

14<sup>th</sup> December 2009

**TRIMEGA LABORATORIES LIMITED**

**("TRIMEGA LABORATORIES" OR "THE COMPANY")**

**NEARLY HALF OF COCAINE USERS TESTING POSITIVE TO COCAETHYLENE**

**- Hair tests reveal extent of danger posed by potentially-lethal cocktail -**

Cocaethylene, a heart attack inducing chemical formed in the liver when cocaine and alcohol are mixed, is present in 45% of cocaine users according to Trimega Laboratories.

The chemical, thought to be responsible for an increase in heart attacks among under 40s, builds up over a number of years in the livers of those who drink alcohol excessively whilst taking cocaine. In terms of lethality, cocaethylene has been shown in mice to be more potent than cocaine or alcohol by exerting more cardiovascular toxicity than either drug alone.

By screening for substance abuse in the hair samples of 1,728 donors nationwide, Trimega Laboratories found cocaine to be present in 20% (344) of samples. Out of those testing positive to cocaine, 45% also tested positive to cocaethylene. Whilst there were too few samples to provide a meaningful analysis for Scotland & Wales, there were some distinct regional variations within England.

**Table 1: Presence of cocaethylene in cocaine users in England:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	North West	60%	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	London	59%	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	North East	54%	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Average	45%	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	East Mids	43%	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	South East	35%	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	South West	30%	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	West Mids	22%	<b>Source: Trimega Laboratories</b>

Avi Lasarow, managing director of Trimega Laboratories, commented:

"Hair tests provide a tell-tale window of detection for any drug and alcohol abuse up to 12 months prior. They are used to unequivocally determine any dangerous levels of abuse or, indeed, abstinence among individuals who are required to be tested by courts, employers, social services and even insurance companies. This includes very accurate readings of when and how much cocaine or alcohol has been consumed and the resulting levels of cocaethylene being formed in the body. In other words, the results from a hair test can pretty much establish the risk of having a heart attack."

Since hair growth is fed by the bloodstream, the ingestion of drugs or excess alcohol in the blood is revealed by analysing chemical markers absorbed by the hair. As the hair grows, it absorbs these markers into its structure, which remain in the hair indefinitely. These markers are only produced when there is alcohol or drugs in the bloodstream. The more markers there are, the more has been consumed. A tuft of hair about the diameter of a pencil is required and the industry standard is to test a length of 1.5 inches, which provides a 90 day history. If no head hair is available, body hair can be used instead. Samples must be taken by a

trained collector or by a national nursing service to collect samples on behalf of clients and results are generally available in seven to 10 working days from receipt of the sample.

**- ENDS -**

#### **About Trimega Laboratories**

Established in London in 2005, Trimega Laboratories ([www.trimegalabs.com](http://www.trimegalabs.com)) has developed a range of innovative techniques for testing substances of abuse. Its core business is laboratory-based analysis of hair samples that provides accurate historical records of any alcohol or drugs dependency over a one to 12 month period. Its methods are certified to ISO 9001:2000 and have been recognised as 'World Leading' by the Society of Hair Testing, a consensus reached by experts from 23 countries. In the UK its clients include: Family Law specialists, Social Services, regulatory bodies, professions such as nurses and pilots, as well as being ordered by the Courts directly. Other services offered by Trimega Laboratories include: Roadside Drugalyzer Testing for law enforcement, Hair Steroid Testing for athletes, and most recently, Hair Benzodiazepines Testing. Trimega Laboratories won the title of Best Use of Technology in the 2008 Barclays-sponsored Startups Awards, was a regional winner in the 2008 HSBC Start-up Stars, a finalist in the 2009 Fast Growth Business Awards, and has been on the shortlist for the National Business Awards two years running.

#### **ENQUIRIES:**

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE COMPANY VISIT [WWW.TRIMEGALABS.COM](http://WWW.TRIMEGALABS.COM)**