

Welcome to our latest newsletter. We aim to update our valued partners and the workplace (generally) about issues that face our industry; drugs and alcohol in the workplace. We highlight the latest trends, what concerns are filtering through to the shop floor, and help to educate those who strive for a safer and harm free workplace.

Integrity Sampling P/L is Australia wide, with 130 staff and technicians. We are Australia's leading drug and alcohol testing company. We service the transport, warehousing, manufacturing, building, construction, logistics, aviation, marine, mining, forestry, automotive and allied industries, performing in excess of 50,000 tests annually.

There has been a concentration of late in the media and workplace on the issue of Codeine; what harms it can cause, and how knowledge into this type of medicine is a bit vague. This month we help you better understand Codeine, what it is used for and why it can be harmful.

NEWSLETTER

WINTER WARNING

As the clouds gather and the wet weather settles in, so will the incidents of overuse of Codeine based drugs. Whilst some people consider Codeine to be a harmless over-the counter pain killer or cold medication, this is about to change. Across Australia, governments are legislating against the accessibility of this potentially dangerous medication. Codeine is found in products such as Codral Cold and Flu, Nurofen Plus, Panadeine and so many other 'winter' drugs: medicines taken more in winter months due to colds and flu. If taken at the recommended dosage, Codeine should not be an issue however, if abused or, which is often the case, an employee doubles or triples up their dosage, then serious side effects may occur. It is well known that some people tend to over use their medications in the misbelief they will get better quicker. This over usage may cause side effects that could make it dangerous to operate machinery or drive, particularly heavy transporters. Additionally, taxi drivers (who work long shifts) can face the same problem. Indeed, anyone who is required to drive.



The side effects to excessive Codeine use are not dissimilar to those experienced by heroin users. After all, Codeine is a derivative of the opium poppy, which is where heroin comes from. Therefore, if an employee over uses Codeine, they could easily fail a random drug test. Whilst this can be explained by an employee, their behaviour and ability to undertake daily tasks will almost certainly be affected. And that's the worry!

Classic side effects for Codeine affected employees are: **drowsiness, apathy, decreased appetite, lack of interest in work, moodiness, agitation**, etc. Physical attributes that may assist to identify an employee under the effects of Codeine are: **dizziness, fainting, nausea, twitching, erratic behaviour, inability to concentrate, memory loss**, etc.

It is important that if an employee admits to ongoing use of Codeine, that they are referred to a doctor or drug counsellor who will explain the ramifications of long term abuse of Codeine. The real concern is an employee who has become addicted to Codeine and hides their addiction whilst operating machinery or driving. We highly recommend the people at **First Step - Bryan Ambrosius** on **(03) 9537 3177**.





CODEINE PROVES A HEADACHE TO MANAGEMENT

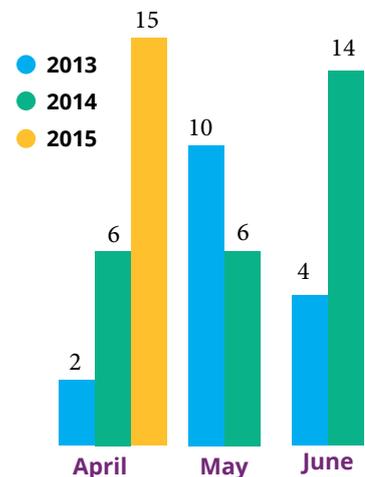
The attached graph shows an alarming increase in Codeine detected in the workplace, in Victoria, by **Integrity Sampling**. The graph is based on the past three years. In June 2013 **Integrity Sampling** detected four positives to Codeine based drugs. However by June 2014 this increased to fourteen positives. We expect this figure to be even higher by June this year, given that we have already had fifteen positives to Codeine for the month of May.

A pain specialist, Dr Michael Vagg stated in the media recently; "...30% of people do not have the right enzymes in their liver to process codeine..."

Dr Rose Neild told a recent Scientific group; "...people who are using over-the-counter codeine in large amounts may not actually present for help until perhaps they've had some adverse effect..."

The point in this awareness letter is to alert management to the harms of Codeine, especially at a time when the real noise on drugs in the workplace is usually focused on alcohol and ICE, or amphetamine based drugs.

Positive results for codeine during winter months 2013-15



THE POLICE ARE ONTO IT



As is often the case, the Police are very proactive in the area of illicit drugs and alcohol abuse. In recent weeks the upper echelon of the Police has come out to highlight the problem with drugs in the business sector; "...we have seen an increase in the number of drivers detected driving heavy vehicles that have been affected (by drugs)..." In fact the Police have found 1 in 12 transport drivers (tested) affected by drugs and **Integrity Sampling** has found 1 in 16 giving similar results. Incidentally, these figures are 20% up from last year. The problem is definitely on the increase!

SPECIAL INVITATION

Good news for management. For those wanting a better understanding of the complexities of drugs and alcohol in the workplace, or for those seeking answers on how to assist their employees in this area, we will be holding an industry brunch to be held at the St Kilda Town Hall in July (date to be confirmed) with myself, the Chairman of First Step, Tim Costello (World Vision) and First Step's Brian Ambrosius, being present to answer any questions you may have.

This will be a free, two hour session with light refreshments included.

In the meantime should you need any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Livio on (03) 9478 3116. We are here to help!



Michael Wheeldon

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