

The Secret Life of the Illicit Drug Supply in the United States

You are a clinician working in Baltimore whose patients are reporting more intense effects such as drowsiness from the local illicit drugs compared to previous years. You wonder if there could be xylazine or other novel psychoactive substances (NPS) in the local drug supply.

1. Try a Google search (or search via other search engine of your choice) for information about xylazine or other NPS in the Baltimore or Maryland illicit drug supply.
2. Try searching for this information on the local Health Department (Baltimore City) website.
3. What about the Maryland State Health Department?
4. You discover that the state of Maryland is doing testing of the illicit drug supply (Rapid Analysis of Drugs Program). Do a search for this program to see if you can find any information about NPS like xylazine in the illicit drug supply.
5. Try a search on Google Scholar, PubMed, or any other literature searching site of your choice for publications by local researchers in Baltimore or Maryland on these topics.
6. Maryland is home to the NIH, and NIDA (National Institute on Drug Abuse) is conveniently located right in the city of Baltimore. Search the NIDA website to see what information is posted there regarding NPS in the illicit drug supply.
7. One of your colleagues tells you that the Health Departments in some other states, such as New Jersey and Florida, have good data. Try searching the website of one of these states, or of your own home state, to see what information about NPS in the local illicit drug supply is available.

8. Moving to the national level, try searching the CDC website for this information. The CDC site separates out nonfatal and fatal overdose reports (DOSE and SUDORS), so you may want to try looking at both.
9. What about the DEA website?
10. How about the drug analysis program of sites like Erowid where people who use drugs share information (www.erowid.com)?
11. What about private/government partnerships, like Center for Substance Use and Health Research (CESAR) National Drug Early Warning System (NDEWS)?
12. Take a look at the NDEWS State and National Overdose Web (SNOW) dashboard.
13. Try searching on the site of any major national toxicologic laboratory (Quest, Labcorp, Mayo, NMS, etc.) for this information.
14. How about the newly published report on the Millennium Labs site (<https://www.millenniumhealth.com/news/signals-report-vol-5/>)?
15. What about the Center for Forensic Science Research and Education (CFSRE) NPS Discovery Program?
16. Take a look at the Toxicology Investigators Consortium (ToxIC) site, particularly the Fentalog and DOTS study results.