

**Searching for Potential
Markers for Monitoring the
Presence of Opiates in Urine
Exposed to Oxidising
Adulterants**

By

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Certificate of authorship and originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all the information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Susan Luong

DATE

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Table of contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.1 THE OPIUM POPPY- FROM THE FIELDS TO THE STREETS.....	2
1.1.1 <i>Manufacture of illicit heroin</i>	6
1.1.1.1 Lime method- predominant procedure for the isolation of morphine.....	6
1.1.1.2 Conversion of morphine to heroin.....	10
1.1.2 <i>Major legal opium poppy fields for pharmaceutical and culinary uses</i>	12
1.1.3 <i>Illicit heroin – the global picture</i>	14
1.1.3.1 Illicit heroin supply and demand.....	14
1.1.3.2 Illicit heroin trafficking and seizures.....	17
1.1.3.3 Heroin- the situation in Australia.....	19
1.1.3.4 Legislation for heroin, morphine and codeine.....	21
1.2 EFFECT OF HEROIN, MORPHINE AND CODEINE ON THE HUMAN BODY.....	21
1.2.1 <i>Routes of administration</i>	22
1.2.2 <i>Metabolism and excretion of heroin, morphine and codeine</i>	22
1.2.3 <i>Mechanism of action of opiate alkaloids</i>	26
1.2.4 <i>CNS and peripheral effects associated with the use of opium alkaloids</i>	26
1.3 DETECTION OF OPIATE ALKALOIDS IN URINE.....	27
1.3.1 <i>Immunoassay Techniques</i>	28
1.3.2 <i>Thin Layer Chromatography</i>	30
1.3.3 <i>Gas chromatography-mass spectrometry</i>	30
1.3.3.1 Specimen hydrolysis.....	30
1.3.3.2 Extraction of opiate analytes.....	32
1.3.3.3 Derivatisation of opiate analytes.....	38
1.3.3.4 GC-MS separation and detection of opiates.....	39
1.3.4 <i>Liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry</i>	40

1.3.4.1	Chromatographic separation of opiates using LC	41
1.3.4.2	Ionisation interfaces and mass spectrometric detection for opiates.....	42
1.3.5	<i>Stability of opiate alkaloids in urine</i>	<i>44</i>
1.4	SAMPLE ADULTERATION IN URINE DRUG TESTING.....	45
1.4.1	<i>Methods of urine adulteration</i>	<i>47</i>
1.4.1.1	Substitution	47
1.4.1.2	In-vivo adulteration	48
1.4.1.3	In-vitro adulteration	48
1.4.2	<i>Oxidising adulterants.....</i>	<i>49</i>
1.4.2.1	Nitrite.....	50
1.4.2.2	Pyridinium chlorochromate	50
1.4.2.3	Hypochlorite	51
1.4.2.4	Peroxide/peroxidase.....	51
1.4.2.5	Glutaraldehyde	52
1.4.2.6	Factors affecting the effectiveness of oxidising urine adulterants	53
1.4.3	<i>Methodologies for the detection of urine adulteration.....</i>	<i>53</i>
1.4.3.1	Spot tests	56
1.4.3.2	Instrumental techniques.....	57
1.4.3.3	Dipstick detection devices	58
1.5	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PHD RESEARCH.....	59
CHAPTER 2:	PILOT STUDY	62
2.1	INTRODUCTION	62
2.2	SELECTION OF OXIDANTS	62
2.2.1	<i>Chemical reagents and materials.....</i>	<i>62</i>
2.2.2	<i>Donor urine.....</i>	<i>63</i>
2.2.3	<i>Experimental method.....</i>	<i>63</i>
2.2.4	<i>Results and discussion</i>	<i>63</i>

2.3	QUALITATIVE LC-MS METHOD FOR THE SCREENING OF OPIATES IN URINE	65
2.3.1	<i>Chemical reagents and materials</i>	66
2.3.2	<i>Experimental method</i>	66
2.3.2.1	Preparation of drug standards in water and urine.....	66
2.3.2.2	Preparation of mobile phases.....	66
2.3.2.3	LC separation	67
2.3.2.4	MS detection.....	67
2.3.3	<i>Results and discussion</i>	68
2.3.3.1	Chromatographic separation of the opiate analytes	68
2.3.3.2	Fragmentor voltage and collision energy optimisation	73
2.4	CONCLUSIONS FOR THE PILOT STUDY.....	77
CHAPTER 3: SEARCH FOR POTENTIAL MARKERS FOR MONITORING THE PRESENCE OF 6-MONOACETYLMORPHINE IN URINE ADULTERATED WITH NITRITE.....		79
3.1	INTRODUCTION	79
3.2	MATERIALS.....	79
3.2.1	<i>Drug standards and reagents</i>	79
3.2.2	<i>Urine specimens</i>	80
3.3	INSTRUMENTATION	80
3.3.1	<i>CEDIA[®] 6-AM assay</i>	80
3.3.2	<i>LC-MS</i>	81
3.3.3	<i>GC-MS</i>	81
3.3.4	<i>Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectroscopy</i>	82
3.4	EXPERIMENTAL METHOD	82
3.4.1	<i>Exposure of 6-MAM to potassium nitrite</i>	82
3.4.2	<i>MRM method validation</i>	83
3.4.3	<i>Isolation of the 6-MAM/nitrite reaction product</i>	85
3.5	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	85

3.5.1	<i>Effect of nitrite on CEDIA[®]</i>	85
3.5.2	<i>LC-MS studies</i>	89
3.5.3	<i>Structural elucidation of the 6-MAM/nitrite oxidation product</i>	95
3.6	CONCLUSIONS	104
CHAPTER 4: DETECTION AND IDENTIFICATION OF 2-NITRO-MORPHINE AND 2-NITRO-MORPHINE-6-GLUCURONIDE IN NITRITE ADULTERATED URINE SPECIMENS CONTAINING MORPHINE AND ITS GLUCURONIDES		107
4.1	INTRODUCTION	107
4.2	MATERIALS	108
4.2.1	<i>Drug standards and reagents</i>	108
4.2.2	<i>Urine specimens</i>	108
4.3	INSTRUMENTATION	109
4.3.1	<i>LC-MS</i>	109
4.3.2	<i>GC-MS</i>	109
4.3.3	<i>NMR</i>	110
4.4	EXPERIMENTAL METHOD	110
4.4.1	<i>LC-MS studies</i>	110
4.4.2	<i>MRM method validation</i>	111
4.4.3	<i>Enzymatic hydrolysis studies</i>	111
4.4.4	<i>GC-MS studies</i>	112
4.4.5	<i>NMR studies</i>	112
4.5	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	112
4.5.1	<i>Formation of 2-nitro-morphine</i>	112
4.5.2	<i>Formation of 2-nitro-morphine-6-glucuronide</i>	120
4.5.3	<i>Inability of nitrite to react with codeine and morphine-3-glucuronide</i>	123
4.5.4	<i>Development of an MRM method</i>	123
4.5.5	<i>Detection of 2-nitro-morphine and 2-nitro-M6G in authentic morphine-positive urine following nitrite adulteration</i>	126

4.5.6	<i>Preliminary stability assessment of the nitrated opiate species upon storage</i>	128
4.5.7	<i>Enzymatic hydrolysis studies</i>	130
4.5.8	<i>GC-MS studies</i>	131
4.6	CONCLUSIONS	133
CHAPTER 5: TRANSFORMATION OF CODEINE AND CODEINE-6-GLUCURONIDE TO OPIOID ANALOGUES BY URINARY ADULTERATION WITH PYRIDINIUM CHLOROCHROMATE		135
5.1	INTRODUCTION	135
5.2	MATERIALS	136
5.2.1	<i>Drug standards and reagents</i>	136
5.2.2	<i>Urine specimens</i>	136
5.3	INSTRUMENTATION	137
5.3.1	<i>LC-MS</i>	137
5.3.2	<i>NMR</i>	138
5.4	EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES	138
5.4.1	<i>Exposure of opiates to PCC</i>	138
5.4.2	<i>Preparation of reaction products</i>	139
5.4.3	<i>Immunoassay and GC-MS study</i>	140
5.5	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	141
5.5.1	<i>Exposure of codeine and C6G to PCC</i>	141
5.5.1.1	Reaction of codeine and PCC in water and in urine	141
5.5.1.2	Reaction of C6G and PCC in water and in urine	147
5.5.1.3	PCC adulteration of an authentic specimen	151
5.5.1.4	Immunoassay and GC-MS study	153
5.5.2	<i>Structural elucidation of the reaction products</i>	157
5.5.2.1	Characterisation of product m/z 298	157
5.5.2.2	Characterisation of product m/z 314a	167
5.5.2.3	Characterisation of product m/z 314b	170
5.5.2.4	Characterisation of product m/z 316	174

5.5.2.5	Tentative structure for product m/z 416	177
5.5.2.6	Proposed mechanism of action of PCC as a urine adulterant	181
5.6	CONCLUSIONS	183
CHAPTER 6: EXPOSURE OF 6-MAM, MORPHINE, MORPHINE-3-GLUCURONIDE AND MORPHINE-6-GLUCURONIDE TO PCC IN URINE		185
6.1	INTRODUCTION	185
6.2	MATERIALS	185
6.2.1	<i>Drug standards and reagents</i>	185
6.2.2	<i>Urine specimens</i>	186
6.3	LC-MS INSTRUMENTATION	186
6.4	EXPERIMENTAL METHODS	186
6.4.1	<i>Exposure of morphine analogues to PCC in water</i>	186
6.4.2	<i>Exposure of morphine analogues to PCC in urine</i>	187
6.4.3	<i>Structural elucidation of the reaction products</i>	187
6.4.4	<i>Analysis of PCC-adulterated authentic specimens by a routine toxicology laboratory</i>	187
6.5	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	188
6.5.1	<i>Exposure of morphine analogues to PCC in water</i>	188
6.5.1.1	Reaction of M3G to PCC in water	188
6.5.1.2	Reaction of morphine to PCC in water	189
6.5.1.3	Reaction of 6-MAM to PCC in water	192
6.5.1.4	Effect of PCC on M6G in water	193
6.5.2	<i>Exposure of M3G, morphine and 6-MAM to PCC in urine</i>	194
6.5.2.1	Search for product m/z 460 in urine spiked with M3G and exposed to PCC	195
6.5.2.2	Search for product m/z 316 in urine spiked with morphine and exposed to PCC	197
6.5.2.3	Search for product m/z 358 and m/z 360 in urine spiked with 6-MAM and exposed to PCC	199
6.5.3	<i>Structural elucidation of the reaction products</i>	203
6.5.3.1	Characterisation of product m/z 460	203
6.5.3.2	Characterisation of product m/z 358 and product m/z 360	205

6.5.3.3	Characterisation of products m/z 316	210
6.5.4	<i>Analysis of PCC adulterated authentic specimens using a routine toxicology laboratory</i>	212
6.6	CONCLUSIONS.....	216
CHAPTER 7:	EXPOSURE OF OPIATES TO HYPOCHLORITE	218
7.1	INTRODUCTION	218
7.2	MATERIALS.....	218
7.2.1	<i>Drug standards and reagents</i>	218
7.2.2	<i>Urine specimens</i>	219
7.3	SAMPLE PREPARATION	219
7.4	ANALYSIS OF OPIATE POSITIVE URINE SPECIMENS SPIKED WITH HYPOCHLORITE BY LC-MS.....	219
7.5	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	219
7.6	CONCLUSIONS.....	233
CHAPTER 8:	QUANTITATIVE NMR ANALYSES OF 2-NITRO-MAM AND 2-NITRO-MORPHINE.....	235
8.1	INTRODUCTION	235
8.2	MATERIALS.....	236
8.3	INSTRUMENTATION	236
8.4	EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES.....	237
8.5	RESULTS AND CALCULATIONS.....	237
8.6	CONCLUSIONS.....	241
CHAPTER 9:	OVERALL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK	243
9.1	OVERALL CONCLUSIONS	243
9.2	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK.....	245
APPENDIX	249
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THIS RESEARCH		276
REFERENCES		278

List of figures

Figure 1-1: The opium poppy plant, <i>Papaver Somniferum</i> [1].	2
Figure 1-2: Opiate alkaloids (a) morphine, (b) codeine, (c) thebaine, (d) noscapine and (e) papaverine, found in the opium poppy.	4
Figure 1-3: The 'Golden Triangle' (map adapted from [10])......	5
Figure 1-4: The 'Golden Crescent' (map adapted from [10])......	5
Figure 1-5: Flowchart outlining the lime method for the extraction of morphine.....	9
Figure 1-6: Reaction scheme showing the acetylation of morphine to heroin.	10
Figure 1-7: Global potential opium production, 1997-2011 [9]. Note: the 2011 estimate for the rest of the world is provisional.	15
Figure 1-8: Global seizures of heroin and morphine in 2010 (countries and territories reporting seizures of more than 100 kg) [9]......	19
Figure 1-9: Number and weight of heroin detections at the Australian border, 2002-03 to 2011-12 [20]......	20
Figure 1-10: Metabolic pathway of (a) heroin in the human body, including the metabolic routes for (b) 6-MAM, (c) 3-MAM, (d) morphine, (e) M3G, (f) M6G, (g) normorphine, (h) normorphine-3-glucuronide, (i) normorphine-6-glucuronide, (j) codeine, (k) norcodeine and (l) C6G.....	25
Figure 1-11: Principle behind the CEDIA immunoassay, where (a) in the absence of free drug, formation of a complete tetrameric enzyme is inhibited, and no coloured product is generated after addition of substrate to the reaction mixture; and (b) in presence of free drug, it competes with the enzyme donor (ED)-drug conjugate for anti-drug antibody binding sites. Complete active enzyme molecules are formed, which converts the colourless substrate into coloured product in proportional to the drug concentration. Note that EA is the enzyme acceptor (schematic obtained from [75])......	29

Figure 1-12: pKa values of (a) 6-MAM, (b) morphine and (c) codeine [81].	33
Figure 1-13: General procedure for the LLE of opiates from urine.	34
Figure 2-1: The effect of various oxidants on the appearance and pH of urine.	65
Figure 2-2: chromatogram of morphine ($R_t = 1.6$ min) in water obtained with the inset gradient, where solvent B = acetonitrile +0.05% formic acid, and solvent A = ammonium formate +0.05% formic acid.	70
Figure 2-3: Total ion current (TIC) chromatogram of a mixed opiate standard in water obtained using the gradient outlined in Table 2-2, where the order of elution is: (a) M3G ($R_t = 1.1$ min), (b) M6G ($R_t = 2.4$ min), (c) morphine ($R_t = 4.4$ min), (d) codeine ($R_t = 9.1$ min) and (e) 6-MAM ($R_t = 9.5$ min).	72
Figure 2-4: Plot of extracted M3G (m/z 462) peak area vs. fragmentor voltage.	74
Figure 2-5: Plot of extracted M6G (m/z 462) peak area vs. fragmentor voltage.	74
Figure 2-6: Plot of extracted morphine (m/z 286) peak area vs. fragmentor voltage.	75
Figure 2-7: Plot of extracted codeine (m/z 300) peak area vs. fragmentor voltage.	75
Figure 2-8: Plot of extracted 6-MAM (m/z 328) peak area vs. fragmentor voltage.	76
Figure 3-1: TICs and product ion scan spectra of 6-MAM and the reaction product in urine: (a) TIC of 6-MAM ($R_t = 9.5$ min), (b) MS of 6-MAM (fragmentor voltage 170 V, collision energy 35 eV), (c) TIC of the reaction product ($R_t = 12.0$ min) and (d) MS of the reaction product (fragmentor voltage 200 V, collision energy 45 eV).	90
Figure 3-2: 6-MAM calibration curve displaying the linear response function between 1-1000 ng/mL for day four of the method validation.	91
Figure 3-3: TICs of 'authentic urine 1' (a) prior to nitrite fortification, (b) subsequent to nitrite fortification (no acidification, pH 6) and (c) following nitrite fortification (pH 3). Retention time of 6-MAM is 9.5 min and the reaction product is 12.0 min.	94

Figure 3-4: Proposed reaction mechanism for the formation of 2-nitro-MAM from reaction of 6-MAM with potassium nitrite under acidic conditions.	96
Figure 3-5: ^1H -NMR spectrum of 6-MAM in CDCl_3	97
Figure 3-6: ^1H -NMR spectrum of 2-nitro-MAM in CDCl_3	98
Figure 3-7: ^1H -NMR spectra of 6-MAM and 2-nitro-MAM (6.0-8.0 ppm region): (a) 6-MAM before resolution enhancement, (b) 2-nitro-MAM before resolution enhancement, (c) 6-MAM after resolution enhancement, with line broadening (lb) and Gaussian broadening (gb) set at -0.5 and 0.6, respectively, and (d) 2-nitro-MAM after resolution enhancement, with lb and gb set at -1 and 0.35, respectively.	100
Figure 3-8: Selected region of ^1H - ^1H COSY spectrum of 2-nitro-MAM.	101
Figure 3-9: Partial ^1H - ^{13}C HSQC spectrum of 2-nitro-MAM in CDCl_3	102
Figure 3-10: Partial ^1H - ^{13}C HMBC spectrum of 2-nitro-MAM in CDCl_3	103
Figure 3-11: Total ion chromatograms (TICs) and mass spectra of the TMS derivatives of 6-MAM and 2-nitro-MAM: (a) TIC of 6-MAM-TMS eluting at 5.12 min, (b) MS of 6-MAM-TMS, (c) TIC of 2-nitro-MAM-TMS eluting at 6.73 min, and (d) MS of 2-nitro-MAM-TMS.....	104
Figure 4-1: TIC chromatograms of (a) morphine, eluting at 4.1 min and (b) the major reaction product resulting from morphine reaction with 0.6 M KNO_2 , eluting at 7.8 min.....	113
Figure 4-2: Accurate mass CID spectra for (a) morphine (FE = 170 V, CE = 45 eV) and (b) 2-nitro-morphine (FE = 170 V, CE = 45 eV)	115
Figure 4-3: General reaction scheme depicting the conversion of (1) the opiate starting material to (2) the nitrated oxidation product, where R = H for morphine, and R = $\text{C}_6\text{H}_9\text{O}_6$ (glucuronide) for M6G.	116
Figure 4-4: ^1H -NMR spectrum of morphine in CD_3OD	118
Figure 4-5: ^1H -NMR spectrum of the reaction product 2-nitro-morphine in CD_3OD	119

- Figure 4-6: ^1H -NMR spectra of (a) morphine and (b) 2-nitro-morphine; ^1H - ^1H COSY spectra of (c) morphine and (d) 2-nitro-morphine; and ^1H - ^{13}C HSQC spectra of (e) morphine and (f) 2-nitromorphine. Spectra shown are for the aromatic region only. 120
- Figure 4-7: TIC chromatograms of (a) M6G, eluting at 2.1 min and (b) the major reaction product resulting from M6G reaction with 0.6 M KNO_2 , eluting at 4.5 min (note: the small peak at 2.1 min is not M6G, and belongs to an unknown urinary compound). 121
- Figure 4-8: Accurate mass MS/MS data for (a) 2-nitro-M6G (FE = 170 V, CE = 45 eV) and (b) 2-nitro-M6G (FE = 170 V, CE = 60 eV). 122
- Figure 4-9: TIC chromatograms showing the major analytes detected in (a) the authentic specimen, (b) the authentic specimen spiked with 0.05 M KNO_2 , (c) the authentic specimen spiked with 0.05 M KNO_2 (pH 3), (d) the authentic specimen spiked with 0.6 M KNO_2 , and (e) the authentic specimen spiked with 0.6 M KNO_2 (pH 3). Retention times are: morphine = 4.1 min, 2-nitro-morphine = 7.7 min, M6G = 2.1 min, 2-nitro-M6G = 4.4-4.5 min and M3G = 1.0 min. 127
- Figure 4-10: (a) GC trace and (b) MS fragmentation pattern of the TMS derivative of 2-nitro-morphine, in scan mode. 132
- Figure 4-11: (a) GC trace and (b) MS fragmentation pattern of the TMS derivative of morphine, in scan mode. 132
- Figure 5-1: TIC chromatograms (product ion scan) of a codeine urine sample adulterated with 20 mM PCC (a) one hour, (b) one day and (c) one week after adulteration; and TIC chromatograms of a corresponding codeine urine sample adulterated with 100 mM PCC (d) one hour, (e) one day and (f) one week after adulteration (the peak at 8.1 min was also present in the control samples and therefore determined not to be a reaction product). ... 143
- Figure 5-2: TIC chromatograms (product ion scan) of the C6G urine sample adulterated with 100 mM PCC (a) one hour, (b) one day and (c) one week after adulteration. Nb: R_t for C6G is 6.5 min; R_t for codeine and products m/z 416 and m/z 298 are 9.2 min, 10.1 min and 11.3 min, respectively. 148
- Figure 5-3: TIC chromatograms (product ion scan) of the authentic urine specimen adulterated with 100 mM PCC (a) one hour, (b) one day and (c) five days after adulteration.

Nb: R_t for C6G, codeine and products m/z 416 and m/z 298 are 6.4 min, 9.0 min, 10.1 min and 11.1 min, respectively.....	152
Figure 5-4: plot of (a) morphine- d_6 loss and (b) codeine- d_6 loss in two urine blank (B1, B2) specimens and six opiate positive (U1-U6) urines adulterated with PCC (analyte loss is expressed as a percentage relative to morphine- d_6 and codeine- d_6 abundance in the corresponding unadulterated specimen).	156
Figure 5-5: Molecular structures of (a) codeine, (b) codeinone, (c) 14-hydroxycodeinone (d) 6-O-methylcodeine and (e) 8-hydroxy-7,8-dihydrocodeinone.....	158
Figure 5-6: TIC chromatogram (product ion scan) of the NMR sample containing the extracted opiate derivatives in $CDCl_3$. R_t for codeine and products m/z 316, 314 (314a and 314b) and 298 are 9.2 min, 9.5 min, 10.6 min and 11.3 min, respectively. Nb: The peak at 5.6 min is not an analyte of interest; however, the peak at 7.9 min also belongs to codeine.	158
Figure 5-7: Resonance structures of codeinone demonstrating the presence of a partial positive charge on the C-8 carbon.....	160
Figure 5-8: QQQ-MS fragmentation patterns of (a) codeine (CE = 45 eV), (b) the m/z 298 product (CE = 40 eV) and (c) the codeinone reference material synthesised via the Swern oxidation route (CE = 40 eV).	163
Figure 5-9: Equilibrium between (a) codeinone and (b) neopinone.....	164
Figure 5-10: High resolution CID spectrum of product m/z 298, codeinone (FE = 250 V, CE = 40 eV).....	165
Figure 5-11: Proposed MS fragmentation pathways of the product m/z 298, codeinone.....	166
Figure 5-12: High resolution CID spectrum of product m/z 314a, 14-hydroxycodeinone (FE = 150 V, CE = 20 eV).	167
Figure 5-13: Proposed MS fragmentation pathways of product m/z 314a, 14-hydroxycodeinone.	169
Figure 5-14: Structure of ethylmorphine.....	170

Figure 5-15: TIC chromatogram (product ion scan) of (a) a 6-O-methylcodeine standard, and QQQ-MS CID spectra of (b) a 6-O-methylcodeine standard (CE = 25 eV) and (c) the m/z 314b product (CE = 25 eV).	171
Figure 5-16: High resolution CID spectrum of product m/z 314b, 6-O-methylcodeine (FE = 220 V, CE = 45 eV).	172
Figure 5-17: Proposed MS fragmentation pathways of product m/z 314b, 6-O-methylcodeine.	173
Figure 5-18: QQQ-MS fragmentation patterns of (a) the product m/z 316 (CE = 40 eV) and (b) oxycodone (CE = 40 eV).	175
Figure 5-19: High resolution CID spectrum of product m/z 316, 8-hydroxy-7,8-dihydrocodeinone (FE = 240 V, CE= 40 eV), resulting from the reaction of codeine and PCC in urine.	175
Figure 5-20: Proposed MS fragmentation pathways of product m/z 316, hypothesized to be 8-hydroxy-7,8-dihydrocodeinone.	176
Figure 5-21: QQQ-MS CID spectra of (a) C6G (CE = 45 eV) and (b) product m/z 416 (CE = 40 eV), with a reaction scheme depicting the proposed conversion of (c) C6G to (d) the tentative reaction product by PCC.	178
Figure 5-22: High resolution CID spectrum (FE = 170 V, CE = 40 eV) and the proposed structures for the product ions for product m/z 416, tentatively identified to be a C6G lactone derivative.	180
Figure 5-23: Proposed mechanism for the oxidation of codeine to codeinone by PCC.	182
Figure 6-1: TIC chromatograms of M3G spiked with 20 mM PCC in water (a) one hour, (b) two days and (c) three weeks after reaction commencement, and TIC chromatograms of M3G with 2 mM PCC in water (d) two days and (e) three weeks following fortification, with (f) the CID spectrum of product m/z 460.....	189
Figure 6-2: TIC chromatograms of morphine spiked with 20 mM PCC in water (a) one day, (b) three days and (c) five days after reaction commencement; and TIC chromatograms of a	

parallel set of samples containing 100 mM PCC (d) one day, (e) three days and (f) five days following adulteration. R_t of product m/z 316 is 8.9 min.	190
Figure 6-3: (a) TIC chromatogram and (b) CID spectrum of morphine ($R_t = 4.6$ min), and (c) CID spectrum of product m/z 316.	191
Figure 6-4: CID spectra of (a) 6-MAM, (b) product m/z 358 and (c) product m/z 360.	193
Figure 6-5: TIC chromatograms (product ion scan) of M3G exposed to 20 mM PCC in urine (a) one hour, (b) one day and (c) one week elapsed since the commencement of the reaction; and M3G reaction to 100 mM PCC in urine (d) one hour, (e) one day and (f) one week following adulteration.	196
Figure 6-6: Plot of morphine and product m/z 316 abundance in urine adulterated with 100 mM PCC.	198
Figure 6-7: TIC chromatograms (product ion scan) of 6-MAM exposed to 100 mM PCC in urine (a) one hour, (b) one day (d) two days and (d) seven days following adulteration.	201
Figure 6-8: (a) Close-up of the TIC chromatogram in Figure 6-7a of products m/z 360 at 5.17 and 6.48 min at one hour after reaction of 6-MAM and PCC in urine; (b) CID spectrum of product m/z 360 at 5.17 min and (c) CID spectrum of product m/z 360 at 6.48 min.	202
Figure 6-9: Reaction scheme showing the conversion of (a) M3G to (b) morphinone-3-glucuronide in the presence of PCC in urine.	203
Figure 6-10: High resolution CID spectrum of product m/z 460, morphinone-3-glucuronide (FE = 200 V, CE = 30 eV).	204
Figure 6-11: Proposed mass fragmentation pathways for product m/z 460, morphinone-3-glucuronide.	204
Figure 6-12: Molecular structure of (a) 6-MAM and the proposed structures for (b) product m/z 360 (7,14-dihydroxy-6-MAM) and (c) product m/z 358.	205
Figure 6-13: High resolution CID spectrum of product m/z 360 (FE = 170 V, CE = 35 eV).	206

Figure 6-14: Proposed MS fragment ions and fragmentation pathways for product m/z 360, 7,14-dihydroxy-6-MAM.....	207
Figure 6-15: High resolution CID spectrum of product m/z 358 (FE = 170 V, CE = 40 eV).....	208
Figure 6-16: Proposed MS fragment ions and fragmentation pathways for product m/z 358.	209
Figure 6-17: High resolution CID spectrum of product m/z 316 (FE = 170 V, CE = 35eV).....	210
Figure 6-18: molecular structure of (a) morphine and (b) the proposed structure for product m/z 316.	211
Figure 6-19: Plot of (a) morphine-d ₆ loss and (b) codeine-d ₆ loss in two urine blank specimens and four opiate positive urines adulterated with PCC (analyte loss is expressed as a percentage relative to morphine-d ₆ and codeine-d ₆ abundance in the corresponding unadulterated specimen).....	215
Figure 7-1: (a) TIC chromatogram of 6-MAM in water and (b)TIC chromatogram overlay of the 6-MAM + 0.5-0.75% (w/v available chlorine) hypochlorite solution and the corresponding reagent control, with the possible reaction product eluting at 0.9 min and (c) MS spectrum of the product eluting at 0.9 min.	222
Figure 7-2: (a) TIC chromatogram of morphine in water and (b)TIC chromatogram overlay of the morphine + 0.5-0.75% (w/v available chlorine) hypochlorite solution and the corresponding reagent control, with the possible reaction product eluting at 0.9 min and (c) MS spectrum of the product eluting at 0.9 min.	223
Figure 7-3: TIC chromatogram overlay of the 6-MAM + 0.025-0.0375% (w/v available chlorine) hypochlorite solution and the corresponding reagent control, with the possible reaction products eluting at 0.8 min and 3.0 min, (b) MS spectrum of the product eluting at 0.8 min and (c) MS spectrum of the product eluting at 3.0 min.	224
Figure 7-4: TIC chromatogram overlay of the morphine + 0.025-0.0375% (w/v available chlorine) hypochlorite solution and the corresponding reagent control, with the possible reaction products eluting at 0.9 min and 3.0 min, (b) MS spectrum of the product eluting at 0.9 min and (c) MS spectrum of the product eluting at 3.0 min.	225

Figure 7-5: (a)TIC chromatogram of codeine in water, (b) TIC chromatogram overlay of the codeine + 0.025-0.0375% (w/v available chlorine) hypochlorite (green trace) and the codeine + 0.075-0.1125% (w/v available chlorine) hypochlorite (red trace), with the possible reaction products eluting at 11.9 min and 14.2 min (c) MS spectrum of the product eluting at 11.9 min and (d) MS spectrum of the product eluting at 14.2 min.	227
Figure 7-6: (a)TIC chromatogram of M3G in water, (b) TIC chromatogram overlay of the M3G + 0.125-0.1875% (w/v available chlorine) hypochlorite solution and the corresponding reagent control, with the possible reaction products eluting at 3.9 min and 8.1 min, (c) MS spectrum of the product eluting at 3.9 min and (d) MS spectrum of the product eluting at 8.1 min.	230
Figure 7-7: enlargement of the m/z 496 peak belonging to the potential reaction product eluting at 3.9 min, demonstrating the 3:1 ratio of m/z 496 to m/z 498.....	231
Figure 7-8: (a) TIC chromatogram overlay of the M3G + 0.025-0.0375% (w/v available chlorine) hypochlorite (black trace) and the codeine + 0.075-0.1125% (w/v available chlorine) hypochlorite (red trace), with M3G eluting at 1.0 min and product m/z 496 at 3.9 min,, (b) MS spectrum of M3G (c) MS spectrum of product m/z 496.....	232
Figure 8-1: structure of 1,3,5-triazine.....	235
Figure 8-2: Integrated ¹ H-NMR spectrum of 2-nitro-MAM with spiked 1,3,5-triazine in CDCl ₃ (δ 5.4-9.4 ppm region).	238
Figure 8-3: Integrated ¹ H-NMR spectrum of 2-nitro-morphine with spiked 1,3,5-triazine in CD ₃ OD (δ 5.2-9.8 ppm region).	240

List of tables

Table 1-1: Potential illicit production of opium and manufacture of heroin of unknown purity, 2004-2011 (adapted from [9]).	17
Table 1-2: Short-term and long-term effects associated with opiate use.	27
Table 1-3: Base materials and sorbent functional groups commonly used in SPE cartridges [83].	36
Table 1-4: Physiological measurements of temperature, pH, specific gravity and creatinine in normal human urine.	54
Table 1-5: SAMHSA guidelines for adulteration and substitution testing [105].	55
Table 2-1: Source parameters for the 6460 and 6490 QQQ-MS.	68
Table 2-2: gradient elution profile for the separation of opiates in aqueous matrices.	71
Table 2-3: Injection volume and auxiliary parameters implemented in the LC method.	72
Table 2-4: Protonated parent ions and the optimal fragmentor voltage determined for each opiate analyte.	76
Table 3-1: Preparation of the 6-MAM calibration standards in urine.	83
Table 3-2: Preparation of the 6-MAM working solutions in methanol.	84
Table 3-3: Preparation of the 6-MAM QC samples in urine.	84
Table 3-4: Preparation of the 6-MAM working solutions in methanol for the QC samples.	85
Table 3-5: CEDIA [®] Heroin Metabolite (6-AM) assay responses for spiked and authentic urine samples following nitrite adulteration.	88
Table 3-6: Accuracy and precision of the developed MRM method for monitoring 6-MAM in urine.	92
Table 3-7: Summary of the effect of urine pH on the formation of 2-nitro-MAM.	92

Table 4-1: Key NMR acquisition parameters for the analysis of morphine and the reaction product in CD ₃ OD.....	110
Table 4-2: LC-MS/MS MRM method validation results for morphine, M3G and M6G.	125
Table 4-3: A summary of the analytes present in each urine sample monitored during the 12 day time course study.....	129
Table 5-1: Relative peak areas of analytes (normalised to the most abundant analyte (100%)) detected in the codeine adulterated samples after one hour, one day and one week elapsed since commencement of the reaction using LC-MS (product ion scan) analysis.....	144
Table 5-2: Relative peak areas of analytes (normalised to the most abundant analyte (100%)) detected in the C6G adulterated samples after one hour, one day and one week elapsed since commencement of the reaction using LC-MS (product ion scan) analysis.....	150
Table 5-3: Immunoassay screening results for the unmodified blank (B1, B2) and opiate positive (U1-U6) urine specimens and the corresponding adulterated specimens with 20 mM and 100 mM PCC.....	154
Table 5-4: GC-MS confirmatory results for the unmodified blank (B1, B2) and opiate positive (U1-U6) urine specimens and the corresponding adulterated specimens with 20 mM and 100 mM PCC.....	155
Table 5-5: ¹ H-NMR chemical shifts of literature codeine and codeinone compared to the codeine standard and product m/z 298 analysed in this study.....	159
Table 5-6: ¹³ C-NMR chemical shifts of literature codeine compared to the codeine standard analysed in this study.....	162
Table 6-1: MS parameters used for the acquisition of CID spectra for the opiates and their respective reaction products.	195
Table 6-2: Relative peak areas of analytes (normalised to the most abundant analyte (100%)) detected in the M3G adulterated samples after one and five hours and one, two, four and seven days elapsed since the commencement of the reaction using LC-MS (product ion scan) analysis.....	197

Table 6-3: Relative peak areas of analytes (normalised to the most abundant analyte (100%)) detected in the 6-MAM adulterated samples after one and five hours and one, two, four and seven days elapsed since commencement of the reaction using LC-MS (product ion scan) analysis.....	200
Table 6-4: Proposed product ions and corresponding mass accuracy differences for the peaks observed in the CID spectrum of product m/z 316.	211
Table 6-5: Immunoassay screening results for the unmodified blank (B1, B2) and opiate positive (U1-U4) urine specimens and the corresponding adulterated specimens with 20 mM and 100 mM PCC.....	213
Table 6-6: GC-MS confirmatory results for the unmodified blank (B1, B2) and opiate positive (U1-U4) urine specimens and the corresponding adulterated specimens with 20 mM and 100 mM PCC.....	214
Table 7-1: pH of the reaction mixtures with various concentrations of fortified hypochlorite.	220
Table 8-1: Acquisition parameters used for the collection of ¹ H-NMR data.	236

Abbreviations

1D	one-dimensional
$^1\text{H-NMR}$	one-dimensional proton NMR
$^1\text{H-}^1\text{H COSY}$	two-dimensional correlation spectroscopy NMR
$^1\text{H-}^{13}\text{C HSQC}$	heteronuclear single quantum coherence spectroscopy
$^1\text{H-}^{13}\text{C HMBC}$	heteronuclear multiple bond correlation spectroscopy
2D	two-dimensional
2-nitro-M6G	2-nitro-morphine-6-glucuronide
2-nitro-MAM	2-nitro-6-monoacetylmorphine
2-nitro-MAM-TMS	trimethylsilyl derivative of 2-nitro-MAM
3-MAM	3-monoacetylmorphine
6-MAM	6-monoacetylmorphine
6-MAM-TMS	trimethylsilyl derivative of 6-MAM
AIDDC	Australian Illicit Drug Data Centre
APCI	atmospheric pressure chemical ionisation
AS/NZS 4308	Australian/New Zealand Standard™ 4308
BSTFA	<i>N,O</i> -bis(trimethylsilyl)trifluoroacetamide
C6G	codeine-6-glucuronide

CDCl ₃	deuterated chloroform
CD ₃ OD	deuterated methanol
CEDIA	cloned enzyme donor immunoassay
CID	collision induced dissociation
CNS	central nervous system
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
DPC	diphenylcarbazide
EIC	extracted ion chromatogram
EI-MS	electron impact-mass spectrometer
ELISA	enzyme linked immunosorbent assay
EMIT	enzyme multiplied immunoassay
EPO	erythropoietin
ESI	electrospray ionisation
ESI-MS	electrospray ionisation-mass spectrometry
FPIA	fluorescence polarisation immunoassay
GC-MS	gas chromatography-mass spectrometry
h	hour(s)
HCl	hydrochloric acid

HPLC	high performance liquid chromatography
ICP-MS	inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry
KNO ₂	potassium nitrite
LC	liquid chromatography
LC-MS	liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry
LC-MS/MS	liquid chromatography tandem mass spectrometry
LLE	liquid-liquid extraction
M3G	morphine-3-glucuronide
M6G	morphine-6-glucuronide
MALDI	matrix assisted laser desorption ionisation
MeOH	methanol
min	minutes
MRE	mean relative error
MRM	multiple reaction monitoring
MS	mass spectrometry
MSTFA	<i>N</i> -methyl- <i>N</i> -(trimethylsilyl)trifluoroacetamide
<i>m/z</i>	mass-to-charge
NaOH	sodium hydroxide

NMI	National Measurement Institute
NMR	nuclear magnetic resonance
PCC	pyridinium chlorochromate
QQQ-MS	triple quadrupole-mass spectrometer/spectrometry
QTOF-MS	quadrupole time-of-flight mass spectrometer/spectrometry
R _f	retention factor
R _t	retention time
RIA	radioimmunoassay
RSD	relative standard deviation
SAMHSA	substance abuse and mental health services administration
SIM	selective ion monitoring
SPE	solid phase extraction
THC	Δ^9 -tetrahydrocannabinol
THC-COOH	11-nor-9-carboxy- Δ^9 -tetrahydrocannabinol
TIC	total ion chromatogram
TLC	thin layer chromatography
TMB	tetramethylbenzidine
TMCS	trimethylchlorosilane

UNODC United Nations Office on Drug and Crime

WADA World Anti-Doping Agency

Abstract

Urine is a long accepted biological matrix used for the detection of prescription and illicit drug use in the population. In today's society, there is still a social stigma attached to individuals that have been found to be using contraband drugs. Being labelled a "drug addict" or a "drug cheat" in sports can potentially be detrimental to a person's reputation. As such, it is not surprising to learn that they are motivated to discover and utilise new and ingenious ways of circumventing routine drug testing protocol. A very effective method for doing so is to purposefully tamper a urine specimen to invalidate the results of a drug test.

Currently, urine samples deemed to be tampered are not analysed further for drugs of abuse as the presence of the target analytes may be significantly deteriorated or even undetectable using routine testing methods. One pathway for the mechanism of action of commercially available urine adulterants is through oxidation.

The research carried out in this project has shown that following exposure of six opiates (6-MAM, morphine, codeine, codeine-6-glucuronide, morphine-3-glucuronide and morphine-6-glucuronide) to various oxidising adulterants (nitrite, PCC and hypochlorite), stable reaction products were identified in urine. The structures of 12 reaction products were elucidated using high resolution mass spectrometry and nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, where possible. The reaction products were characterised to be: 2-nitro-MAM, 2-nitro-morphine, 2-nitro-M6G, codeinone, 14-hydroxycodeinone, 6-O-methylcodeine, 8-hydroxy-7,8-dihydrocodeinone, a lactone derivative of C6G, morphinone-3-glucuronide, 7,14-dihydroxy-6-MAM, a 7,8-di-keto analogue of 6-MAM and a 7,8-di-keto analogue of morphine.

In all cases, the original opiate abundances were found to be diminished or undetectable. However, the reaction products were found to be stable for at least seven days using LC-MS. Reaction mechanisms for the formation of the 2-nitro analogues and codeinone were also proposed. The formation of the 2-

nitro analogues was hypothesised to follow an electrophilic substitution reaction. The production of codeinone was suggested to be initiated by the chromium (VI) complex found in PCC.

It was discovered that both nitrite and PCC caused a decrease in the response of the CEDIA 6-AM and opiate assays, respectively. In addition, the morphine/codeine ratios (used during confirmation testing) were found to be affected by the presence of PCC, due to the loss of both native and internal standard species.

The exposure of the opiates to hypochlorite in water resulted in the detection of several potential reaction products. However, it is disadvantageous that they appear to be relatively unstable, only forming under narrow hypochlorite concentration ranges. Due to these reasons, further investigation was not pursued.

Finally, an in-house quantitative NMR procedure for the certification of reaction product material was demonstrated using 2-nitro-MAM and 2-nitro-morphine following their syntheses and isolation. This method can be used as a quick alternative to certifying material through commercial institutions when there are constraints with time and funding.

Overall, the research carried out in this project has laid the groundwork for future work concerning the use of the reaction products as markers for monitoring the presence of opiates in adulterated urine. Due to its relative stability, ease of formation and detection, the identified reaction products show potential for their incorporation into drug testing programs as a way of monitoring opiate positive urine specimens adulterated with nitrite.