

22nd
AUGUST, 2017

HELSINKI
FINLAND

Call for Abstracts

Making Sense of Polydrug Use

Challenges and Responses

It is frequently assumed that the use of multiple substances has increased substantially over recent decades. However, as a social and cultural phenomenon, polydrug use is manifold, diverse and wide-ranging. Even though the phenomenon is acknowledged, theoretical and empirical knowledge of it continues to be scarce and underdeveloped. How is polydrug use defined? Who qualifies as a polydrug user? Why do people combine different substances? What are the harms of different polydrug use? Our knowledge of these issues is scant. Clearly, there is no unified concept of polydrug use, nor is there an established practice for measuring it.



While polydrug use is often regarded as strongly stigmatized and marginalized behavior, recent studies have shown that neither does polydrug use always belong to the margins nor is it necessarily problematic. Polydrug use may express new patterns of use that intentionally and consciously aspire to produce, enhance or mediate certain effects. Whether this represents techniques of chemical mind manipulation that are nowadays more generally used in many cultural contexts, is an interesting question.

The **polydrug use workshop** is arranged alongside the Contemporary Drug Problems conference. Participation in the workshop does not require attendance at the CDP-conference.

The objective of this satellite workshop is to make sense of the widely discussed but inadequately defined polydrug phenomenon. We welcome presentations that critically discuss the phenomenon from theoretical, conceptual, practical or empirical viewpoints.

The workshop is hosted by the research project: Making sense of polydrug use: prevalence, use patterns and harms funded by the Academy of Finland and the Finnish National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), and will be held on Tuesday **22 August, 2017**, at Paasitorni, Helsinki. Guest speakers include **Aileen O’Gorman** (University of the West Scotland, UK) and **François Lamy** (Wright State University; USA). Participation in the workshop is free of charge.

The presentations may touch upon:

- Defining and framing the concept
- Intentions and motives of polydrug use
- Different patterns of polydrug use
- Health harms, social harms and risk
- Prevalence of polydrug use in different socio-demographic groups
- Treatment of polydrug users
- Political use of the term polydrug use
- Polydrug use as a challenge to drug policy
- Polydrug use in the night-time economy
- Polydrug use in working life/education
- Discussions on medicalization
- Discussions on normalization
- Quantitative measures and qualitative measures

Other themes and approaches elucidating the diversity of the phenomenon are also readily welcomed.

We invite abstracts of approximately 300 words to Dr. Kati Kataja: [kati.kataja\(at\)thl.fi](mailto:kati.kataja@thl.fi) by **1 March 2017**. All submissions will be reviewed and decisions will be made by **7 April 2017**. Each presenter will have 15 minutes time followed by 5 minutes for questions and discussion. Registration will be opened at: www.thl.fi/polydrug