

Alcohol detection anklets gain attention in New Zealand

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With COVID-19, incidents of alcohol abuse reportedly on the rise



Alcohol Detection Anklets (ADA) are garnering a lot of attention in New Zealand and Australia for helping alcohol-involved clients refrain from drinking. The anklets use transdermal technology to detect alcohol use in individuals who have been ordered by court or parole to refrain from consumption as a condition of release.

Alcohol Detection Anklets, otherwise known as SCRAM Continuous Alcohol Monitoring®—are manufactured by SCRAM Systems® based out of Littleton, Colorado, in the United States.

The technology has been through numerous pilots and trial usage in New Zealand with impressive results:

In one pilot, 153 offenders were monitored for a total of 18,442 days. There were confirmed drinking events on only 649 of those days, indicating that wearers remained sober 96.5% of the time. Of the 153 clients monitored, 115 remained completely abstinent from alcohol for the entire duration of their sentence, a 75.2% sober rate.

A report from the NZ Department of Corrections indicates that testing for alcohol and other drugs is essential for corrections and police officials to be able to intervene with high-risk offenders who are ordered to abstain from alcohol use by the court or Parole Board. This is often the case when the individual is at risk of causing harm from substance misuse.

In May of this year, the Ministry of Justice in the United Kingdom announced new legislation under which offenders who commit an alcohol-fueled crime can be banned from drinking and made to wear the anklets, referred to as 'sobriety tags' in the UK. The UK went from trial to national rollout with stats mirroring the success seen in New Zealand.