

25th August 2010

IAEM welcomes introduction of the Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010

The Irish Association for Emergency Medicine warmly welcomes the announcement by the Minister for Justice and Law Reform, Mr Dermot Ahern TD that the [Criminal Justice \(Psychoactive Substances\) Act 2010](#) came into effect on Monday 23 August 2010.

This Act will make it an offence to sell or supply for human consumption, substances which have psychoactive effects that are outside the remit of the [Misuse of Drugs Act 1977 \(Controlled Drugs\) Declaration Order 2010](#). Conviction under the Act will carry a sentence of up to five years imprisonment. The Act also enhances the powers of An Garda Síochána to intervene promptly in issuing 'Prohibition Orders' on outlets who continue to sell these substances. Furthermore, the Act gives full search and seizure powers to Gardaí and the Customs Service.

Emergency Departments (EDs) across the state continue to see the immediate toxic and psychiatric effects of illicit psychoactive agents including those available both before and after enactment of the May 2010 Declaration Order. This continuing access remains a cause for concern as does the continuing online availability of a broad range of illegal psychoactive products. These highly dangerous substances are similar to many of the psychoactive 'street drugs' which have been illegal for many years. The permanent toxic and psychiatric sequelae of these psychoactive substances are, as yet, unknown but the likelihood is that many will give rise to persistent long-term health problems. IAEM advises the public to refrain from the use of all psychoactive substances whether supplied by acquaintances, in *Head Shops* or online.

The Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010 is an important next step in dealing with the scourge of so-called 'Legal Highs' which we fully support.

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