

Memo re Collection of NPS Packets from Patients recruited to the IONA Study for Analysis at the Police Forensic Laboratory, Howdenhall

Patients exposed to Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) are being recruited in the Emergency Department and Base 6 of the Royal infirmary to the IONA study (PI Prof Thomas, Newcastle University). This has received local ethics and R&D approval.

Blood and urine samples from these patients are being analysed at the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) Forensic Science Laboratory at Howden Hall, Edinburgh. Researchers in the laboratory would like to compare the results of analysing the biological samples with analysis of NPS remnants in their packages.

Patients occasionally bring with them to the ward packages for the NPS to which they have been exposed. For their safety, these packages, whether empty or not, are taken away from the patient and stored in the ward. Previously, these packages have been taken away by pharmacy and destroyed. The police located in the hospital do not become involved with these packages.

Where patients are recruited to the IONA study, we will now place any NPS packages they present with into a green pharmacy bag, labelled only with their study number. Along with blood samples, these samples will be stored at -80° C after transfer to the QMRI until they can be taken to the laboratory at Howdenhall.

After transfer by myself, or Mr Adrian Thompson, to the laboratory, the blood samples and packages will be handed over for analysis. SPA Forensic Laboratories handle items suspected of containing controlled or psychoactive drugs routinely and have the required processes and licences in place to ensure the integrity and security of the items are not compromised. The laboratory staff will care for the samples while in their possession and destroy package and contents once the analysis is complete.



Prof Michael Eddleston
Toxicology ward, RIE &
University of Edinburgh
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SPA Forensic Science Laboratory
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