown on a wide variety of illicit drugs which have similar toxic effects and continue to be relatively easily sourced. It is in all our interests to ensure that these drugs, which are associated with significant psychiatric and medical sequelae, become increasingly impossible for vulnerable individuals or those 'experimenting' to access.

In this regard the Minister's move on 11th May 2010 represents an important first step.