

**Ananova:**

## **Eye scanner spots employees under the influence**

Companies could soon be using a quick new eye test to tell if workers are under the influence of drugs or drink.

The portable eye scanner can tell if employees have taken anything from alcohol and cannabis to hard drugs such as cocaine, ecstasy or heroin.

It is estimated as many as two million people take ecstasy alone each weekend and the new test, which takes just four minutes, will spark fears of "Big Brother" monitoring of lifestyles outside the workplace.

The new machine, called an Eye Check Pupilometer, looks like a pair of binoculars and has a link to a computer.

It is held to the eye and scans using green light flashing at the pupils. It gives an instant reading of the pupil's reaction speed.

It can then instantly tell if the employee's reaction is impaired due to the influence of drink, drugs, or simple fatigue, according to Hampton Knight, the UK firm distributing the US-built device.

A swab or urine test would then be carried out on any "suspect" employees who failed the eye impairment test, to confirm the presence of drink or drugs.

The £10,000 machine could replace costly "invasive" tests currently used by some firms.

It is bound to spark further disquiet over what rights employers have to test and monitor employees.

One large UK company has already bought the device. Their identity is being kept a secret, along with two police forces who are also testing it.

Industry groups say such testing is an important element to monitor health and safety.

Currently only about 5% of firms test for drink and drugs, but the number is on the increase.

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