

Drug Alert

January 29, 2019

Follow up to January 14 Alert re: fentanyl/heroin reactions

In mid-January, harm reduction workers and people who use drugs reported that some drugs sold as fentanyl or heroin were causing concerning symptoms, including severe anxiety, memory lapses, erratic behaviour, hallucinations, rapid heart rate and shortness of breath. The reported symptoms lasted at least 30 minutes, up to a few hours. As a result, an alert notice was issued on January 14th (attached below).

In response to community concerns, Toronto Overdose Prevention Society members worked with the laboratory at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health to analyze residue in used injection equipment (the dark purple coloured substance mentioned in the Jan. 14th alert notice).

The results showed that a very toxic synthetic cannabinoid, AMB-FUBINACA was a major component in addition to fentanyl and heroin. Other compounds in the residue included acetyl fentanyl, butyrfentanyl, caffeine, cocaine, benzocaine, phenacetin, ketamine, methamphetamine, codeine, MDMA, and acetaminophen.



Dark purple cooker residue

Due to the unregulated illicit market, there is no way of knowing at what point in the supply chain this synthetic cannabinoid was added, how much is in circulation, or if it is still present.

If someone has taken opioid drugs containing synthetic cannabinoids, they may be confused, unable to communicate clearly, and may be extremely disoriented. These symptoms will be particularly concerning to anyone who believes they only took an opioid.

If someone has ingested this substance:

- Stay with the person until the effects pass.
- Do not use any more of this drug.
- There is no specific treatment for synthetic cannabinoid reactions.
- Call 911 if in any doubt.

Please use supervised consumption services and overdose prevention sites.

