

Current Substance Use Trends: Fentanyl and Tranq(Xylazine) and other Opiates

There are various addictive and dangerous substances that people in our community may access. This newsletter intends to highlight Fentanyl, Tranq(Xylazine) and Opiates which are substances causing a serious health problem in the United States.

People are now able to obtain these drugs via Internet sources. This process only compounds the substance abuse crisis. Nora Volkow, MD, NIDA Director states, "It is absolutely crucial to educate young people that pills purchased via social media given to someone by a friend, or obtained from an unknown source may contain deadly Fentanyl." December 2022, National Institute on Drug Abuse.

We are fortunate in our community to have the support of the Mahwah Police Department and its resources to help tackle this epidemic. They work tirelessly to enforce the laws on illegal drug use and possession. The Department also provides options for diversion and rehabilitative resources for individuals through the MMA resources as well as the County. The Mahwah Police Department has been a forerunner in the effective utilization of Narcan (the opioid antidote) and have saved numerous lives because of it. Chief Timothy O'Hara is looking forward to working closely with the MMA to spread awareness in our community and to deter the use of dangerous drugs in our shared responsibility to each other. The Mahwah Police Department recently acquired a K-9 for the frontline fight against the opioid epidemic and other dangerous drugs. This highlights the proactive approach to getting these drugs off the streets and out of the hands of our loved ones. The K-9 Unit will also work with entities in the community (MMA) for public education and demonstrations to promote awareness and to deter substance abuse.

Education of our community is critical to help battle this crisis.



Education is Critical! { “ I never knew I was **addicted** until I tried to **STOP!** ”

The Mahwah Municipal Alliance (MMA) is a nonprofit 501c3 organization committed to offering programs, initiatives and information regarding such life changing issues. Please share this Newsletter with friends and family and visit our updated website at mahwahalliance.org for more information and new downloadable listing of resources. We encourage contacting our Community Substance Abuse Liaison, Dana Romano at 845-548-8781 if you are struggling with addiction.

The content of this newsletter is for informational purposes only. Please consult your doctor for a diagnosis and treatment for your individual mental health. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, are in danger, or are feeling suicidal, Call 911 immediately!

What is Fentanyl?

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. It is a major contributor to fatal and nonfatal overdoses in the U.S.

There are two types of fentanyl: pharmaceutical fentanyl and illegally made fentanyl. Both are considered synthetic opioids. Pharmaceutical fentanyl is prescribed by doctors to treat severe pain, especially after surgery and for advanced-stage cancer.

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However, most recent cases of fentanyl-related overdose are linked to illegally made fentanyl, which is distributed through illegal drug markets for its heroin-like effect. It is often added to other drugs because of its extreme potency, which makes drugs cheaper, more powerful, more addictive, and more dangerous.

**ILLICIT DRUGS
DO NOT COME
WITH AN
INGREDIENTS
LIST.
MANY CONTAIN
DEADLY DOSES OF
FENTANYL.**

Illegally Made Fentanyl

Illegally made fentanyl (IMF) is available on the drug market in different forms, including liquid and powder.

Powdered fentanyl looks just like many other drugs. It is commonly mixed with drugs like heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine and made into pills that are made to resemble other prescription opioids. Fentanyl-laced drugs are extremely dangerous, and many people may be unaware that their drugs are laced with fentanyl.

In its liquid form, IMF can be found in nasal sprays, eye drops, and dropped onto paper or small candies.

Fentanyl and Overdose

Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are the most common drugs involved in overdose deaths. Even in small doses, it can be deadly. **Over 150 people die every day from overdoses related to synthetic opioids like fentanyl.**

Drugs may contain deadly levels of fentanyl, and you wouldn't be able to see it, taste it, or smell it. It is nearly impossible to tell if drugs have been laced with fentanyl unless you test your drugs with fentanyl test strips.



WHAT IS XYLAZINE?



Street Names: "Tranq," "Tranq Dope"

Overview

Xylazine is an FDA-approved veterinary drug used to sedate animals and is not approved for human use. Xylazine is used with opioids such as fentanyl to increase the euphoric effects and the duration of the other drug it is combined with.



What are the effects of Xylazine adulterated opioids?

- Xylazine depresses the central nervous system; it slows heart rate, breathing and blood pressure to dangerously low levels and can cause amnesia and drowsiness.¹
- Xylazine can also cause abscesses, skin ulcers, physical deterioration, and other complications in humans who consume it.²
- Users can become addicted to Xylazine, and withdrawals from opioids cut with Xylazine ("Tranq Dope") are described as more severe than typical opioid withdrawals.³

Fentanyl-related deaths involving Xylazine increased by

276%

From January 2019 (2.9%) to June 2022 (10.9%) in 21 U.S. jurisdictions.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (June 2023)



In 2022, 36% of opioids seized by law enforcement in New Jersey contained Xylazine

New Jersey State Police
Office of Drug Monitoring & Analysis
(May 2023)



Use of Naloxone for ALL Suspected Overdoses

Naloxone will not reverse the effects of Xylazine but should still be administered because it will reverse the effects of any opioids present.

1. Drug Enforcement Administration, Xylazine (May 2023).
2. U.S. Food and Drug Administration, FDA Warns About the Risk of Xylazine Exposure in Humans (November 2022).
3. Drug Enforcement Administration, The Growing Threat of Xylazine and its Mixture with Illicit Drugs (October 2022).

Request for Information and Contact Information

Any agency with additional information regarding this topic, or with questions about this product, may contact the Drug Monitoring Initiative (DMI), Office of Drug Monitoring & Analysis at DMI@njsp.gov.

PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS

What Are They?

Prescription opioids can be used to treat moderate-to-severe pain and are often prescribed following surgery or injury, or for health conditions. These medications can be used as part of treatment, but it is important to understand that using them can come with serious risks. It is vital to talk to your healthcare provider to make sure that you are getting the safest most effective care.

Most Common Prescription Opioids:

- Methadone
- Oxycodone
- Hydrocodone
- Codeine
- Vicodin
- Demerol
- Percocet
- Morphine
- Fentanyl

Signs & Symptoms of Opioid Abuse:

- Depression
- Irritability
- Lowered motivation
- Fatigue
- Itching
- Nodding off
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Anxiety Attacks
- Euphoria
- Dilated Pupils

Risk Factors Are Greater With:

- History of drug abuse
- Genetic predisposition
- Family history of any type of addiction
- Mental health issues (depression, anxiety, personality disorders)
- Environmental conditions (abuse, trauma)

Side Effects:

- **Building up your tolerance** – this means you might need to take more of the prescription opioid to feel the same pain relief.
- **Physical dependence** – symptoms of withdrawal when the medication is stopped. It increases your sensitivity to pain.
- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting and dry mouth
- Low levels of testosterone in men
- Less energy and strength
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Confusion
- Depression

Alternatives to Pain Meds, Try Other Options First.

Talk to your doctor about ways to manage your pain that do not involve prescription opioids. It is possible that some of these options may work better and have less side effects or risks. **Depending on what type of pain you are experiencing, these may be some of your options:**

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- NASIDs (Aspirin, Motrin, Advil)
- Exercise therapy, including physical therapy
- Medications for depression or seizures
- Interventional therapies (injections)
- Exercise and weight loss
- Cognitive therapy
- Acupuncture and massage
- Mindfulness/meditation

Recognize Signs of Opioid Overdose

- Small, constricted "pinpoint pupils"
- Falling asleep or losing consciousness
- Slow, weak, or no breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Limp body
- Cold and/or clammy skin
- Discolored skin (especially in lips and nails)

Save a life. Don't think twice.



The New Jersey Overdose Prevention Act (N.J.S.A. 2C: 35-30)

Allows individuals either experiencing or witnessing an overdose, to seek medical attention without the fear of being arrested. This applies to someone seeking medical assistance for another, even if they have drugs or paraphernalia on their person, or if they are under the influence of drugs themselves.

The law "provides legal protection in the form of immunity from arrest, prosecution or conviction for a use of simple possession drug charge when a person, in good faith, seeks medical assistance for him/herself or for another. The request for medical assistance that triggers the immunity feature may be made by means of the 911 telephone emergency system or by any other means."

How prescription drug abuse leads to heroin use

While heroin is illicit and opioid pills such as Oxycontin are FDA-approved, each is derived from the poppy plant. Their chemical structures are highly addictive opioids, like fentanyl, and are totally synthetic but designed to bind with those same receptors.

These various drugs produce the same result: an increase in pain tolerance and a sense of euphoria, along with drowsiness, occasional nausea and, at higher doses, a slowing of the user's breathing.

All these drugs trigger "tolerance"-- the need to take higher doses for the same effect -- and a craving for the drug in its absence.

It is precisely because there are so many similarities that pain pill addicts frequently turn to heroin when pills are no longer available to them.

Heroin is usually cheaper than prescription drugs. Opiate pain medications cost the uninsured about \$1 per milligram; so a 60-milligram pill will cost \$60. You can obtain the equivalent amount of heroin for about one-tenth the price.

In more affluent areas such as Bergen County, there are a greater number of guardians who have full coverage healthcare, and therefore have a greater number of expensive prescription pills at their disposal and in their homes.



What is heroin?

Heroin is an opioid drug that is synthesized from morphine, a naturally occurring substance extracted from the seed pod of the Asian opium poppy plant. Heroin usually appears as a white or brown powder or as a black sticky substance known as "black tar heroin". Because heroin abusers do not know the actual strength of the drug or its contents, they are at risk of overdose or death. Heroin is usually "cut" with other drugs (fentanyl) or with substances such as sugar, starch powdered milk or quinine. It can also be cut with Strychnine or other poisons.

How is it used?

Heroin can either be injected, inhaled by snorting or sniffing, or smoked. All three routes of administration deliver the drug to the brain very rapidly, and contributes to its health risks and high risk for addiction. Addiction is a chronic relapsing disease caused by changes in the brain and characterized by uncontrollable drug seeking, no matter what the consequences.



3

**most abused
drug classes**

NARCOTIC PAIN KILLERS

CENTRAL NERVOUS
SYSTEM DEPRESSANTS

STIMULANTS

DRUG & ALCOHOL EMERGENCIES:

Mahwah Substance Abuse

Dana Romano, Community Liaison
845-548-8781

Mahwah Police Department

DIAL "911" or 201-529-1000
221 Franklin Turnpike, Mahwah, NJ

National Suicide Hotline

988

Bergen New Bridge Medical Center

800-730-2762 (Available 24/7)
201-967-4000 (Main #)
230 East Ridgewood Ave, Paramus, NJ
Go to ER at this location/police will not be contacted if you reach out for help at the ER.

Saint Clare's Behavioral Health Center

973-316-1905, option 4
Call: Mon-Fri 8am-4:30pm
130 Powerville Road, Boonton, NJ

DRUG & ALCOHOL ADDICTION SUPPORT GROUPS/ COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Alcoholics Anonymous

908-687-8566 / www.nnjaa.org

Families Anonymous

201-327-0748 / [famamahwah@verizon.net](mailto:famahwah@verizon.net)
Mahwah, NJ

Narcotics Anonymous

800-992-0401 (NJ Helpline) / www.na.org

SMART Recovery

440-951-5357 / SmartRecovery.org

The Center for Alcohol & Drug Resources

201-351-2591
22-08 NJ-208, Fair Lawn, NJ

FOR A FULL LIST OF RESOURCES VISIT THE MMA WEBSITE AT WWW.MAHWAHALLIANCE.ORG

WARNING SIGNS OF TEEN SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Certain symptoms and behaviors are warning signs for substance use in teens, although they may also indicate other problems, such as depression.

Warning signs can include:

- *Alcohol, smoke or other chemical odors on your child's or their friends' breath or clothing*
- *Obvious intoxication, dizziness or bizarre behavior*
- *Changes in dress and grooming and choice of friends*
- *Frequent arguments, sudden mood changes and unexplained violent actions*
- *Changes in eating and sleeping patterns*
- *Sudden weight gain or loss*
- *Loss of interest in usual activities or hobbies*
- *School problems such as declining or failing grades, poor attendance and recent discipline problems*
- *Trauma or frequent injuries*
- *Runaway and delinquent behavior*
- *Depressed mood or talk about depression or suicide; suicide attempts*

Common Hiding Places Include:

- *Dresser drawers, beneath or between clothes*
- *Desk drawers, under a bed*
- *Pencil/jewelry cases, inside fake lipstick tubes, compacts or tampons*
- *Backpacks/duffel bags, laptop or instrument carry case*
- *In a plant, buried in the dirt*
- *Between books on a bookshelf, inside books with pages cut out*
- *Under a loose plank in floor boards*
- *Fake soda bottles with false bottoms*
- *Inside over-the-counter medicine containers (Tylenol, Advil, etc)*
- *Inside empty candy bags such as M&Ms or Skittles*





Opioids & Naloxone

Marc M. Dreier, MD

Emergency Medicine Department
The Valley Hospital, Ridgewood, NJ



valleyhealth.com

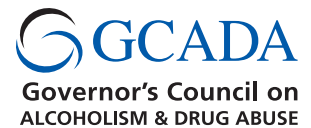
The recorded use of opioids dates back to as many as 7,000 years ago. Opium collected from the seedpod of the poppy was used both medicinally and in rituals. Morphine and codeine were extracted from opium in the 1800s. Soon after, morphine was chemically converted to heroin, which is five times as potent. Fentanyl was synthesized in the 1960s. It is 100 times as potent as morphine. Opioids have been used throughout the ages as cough suppressants, sedatives, and for reducing pain. Opioids also induce a state of euphoria or generalized well-being. This attribute makes them addictive. The sedative effect of opioids at low doses becomes deadly in an overdose. Opioids cause a dose dependent decrease in brain function that begins with sedation, progresses to sleep, and will ultimately result in unconsciousness. When brain function is severely compromised by an opioid, the drive to breathe is extinguished and the lack of oxygen can lead to permanent injury or death in as little as four minutes. Two certain signs of an opioid overdose are decreased responsiveness or unconsciousness and inadequate or absent breathing. Opioid overdose will also typically produce pinpoint pupils.

Naloxone became available in the 1960s. It is a competitive inhibitor at the opioid receptors in the brain and is an antidote for overdose. Naloxone does not remove the opioid from the body but it blocks the action of opioids in the brain and reverses unconsciousness. Naloxone is available as an auto injector (Evzio®), a nasal spray (Narcan®), and a generic that can be injected or sprayed in the nose. Naloxone does not work immediately. Because the lack of oxygen kills in an opioid overdose, it is important to breathe for the victim for the several minutes it may take for the Naloxone to take effect. The duration of action of Naloxone may be shorter than that of the opioid that caused the overdose, so it is important to monitor for recurrent sedation and breathing difficulty. Naloxone is simple to administer, may be life saving, and is available at major pharmacy chains without a prescription.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER



Mahwah Municipal Alliance
Helping our kids make great decisions



Governor's Council on
ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ABUSE

The Mahwah Municipal Alliance (MMA), is an innovative 501(c)3 non-profit collaborative community organization that helps to inspire youth of Mahwah to become contributing, productive members of the community through personal courage, good decision making and physical and social development. The MMA will also support activities for the good and welfare of the community.

The MMA offers programs that focus on the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse, addiction, teenage anxiety and depression, bullying, teen dating abuse and Internet safety.

The MMA supports the Police Academies which are for Mahwah students. The objective of the Academies is to promote an environment where students learn the principles of respect, discipline, teamwork, motivation, and leadership.

This is a collaborative effort from all components of our community and we appreciate your support. We are grateful for the support of the Mahwah Police Department, Board of Education, Township and Business Community.

Your ideas are important to us. We welcome your ideas and are always looking for suggestions and new programs that can help make a difference.

Please contact us at mahwahalliance@mahwahpd.org
and visit our website for upcoming events and resources.

www.mahwahalliance.org

Resource Links



QR Code / Scan Me

MMA Board of Directors:

Valerie Tzaneteas

Deb Kourgelis

Allison Collucci

Liz Skrod

Joan Stewart

Kathy Kelly

Don Floyd

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MMA WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR PLATINUM SPONSORS

