

# ‘There, but for the grace of God...’

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| [emergency,onthepods](#)

**Script Writer:** Eamon Merrick

**Interviewee:** David Caldicott

Associate Professor David Caldicott shares his approach, and insights from his experience helping people who present with issues related to drugs and alcohol.  
Interview by Eamon Merrick.

Associate Professor David Caldicott (aka ‘Dr. Platypus’) is an Emergency Consultant at the Emergency Department of the [Calvary Hospital](#) in Canberra and a Clinical Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine at the Australian National University.

He is a spokesperson for the Australian Science Media Centre on issues of illicit drug use and the medical response to terrorism and disasters.

David has been a lifelong advocate for a harm minimization approach to drug use, and has extensive experience with in situ “pill-testing / drug checking” in the Australian context, having liaised closely with Enlighten at the Enchanted series of raves in South Australia in the early ‘00s.

He designed and piloted the Welsh Emergency Department Investigation of Novel Substances (WEDINOS) project in the UK, a unique program using regional emergency departments as sentinel monitoring hubs for the emergence and spread of novel illicit products. He is currently replicating this work in Australia with the ACT Investigation of Novel Substances (ACTINOS) Group, and is the clinical lead of the Australian Drug Observatory, based at the Australian National University.

He has published widely in the peer-reviewed literature, and presents nationally and internationally on the subject of the use of the emergency department as an observatory for the surveillance of novel psychotropic substances as they evolve, as well as their effects in acute overdose.

**Tags:** #ED,#Emergency Medicine

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