



Media Release



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Issue: **'Warning: Surge in HIV and STDs with Increased ICE use'**

[*"Permissibility, availability and accessibility - all increase consumption."* Dalgarno Institute.]

"For too long authorities have ignored the looming threat of the ICE epidemic on users and the community". A spokesperson for the Dalgarno Institute warned that ICE use results in disinhibited behaviour including violence and unprotected and risky sexual conduct.

To prevent a serious outbreak of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases the Dalgarno Institute advocates that effective action be taken now, including severe penalties for manufacture and selling of the drug; early and mandated treatment, as well as robust and uncompromising demand reduction messages emphasising the danger this drug poses, to help curb use.

Just as alcohol use is associated with a 70% increased risk of infection so the use of ICE increases this risk much more because it is more related to risky sexual behaviour. Shane Varcoe said: "With ICE, the increased risk of infectious disease is not about sharing needles, as most ICE is smoked. HIV and STD transmission is caused by risky sexual behaviour: it is about multiple sex partners and unprotected sex even with people who are known HIV carriers as ICE is known to for its hyper-enhancement of sex drive. It also increases energy and stamina, whilst effecting judgement – bad combination in risk factors. People on ICE often engage in behaviour that would normally be unacceptable to them, both in terms of their own standards of behaviour and the risks they are prepared to take."

He added: "To contain this epidemic, the full effects which are yet to be realised, we need to act now to deter those who sell it, educate young people about the danger of the this highly addictive substance, intervene very early as ICE addicts on average seek treatment only after side-effects become serious and some 5 years after the first signs of trouble. Effective intervention demands mandatory treatment as the ICE addict is unlikely to recover in their own environment because of the availability of the drug and the severity of the withdrawal symptoms. These symptoms include psychosis and severe depression and an inability to think sensibly about the consequences of continued use of the drug.

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