



Drug Trend Bulletin

October 2022

ILLICIT OXYCODONE

This interim Drug Trend Bulletin is published to highlight a current or potentially significant drug related issue that may affect our local communities.

OXYCODONE / NITAZENE OPIOIDS

Since late 2021, sporadic intelligence around the UK suggested that illicit Oxycodone tablets containing Metonitazene were in circulation causing adverse effects to users including overdose and death.

Legitimate Oxycodone tablets are available on prescription in the UK and are dispensed under the brand names Oxycontin and Oxynorm. Oxycodone is a class 'A' drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

Pharmaceutical grade 'Oxycodone' is an Opioid medication and is commonly used for short term pain relief. Images of these are shown below:



A recent recovery of a quantity of tablets bearing Oxycodone markings were found in the Aberdeen area and on examination, found to contain N-pyrrolidino etonitazene.

N-pyrrolidino etonitazene and Metonitazene are highly potent opioids, considered to be far stronger than Fentanyl and can cause delirium, seizures, respiratory depression and overdose even in small doses.

N-pyrrolidino etonitazene and Metonitazene are not yet classified under Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, however recommendations have been made to the Home Office that these drugs (and other similar synthetic opioids) should be classified as class A under this legislation in the future.

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Legitimate and illicitly produced Oxycodone tablets are visually very similar, however tablets that crumble easily or have poor quality markings may be an indicator that they have been illicitly produced and are therefore likely to contain any number of substances other than Oxycodone.

Every opportunity should be taken to highlight the dangers illicitly manufactured tablets presents to drug users and in particular, the dangers of using multiple substances at the same time (poly drug use).

URGENT TREATMENT SHOULD BE OBTAINED BY ANYONE EXPERIENCING HEALTH ISSUES FROM CONSUMING DRUGS.