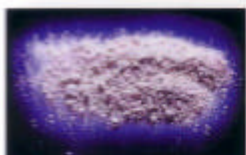


METHAMPHETAMINE FORMS



A1



A2



A3



A4



B1



B2



B3



B4



B5



B6



B7



B8



B9



B10



C1



C2



C3



C4



C5

These images depict recent Australian seizures that have been analysed and identified by forensic laboratories as methamphetamine. Forensic laboratory personnel across Australia generously provided these images, which were collated by the Illicit Drugs Unit of the Australian Customs Service, and labelled by the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC).

Australia's illicit methamphetamine markets are highly dynamic and exhibit wide variation, both between and within regions. This identification sheet has been compiled in an effort to promote the use of consistent terminology among professionals in the law enforcement and health sectors. We encourage you to refer to the various forms as described below when communicating with other professionals.

However, we also hope that professionals and frontline workers who have direct contact with methamphetamine users will use the identification sheets in an exploratory fashion. Showing a user the identification sheet may allow them to identify the form(s) they use, what they call it, frequency and quantity of use, routes of administration, price, purity, availability, origin, associated harms, and so on. In this way, we may develop an understanding of the market from the perspective of the market participants themselves, often the most valid viewpoint from which to conceive such issues.

The June issue of the *Drug Trends Bulletin*, available on the NDARC website at www.ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au, outlined some of changes recently observed in our methamphetamine markets. In that *Bulletin*, we hypothesised that there are at least four forms of methamphetamine available that are considered by the market to be distinct commodities. We refer to these as:

(i) 'Speed' - also known as goey or whiz, this is methamphetamine powder that is manufactured in Australia and ranges in colour from white to yellow, orange, brown or pink. It is usually of relatively low purity, although the purity of speed may be increasing. We propose that the market would currently identify the drugs pictured in **A1-A4 as speed**.

(ii) 'Pills' - methamphetamine tablets that are mostly manufactured in Australia and are generally sold as 'ecstasy'. Sometimes these 'fake ecstasy' tablets are mixed with drugs like ketamine to try to mimic the effects of MDMA (real ecstasy). MDMA is almost always imported; very few clandestine laboratories with the capacity to make MDMA have recently been identified in Australia. Pictures of methamphetamine in pill form have not been included in the identification sheet as these are easily identifiable, and are generally not marketed as methamphetamine, but rather as ecstasy.

(iii) 'Base' - also called paste, wax, point and pure, this is an oily, gluggy or pastey type of damp, sticky powder that often has a brownish tinge and is difficult to dissolve for injection without heat. Base is manufactured in Australia and is usually of relatively high purity. We propose that the market would currently identify the drugs pictured in **B1 and B3 - B10 as base**. **B2** has been fairly consistently identified as **ox blood**, a liquid form of methamphetamine that is not widely available and is usually red in colour.

(iv) 'Ice' - also called shabu, crystal and crystal meth, this is high purity methamphetamine crystals or coarse powder that ranges in colour from translucent to white, but may have a green, blue or pink tinge. True 'ice' is manufactured in Asia and imported into Australia. We propose that the market

would currently identify the drugs pictured in **C1- C5 as ice or crystal meth.**

Due to the discrepancies in reports about various forms of methamphetamine, we do not consider our classification of the pictures as either indisputable or as fixed.

Unfortunately, there are too many inconsistencies in the reports of both drug users and experts in the field to allow total confidence at this time. We acknowledge that, in time, our classification may prove to be incorrect or meaningless in the eyes of the market participants. Given our desire to be informed by and to keep pace with the market itself, we will amend our classification if necessary, and will widely disseminate any amended classification scheme.

In the meantime, we hope that you will agree that (1) the use of consistent terminology; and (2) achieving an understanding of the market from the viewpoint of the market participants themselves, are both valuable steps toward a more thorough understanding of Australia's dynamic methamphetamine markets. We believe that the dissemination of these identification sheets constitutes an important step toward achieving those goals, and hope that you will find it a useful resource in your dealings with methamphetamine users.

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