



The VICE Netherlands Designer Drug Awards 2014

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Every year around 40 new research chemicals are introduced to the market. These are then tried and tested by drugs nerds, psychonauts, and vendors hoping to have a new hit on their hands. While some of these drugs are created as an experiment to see what chemicals can do to your consciousness, most are simply brought onto the market because they're not listed as illegal yet.

These drugs are often sold as " **research chemicals**," as they're meant to be used in a laboratory. In reality, most of that research is done in bedrooms and basements by (generally young) people who willingly turn themselves into lab rats and describe their experiences online for the benefit of drug curious strangers. Each experiences carries with it some level of risk; often these aforementioned lab rats will have to blindly trust the vendor and pray to God that they don't die in a puddle of their own vomit.

To make this list, we talked to **designer drug reviewers**, analyzed the drugs with the help of Google Trends,

and browsed different forums. Then we decided on the following drug awards of 2014.

Continued below.

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12:51al 'Mad Men'?

The winners:

Most innovative drug of 2014

LSZ



Category: Psychedelics (like shrooms)

On the market since: Mid 2013, but didn't get popular until 2014.

Why it exists: A lot of people feel that an LSD trip takes up too much of their time (12 hours). LSZ only lasts eight hours, so the makers of this drug really took the wishes of users into account. Additionally, LSD is still illegal, but LSZ is not.

What does it do? It creates a lot of visuals, but it can take a while before those start to show. Whether or not users trip or not also depends on the dosage. Not everyone's happy with it; some users call it a poor imitation of LSD. But maybe that's exactly what other users want and maybe that's exactly what LSZ is.

Reviewers say: "40 min after it started working, I was building a tent with strings of Christmas lights and 7 speakers."

Most obscure drug of 2014



5-DBFPV

Category: Stimulants

On the market since: Summer 2013. There's not a lot of info available about the drug, and only a few people have tried it. It is likely one of the many stimulants to hit the market that came from labs in China. For some reason there's a big demand for stuff that keeps users awake but also has a mildly trippy effect.

What does it do? It is comparable to MDPV, commonly known as "bath salts"—but more potent. It makes you euphoric and lasts for a couple of hours. There is a chance you'll get a painful headache once the effect wears off though, and the urge to keep taking more is often quite strong.

Reviewers say: "Oh China, what will you come up with next!"

Fastest riser of 2014



3,4-ctmp

Category: Stimulants

On the market since: Late 2012, but was the most searched for drug on one of the main drug forums this year.

Why it exists: You need a prescription for Ritalin, and this drug isn't illegal yet. That probably explains why it's so popular. Its competition is ethylphenidate, another substitute for Ritalin that has been around longer.

What does it do? It keeps people awake. The effects last about eight hours, but many recreational users have derided the drug as being too boring.

The newest drug of 2014



3-Fluorophenmetrazine (3-FPM)

Category: Stimulants

On the market since: November 2014, making it the newest drug that's available online.

Why it exists: This is an updated version of the phenmetrazine from the 1950s, a drug that was used by both John Lennon and Jack Ruby, who was on it when he shot Lee Harvey Oswald. That drug is illegal, 3-FPM isn't (yet).

What does it do? It's a white powder that tastes salty, and its effects are not unlike caffeine: It gives users lots of energy, and makes them clear-headed and talkative. Snorting it is effective, but...

Reviewers say: "It stings so bad, my left eye teared up. God damn ninjas cutting onions!"

The biggest loser of 2014



5-EAPB

Category: Empathogens (like MDMA)

On the market since: 5-EAPB has been around for a few years, but was banned in the UK in June 2014. Since then it has become significantly less popular.

What does it do? The effect is like MDMA or 5-MAPB, but not as good. It's a light stimulant that gives you dry mouth and huge pupils, but it can also be snorted. Users have to be extremely careful with the dosage, because a number of reviews mention that they've had the worst experiences of their life on this. It's dangerous, and now illegal as well. 5-EAPB died an early death, just like some of its users.

Reviewers say: "I saw myself in the reflection of the windows, and I looked like an utter mess, shaking all over, profusely sweating, pupils dilated to all hell, decided it was not best for me to go into the store, so I told her I would wait in the car."

Honorable mentions

These drugs came out this year or became popular this year, but didn't make the cut. They are worth a mention though, because they show how drugs have developed in 2014. No, not drugs—research chemicals, of course. Not for human consumption. So don't take any.

βk-2C-B

Category: Psychedelics

On the market since: βk-2C-B was introduced in October 2013 and remained very popular throughout 2014.

What does it do? It is very similar to its big brother 2C-B, which means it has a light psychedelic shroomy effect combined with the speediness and euphoria of MDMA. The effect seems to last longer than 2C-B – between 11 and 12 hours – but seems to be a bit milder when it comes to euphoria and visuals. The comedown can be very intense.

Reviewers say: "Saw a person who blamed his purple snot on this."

Flubromazolam

Category: Benzos

On the market since: August 2014

Why it exists: These kinds of drugs are used as sleeping pills or as sedatives to relax after an intense trip. It is the main rival of Etizolam, an older drug that was incredibly popular this year.

What does it do? The drug has a hypnotizing effect and relaxes users' muscles. It does last for eight hours, but that is less than most of the drugs that are similar.

Reviewers say: "U have to know whatya doing. I got a huge headache and some memory loss ;) but I drank 3 bottles of wine, yeah."

a-php

Category: Stimulants

On the market since: a-php was introduced in early 2014 and became increasingly popular in the summer.

Why it exists: More and more countries started banning bath salts—meaning MDPV, the drug that was all over the news. Chemists started looking for a drug that had similar effects, and ended up with a-php.

What does it do? It's hard to eat or sleep, but users feel euphoric, become very productive, and won't stop

talking. Long-term use can cause nervousness and paranoia.
thj-018 and thj-2201

Category: Cannabinoids
On the market since: Late 2014

Why it exists: For people who want to get stoned but are too lazy to find a dealer, these synthetic cannabinoids offer a legal high. The downside of this stuff is that a lot of it is junk, and it's often unclear what the risks may be.

What does it do? It's a synthetic cannabinoid in powder form that makes you feel spaced out, chilled, and carefree for about two hours. thj-2201 is a lot more potent than thj-018.

Methoxphenidine

Category: Disassociates (like ketamine)
On the market since: Although it was patented in 1989, it didn't hit the market until December 2013.
Why it exists: Its predecessor MXE will probably be illegal in most places soon, forcing chemists to look for something that isn't blacklisted yet.
What does it do? The exact effects are unclear—the only thing that's certain is that it is one of the few new drugs that were actually developed in **a real lab**. That lab also confirmed what the amateurs suspected: It's a lot like PCP, a classic that dates back to the 1960s. It is very potent stuff that users must be extremely careful with.



TOPICS: *drugs, designer drugs, research chemicals, psychonauts, nerds, Redditors, LSZ, 5-DBFPV, MDPV, 3-FPM, 3-Fluorophenmetrazine, 3,4-ctmp, Stimulants, psychedelics, shrooms, 5-EAPB, Empathogens, βk-2C-B, a-php, thj-2201, Cannabinoid, thj-018, Disassociates, Methoxphenidine, Ketamine, 2014, designer drugs of 2014, end of year lists, culture, party, trying drugs, reviews, VICE Global, Netherlands*

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