Introduction:
In recent years we have witnessed an exponential increase of novel psychoactive substances (NPSs), mainly advertised on the Internet as safer alternative to Regal drugs. The Recreational Drugs European Network (RedNet) project, funded by the European Commission, was implemented to improve the information stream to young people and professionals about effects/risks of NPS by identifying online products and disseminating relevant information through technological tools. According to studies carried by the RedNet team, it is possible to estimate not only that more than 650 different NPSs and combinations are available for sale, but that more than 1000 brand names have been created to advertise these products, making them more appealing especially to young people.

Methods:
The new SMS/Email information service (SMAL) is a new mobile/web tool created to help people to keep up-to-date about the new trends of drug use. The system enables registered users to receive regular emails/messages that contain factsheets with scientifically-based information on the nature and the risks of novel psychoactive substances. The brand names of the 50 most requested fact-sheets embedded in the RedNet SMAL Service have been explored and websites, drug fora and other online resources (i.e.: e-newsgroups, chat-rooms, mailing lists, e-newsletters, and bulletin boards) have been consulted to explore the origins of their denominations and the possible reasons behind the choices.

Results:
Brand names can be mainly divided into 4 groups: (1) adaptations of basic active compounds (e.g. "Phency" for Phenazepam; "Mexxy" for Methoxethamine), (2) indications of the appearance of the substance (e.g. "Cotton Cloud" or "Pure White" for synthetic cathinones), (3) indications of the expected psychoactive effects of the substances (e.g. "Dr. Feel Good" or "Mr Happy" for synthetic cannabinoids) and (4) marketing strategies based on various references to iconic movies, comics, animals and landscapes/space.

Conclusions:
Little is known about the marketing strategies behind this rapidly growing online market. This review study about brand names covers just one of the multiple aspects associated with their diffusion. More in depth socio-cultural studies are required.