

Nationwide Alarm Over Fentanyl Laced with Toxic BTMPS Chemical

New Illicit Drug Adulterant BTMPS Raises Alarms in U.S. Fentanyl Supply

As if the dangers of fentanyl weren't enough, a new industrial chemical—**bis (2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-4-piperidyl) sebacate (BTMPS)**—is now being found in illicit fentanyl across the United States. Originally used in plastics for UV protection, BTMPS is increasingly being detected in fentanyl samples, marking a disturbing shift in the drug supply and raising alarms among health researchers.

Tens of Thousands Potentially Exposed to BTMPS

A recent preprint study by researchers from **UCLA** and other institutions revealed that about a quarter of drug samples sold as fentanyl now contain BTMPS. This rapid integration of the chemical into the drug supply is one of the most abrupt changes observed in recent years.

The scale of potential exposure is alarming. The **Los Angeles Times** reported that instances of BTMPS-detected fentanyl in Los Angeles rose from zero in June to a staggering 41% by August. Tens of thousands of people may be at risk of exposure to this industrial chemical without their knowledge.

Chelsea Shover, an assistant professor at UCLA and one of the study's authors, speculates that drug manufacturers may be adding BTMPS to stabilize fentanyl against degradation from light or heat. This suggests that its inclusion may be deliberate, though the health risks associated with BTMPS remain largely unknown.

Expert Links BTMPS Surge to Failed War on Drugs

Nicolas Tentoni, a researcher at the **University of Buenos Aires** and a member of the **Harm Reduction Association of Argentina (ARDA)**, views the rise of BTMPS in illicit fentanyl as a symptom of deeper issues within global drug policy. Speaking with **Benzinga**, Tentoni attributed the surge of dangerous adulterants like BTMPS to the continued failure of the War on Drugs.

“The emergence of adulterants or substitutes in the illegal drug market is [a direct consequence of criminalizing drug use](#) and pushing the trade underground,” Tentoni explained. The clandestine nature of the illicit drug market creates an environment where toxic substances are used without oversight, posing extreme risks to users.

Tentoni warned that BTMPS's **toxicological profile** poses significant health hazards. “BTMPS blocks **L-type calcium channels** and inhibits **nicotinic acetylcholine receptors**, which can cause **hemodynamic changes** and **cardiovascular disturbances**. This exacerbates the already dangerous nature of adulterated fentanyl,” he said.

Testing Programs Key to Harm Reduction Strategies

In regions with expanded **drug-testing programs**, users have been able to make more informed and safer choices by identifying dangerous adulterants before consumption. Tentoni emphasized the importance of this harm reduction strategy, arguing that it could significantly reduce the health risks posed by unpredictable chemical adulterants like BTMPS.

Testing programs can detect substances like fentanyl, but as of now, there are no rapid tests available specifically for BTMPS, Tentoni noted. Without these testing tools, drug users face even greater risks as they remain unaware of what they are consuming.

No Rapid Tests for BTMPS Yet, Nor Drug Policy Reform

Currently, there are no **rapid test strips** available to detect BTMPS as there are for fentanyl, nor is BTMPS routinely screened for by healthcare professionals, according to the **Los Angeles Times**. This lack of detection capability means that many individuals could unknowingly ingest harmful doses of BTMPS, compounding the already severe dangers of fentanyl use.

As the landscape of illicit drug use becomes more dangerous, the harms of **prohibitionist drug policies** grow increasingly apparent. Tentoni and other experts argue that urgent **drug policy reform** is needed to address the crisis. Until these reforms are enacted, harm reduction strategies—such as expanded drug-testing services and safer supply options—will be critical in minimizing the deadly effects of dangerous adulterants like BTMPS.

With no immediate solution in sight, the rise of BTMPS underscores the growing complexity and danger of the illicit drug market. In the absence of comprehensive drug policy reform, both users and healthcare professionals must remain vigilant to mitigate the risks posed by this industrial chemical's presence in street drugs.

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