



NIIS CAN 30 April 2009

Issue 5

Welcome

www.inhalantsinfo.org.au

The recent Senate report into petrol sniffing in Central Australia has highlighted the success of a coordinated approach in tackling inhalant misuse. While the central Australian region has had a reduction in numbers of inhalant users, there are still other communities around Australia struggling to get a grip on the problem. The National Inhalant Abuse Taskforce report, *National directions on inhalant abuse*, recommended the sharing of intervention strategies suggesting that 'success stories are empowering and even knowledge about other failures provides insight into the complexity of the issue' (p40). The NIIS is a perfect forum for sharing and we invite you to share your community's story with the rest of Australia.

We gladly welcome any feedback, suggestions or contributions to the newsletter and website. You can do this by sending an email to info@inhalantsinfo.org.au.

Regards

Ruth Mahon - NIIS Coordinator

A problem shared

The issues associated with inhalant misuse rarely affect just the individual user. The consequences are also felt by family members and the wider community, especially in instances of repeated or chronic use by groups of individuals. This makes the misuse of inhalants a shared problem and one that often requires a coordinated approach to tackle.

For the person who misuses inhalants, the most obvious impact will be on their health. Any one session of inhalant misuse, whether their first experiment or 100th time can result in serious illness or death. In addition to this, users sometimes also engage in negative behaviours including theft, violence, and destruction of property while attempting to access inhalants or as a result of using them. These behaviours mean the impact of inhalant use goes beyond the individual user and into the community.

As inhalant misuse is not a highly publicised practice, confusion and disbelief are often the first reactions experienced by families when a member is found to be sniffing. Many parents have no idea about the misuse of everyday products until they discover their child has used inhalants and they then have to scramble to find community support to provide accurate information and help.

It is widely published that many inhalant users come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds where family dysfunction may in fact contribute to inhalant use. For these youth, state welfare services are often involved in the provision of health-care and counselling services. Unfortunately many of these youth are also known to the justice system and have limited success in the education system all of which highlights the network of services required to get these users back on track.



When action is taken at the community level it is usually in response to the problem escalating to a point where the users are repeatedly endangering themselves, property has been damaged, or members of the community are at risk from the actions of the users. Communities around Australia have had to implement programs to tackle outbreaks of inhalant

misuse and there have been many successes. A program will be most effective when it is designed to involve a range of community stakeholders and provides multiple strategies that address the underlying reasons for inhalant misuse. It is a fact that successful strategies involve a coordinated approach by a range of government and community agencies.

While each community has a unique set of circumstances the overarching problem is the same and so there are benefits in sharing strategies among communities. This will mean that strategies can be modified to suit the community and then quickly implemented when a situation arises rather than having to be developed from scratch.

References:

d'Abbs P. & MacLean S. (2008), *Volatile substance misuse: a review of interventions*, Monograph Series (National Drug Strat-

(Continued on page 2)

If you are part of a community dealing with inhalant misuse, then share your story with us. The information you share might just help another community.

egy (Australia)), No. 65, Canberra: Australian Government, Dept. of Health and Ageing.

MacLean S (2008), *Developing an inhalant misuse community strategy*, Canberra: Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre for the National Inhalants Information Service.

SURVEY....SURVEY....SURVEY....SURVEY....SURVEY....SURVEY

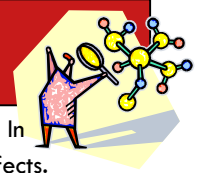


As the NIIS approaches our first anniversary we would like your feedback on how we are doing. We have put together a short survey and invite you to complete it. Your feedback is very important to us so we can continue to provide a relevant service.

You can access the survey at:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=nVx_2fQJPJwO_2ffHJ3Zitjkw_3d_3d

A - Z of inhalant chemicals



The chemicals found in products classed as inhalants can have a range of effects on different parts of the body. In this series we will look at the most common of these chemicals, what they are found in, and their physiological effects.

Ethyl Acetate

Other names: Acetic ether

Molecular formula: C₄H₈O₂

Type: Volatile solvent

Appearance: Colourless liquid with a fruity odour

Products found in: Varnish and lacquers, paints, nail polish, glues

Flammability: Flammable

Effects of exposure: Not considered to be too toxic at low levels. High levels lead to CNS depression; eye, nose & throat irritant; initial euphoria then nausea, vomiting, drowsiness and possible unconsciousness.

Ethyl Benzene

Other names: EB, ethyl-benzol, phenyletane

Molecular formula: C₈H₁₀

Type: Volatile solvent

Appearance: Colourless liquid with a petroleum smell

Products found in: Petrol, some glues (eg carpet adhesive), varnishes

Flammability: Highly flammable

Effects of exposure: CNS depressant; eye, nose & lung irritant, dizziness and loss of coordination, high levels of exposure may result in liver damage.

Ethyl Chloride

Other names: Chloroethane

Molecular formula: C₂H₅Cl

Type: Volatile solvent

Appearance: Colourless liquid or gas with a strong odour

Products found in: Refrigerant, solvent, propellant in aerosols, local anesthetic.

Flammability: Highly Flammable

Effects of exposure: CNS depressant; eye, nose & lung irritant and potential for frostbite; initial euphoria then nausea; long term liver, kidney damage; high levels of exposure can cause cardiac arrhythmias.

Source:

Australian Government, Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (2006) *Ethyl acetate fact sheet*, viewed 20 April 2009, <http://www.npi.gov.au/database/substance-info/profiles/38.html>


Australian Government, Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (2006) *Ethyl benzene fact sheet*, viewed 20 April 2009, <http://www.npi.gov.au/database/substance-info/profiles/40.html>

Pohanish, R. P ed. (2002) *Sittig's handbook of toxic and hazardous chemicals and carcinogens*, 4th ed., New York: Noyes Publications.

Stepstone Technologies (2008) *Toxipedia: connecting science and people*, viewed 20 April 2009, <http://toxipedia.org>

US Department of Health and Human Services (2008), *Agency for toxic substances and disease registry*, viewed 20 April 2009, <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/>

Our Service

There are three components of the NIIS, all of which are provided  of charge to everyone .

Our **Website** - Your first contact point if you are looking for information about inhalants. The site is divided into different sections to make finding information easy and is updated regularly.

Our **Database** - A list of all the inhalant resources we hold. We aim to collect all types of resources including books, journal articles, pamphlets, multimedia, posters & conference papers. This database currently holds 700 resources.

Our **Library Service** - We can supply you with information or resources through our Ask-A-Librarian service or keep you up to date with our current awareness newsletters. Feel free to make contact by emailing info@inhalantsinfo.org.au

Grasping the opportunity of Opal: Assessing the impact of the Petrol Sniffing Strategy.

The report by the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs.

On March 19th 2009, the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs released its report into the inquiry into petrol sniffing and substance abuse in Central Australia. The committee received 20 written submissions and undertook public hearings in Alice Springs, Adelaide and Canberra, as well as visited the communities of Yuendumu, Pa-paunya, Alpurrurulam, Mutitjulu, Amata and Hoppy's Town Camp. The report *Grasping the opportunity of Opal: Assessing the impact of the Petrol Sniffing Strategy* is the result of their investigations. The committee acknowledged previous inquiries into petrol sniffing and questioned what had been achieved in addressing the issue since the 2006 report *Beyond petrol sniffing: renewing hope for Indigenous Communities*. The review looked at the roll out of Opal fuel, the effectiveness of the Eight Point Plan, the delivery of youth and community programs and resources, and what else could be done to deal with the problem. Eighteen recommendations are detailed in the report.

The report can be accessed at:

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/clac_ctte/petrol_sniffing_substance_abuse08/report/report.pdf

Blair McFarland from CAYLUS participated in the inquiry and had this to say about the report:

"CAYLUS, NPY and the delegation of people from the region were very happy with the Senate Report. This Senate Committee is well informed on inhalant issues, having completed the previous report on this issue in 2006. We hope the Government is responsive to their recommendations; especially the need to legislate and the ongoing need for support for remote communities' youth development programs.

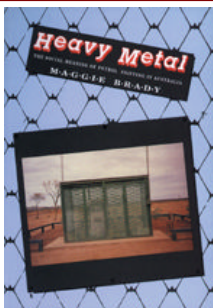
The support for youth programs to date has been disappointing, with a DoHA study "Evaluation of the Impact of Opal Fuel", (p3) Peter D'Abbs and Gillian Shaw, October 2008 finding "there has been no coordination between the provision of Opal fuel and access to youth services in the communities in the sample". This systematic support for youth development programs is the key to making sure inhalant abuse does not return, nor is replaced by some other form of substance abuse. The Mt Theo experience shows that over time, people engaging with good youth development programs can go on to further training and employment. This is the best alternative for older youth who did not attend school due to their inhalant issues, who find returning to a formal school environment too confronting. Most adult education programs are delivered at too high a standard for illiterate and innumerate people to get any benefit from. As such, a properly resourced youth development program can provide the scaffolding that allows young people to gain the skills they need for more engagement in the world.

CAYLUS and NPY look forward to working with the Government on implementing the suggestions made by the Senate."

Blair gave an interview on the ABC Radio: Life Matters program to discuss what is still required to address the issue of inhalant misuse.

Life Matters: Beyond petrol sniffing

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2009/2524913.htm>



Heavy Metal: the social meaning of petrol sniffing in Australia by Maggie Brady

Dr Maggie Brady has very generously donated 16 copies of her book *Heavy Metal* to the NIIS to distribute to our readers. *Heavy Metal* looks at petrol sniffing in a number of Aboriginal communities—the history, practice and settings in which it takes place.

While written in 1992, *Heavy Metal* remains a vital reference re-

source and is still cited in major reports about petrol sniffing and inhalant use. This book would be of value to researchers or individuals who are keen to build their collection of Australian inhalant resources.

Only 6 copies remain...if you would like one, please email Ruth at

info@inhalantsinfo.org.au

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The NIIS is an initiative of the
Alcohol and other Drugs Council
of Australia (ADCA) - National
Drugs Sector Information Service

<http://ndsis.adca.org.au>

National Inhalants Information Service

Inhalants Database

The NIIS can supply you with copies of journal articles as well as loaning items including books, CDs, and DVDs. There is no charge for this service. For a full listing of all resources please visit www.inhalantsinfo.org.au/database. Please email your requests to info@inhalantsinfo.org.au

Items recently added to the database.

VF 2009-147

Inhalant use and major depressive episode among youths aged 12 to 17: 2004 to 2006

Volume: 21 August 2008

Source: NSDUH Report

Pages: 4 p.

Date: 2008

Perron, Brian E.

Prevalence, timing, and predictors of transitions from inhalant use to inhalant use disorders.

Volume: 100 (3) March 2009

Source: Drug and Alcohol Dependence

Pages: 277-284

Date: 2009

VF 2009-144

Karmaker, Gonesh C.

Rhabdomyolysis in a glue sniffer.

Volume: 121 (1271) April 2008

Source: New Zealand Medical Journal

Pages: 70-71

Date: 2008

Web address: <http://www.nzma.org.nz/journal/121-1271/2973/>

VF 2009-177

Trends in adolescent inhalant use : 2002 to 2007

Volume: 16 March 2009

Source: NSDUH Report

Pages: [5] p.

Date: 2009

VF 2008-684

Dell, Colleen Anne

Horse as healer : an examination of equine assisted learning in the healing of First Nations youth from solvent abuse

Volume: 6 (1) 2008

Source: Pimatisiwin : A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health

Pages: 81-105

Date: 2008

VF 2006-791

Bowen, Scott E.


Developmental toxicity of prenatal exposure to toluene.

Volume: 8 (2) 2006

Source: AAPS Journal

Pages: 419-423

Date: 2006



VF 1998-486

Jones, Hendree E.

Inhalant abuse in pregnancy.

Volume: 25 (1) March 1998

Source: Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinics of North America

Pages: 153-167

Date: 1998

VF 1994-478

Arnold, Georgianne L.

Toluene embryopathy : clinical delineation and development follow-up.

Volume: 93 (2) February 1994.

Source: Pediatrics

Pages: 216-220

Date: 1994
