
Fwd: nitazenes

1 message

Johnston - CDPHE, Gabi <gabi.johnston@state.co.us>
To: sarah.gleim@theconversation.com

Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 4:15 PM

Hi there - Kirk mentioned that you're looking for some information on nitizines. He, along with staff from our Prevention Services Division, put together some information for you. Holler if you need anything else. Gabi

Since mid-2021, CDPHE has recorded 11 deaths involving nitazenes of any form through routine vital records/death certificate registration, including 6 in 2022 and 3 in 2023 (data for 2023 remain provisional, as final registration and processing of these data continues).

Given the confidentiality provisions that govern these vital statistics data, we are not permitted to release confidential information from these records, nor confirm details about individual events. Given the relatively small numbers and varied demographic categories in which these deaths occurred, we would not be able to present additional breakouts of these deaths.

Novel synthetic opioids continue to emerge in the illegal market worldwide. A common tactic of illicit drug manufacturers is to seek out forms of drugs that are not on the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration controlled substances list. Nitazenes are synthetic opioids. Some nitazene analogs are as potent as fentanyl, while others surpass the potency of fentanyl. Regardless of potency, any opioid overdose can be reversed with the use of naloxone if administered in a timely manner.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is committed to doing all we can to prevent drug overdoses, and one of our current strategies is to increase access to naloxone. The rapid emergence of new synthetic opioids underscores the importance of using innovative public health and harm reduction strategies to prevent overdoses and other harms associated with drug use.

Individuals use drugs for many different reasons, whether prescribed, legal, or illicit. Because the illicit market is not regulated for potency or purity, it is not always possible for individuals to know what is in their substance or how it will affect them. Harm reduction tactics such as carrying naloxone, having another person around to check on you and administer naloxone if necessary, and testing your substances can reduce the risk of a fatal overdose. At this time, nitazenes are not common in Colorado's drug supply.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment monitors fatal drug overdoses and emergency department visits associated with non-fatal overdoses, and will respond accordingly if there is an increase in nitazene- or xylazine-related overdoses in the state. Colorado has had very few nitazene-related overdoses to date, and we have not yet seen an uptick in these cases in the state.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sarah Gleim** <sarah.gleim@theconversation.com>
Date: Wed, Feb 7, 2024 at 10:11 AM
Subject: nitazenes
To: <Kirk.Bol@state.co.us>

Hi Kirk

Do you have any information on nitazenes in Colorado, specifically how many deaths/overdoses have been tied to them? Or even a fact sheet on their potency, etc.?

We have a Q&A about to run on them, with specifics about the two deaths in Boulder last year, but are looking for more info if you have it.

Thanks.

Sarah Gleim
Researcher and editor
[The Conversation](#)
404.245.2294