



Northeast & Caribbean (HHS Region 2)

PTTC

Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Xylazine and Opioid Use: An Update



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Research Project Manager
Technical Assistance & Implementation
SBIRT / Equity & Inclusion

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- You must attend the entire session.



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Northeast & Caribbean PTTC Team



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This webinar training is provided under New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) Education and Training Provider Certification Number 0115. Training under a New York State OASAS Provider Certification is acceptable for meeting all or part of the CASAC/PPP/CPS education and training requirements.

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Disclaimer

The development of these training materials was supported by grant TI082504 (PI: M. Chaple) from the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), United States Department of Health and Human Services. The contents are solely the responsibility of the Northeast and Caribbean Addiction Technology Transfer Center, and do not necessarily represent the official views of SAMHSA.

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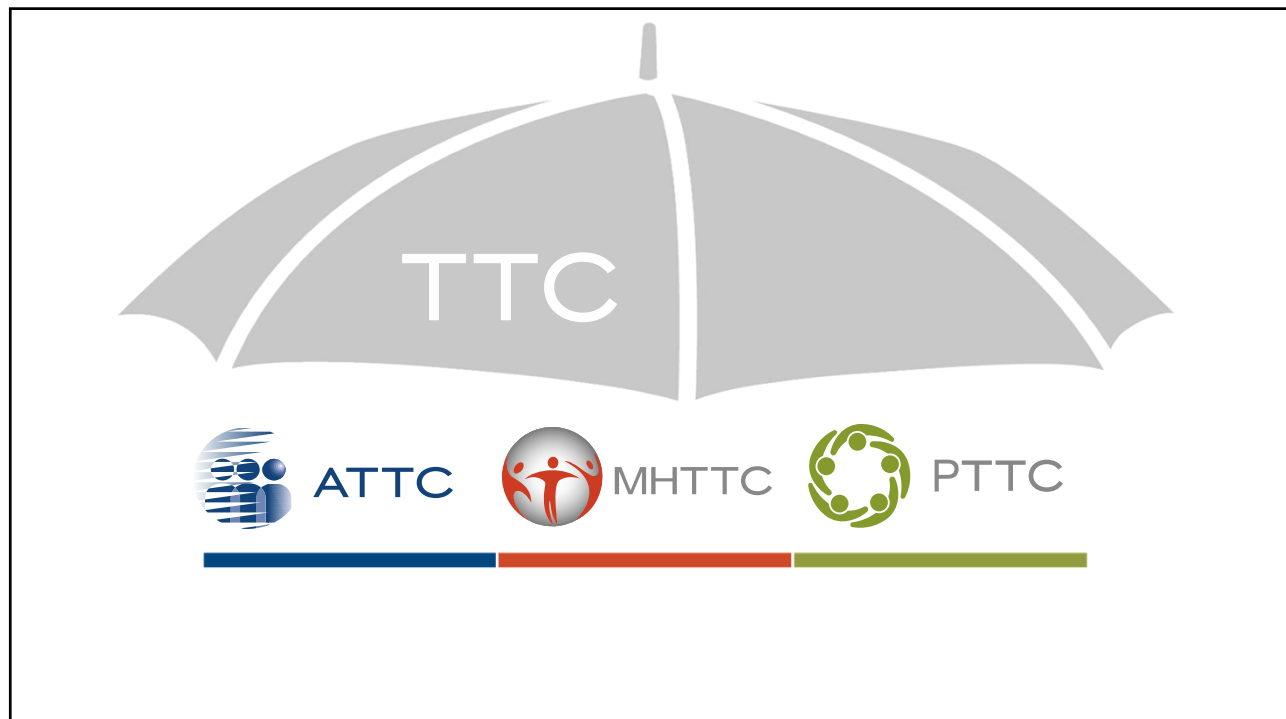
Purpose of SAMHSA's Technology Transfer Centers

The purpose of the Technology Transfer Centers (TTC) program is to **develop and strengthen** the **specialized behavioral healthcare and primary healthcare workforce** that provides substance use disorder (SUD) and mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.

Help people and organizations incorporate **effective practices** into substance use and mental health disorder prevention, treatment and recovery services



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The use of affirming language inspires hope and advances recovery.

LANGUAGE MATTERS.

Words have power.

PEOPLE FIRST.

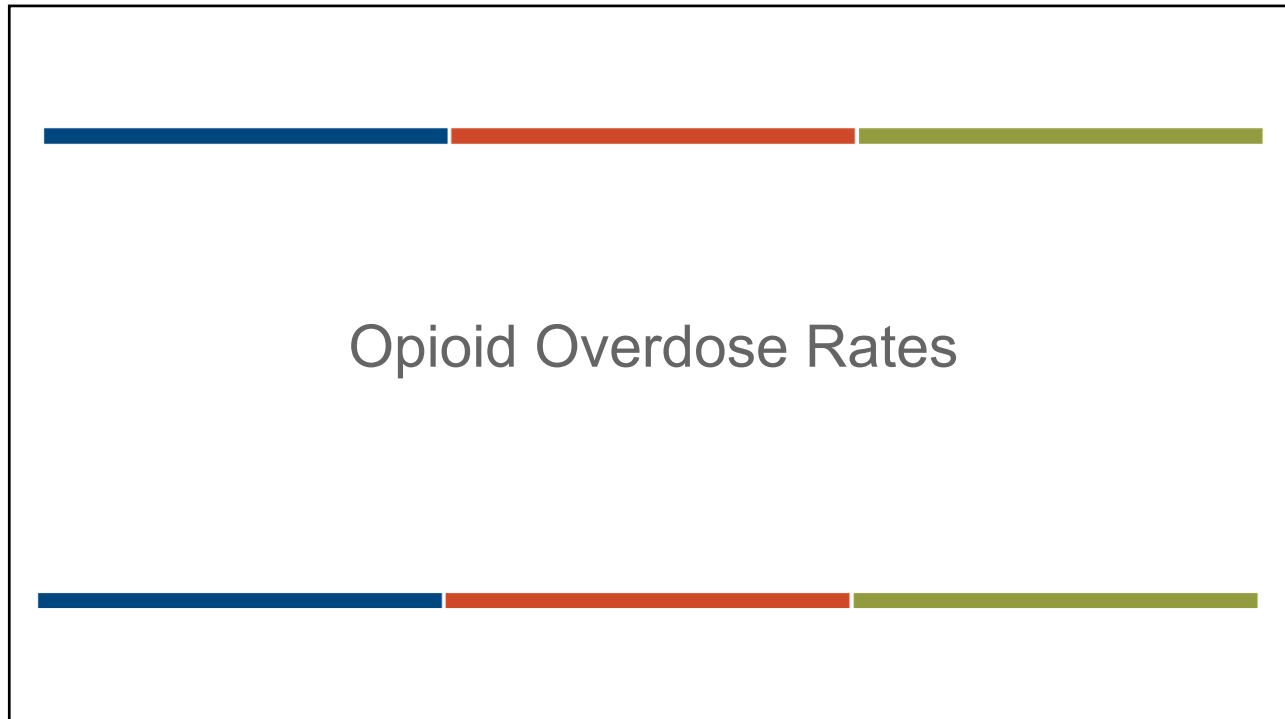
The ATTC Network uses affirming language to promote the promises of recovery by advancing evidence-based and culturally informed practices.

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Objectives

Participants will review current opioid overdoses driven by fentanyl and xylazine, adverse and long-term effects of xylazine, and currently recommended prevention strategies.

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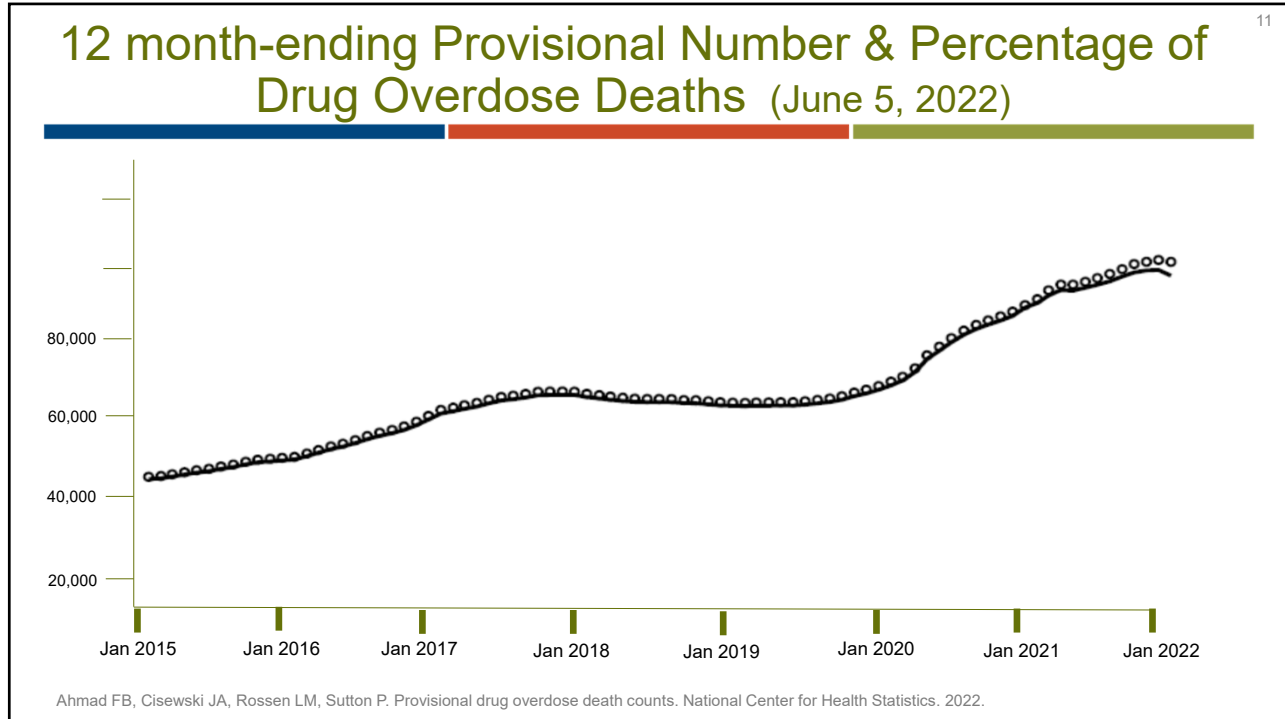
Opioid Overdose Rates Increased in 2020

- 44% among Black people, 86% increase in youth
- 39% among American Indian and Alaska Native people
- 22% for White people, 34% increase in youth
- 21% for Hispanic people, 51% increase in youth

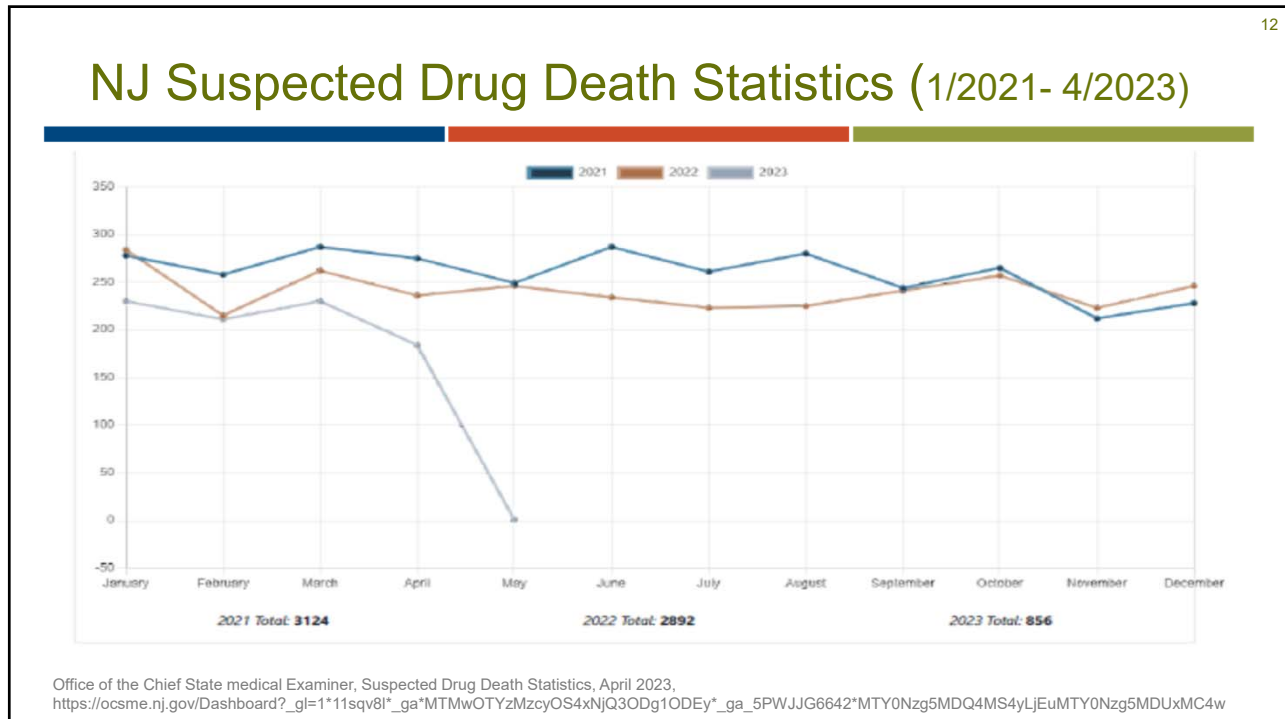
The steep rise in deaths among Black and Indigenous people far outpaced what was seen among white people during the same time period. That group had a 22% year-over-year increase in drug overdoses in 2020.

NPR, July 20, 2022, U.S. death toll from drug overdoses is rising fast among Black and Indigenous people, <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2022/07/20/1112331075/u-s-death-toll-from-drug-overdoses-is-rising-fast-among-black-and-indigenous-peo>

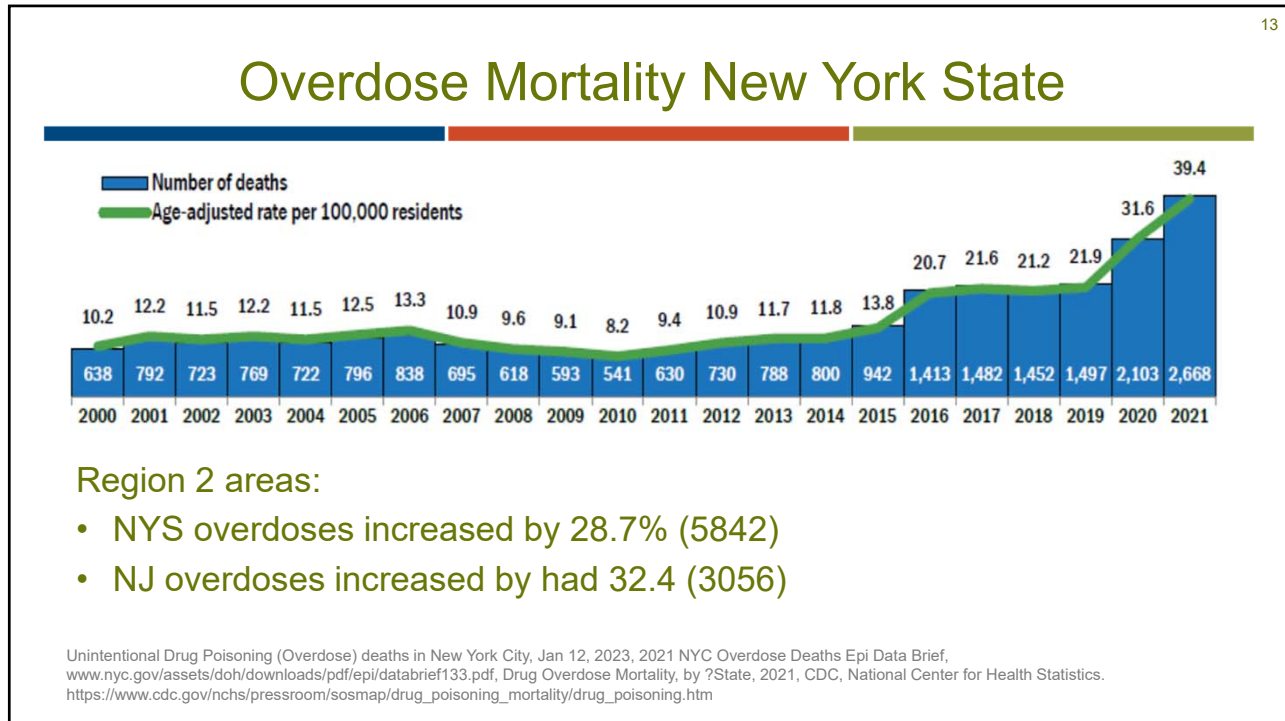
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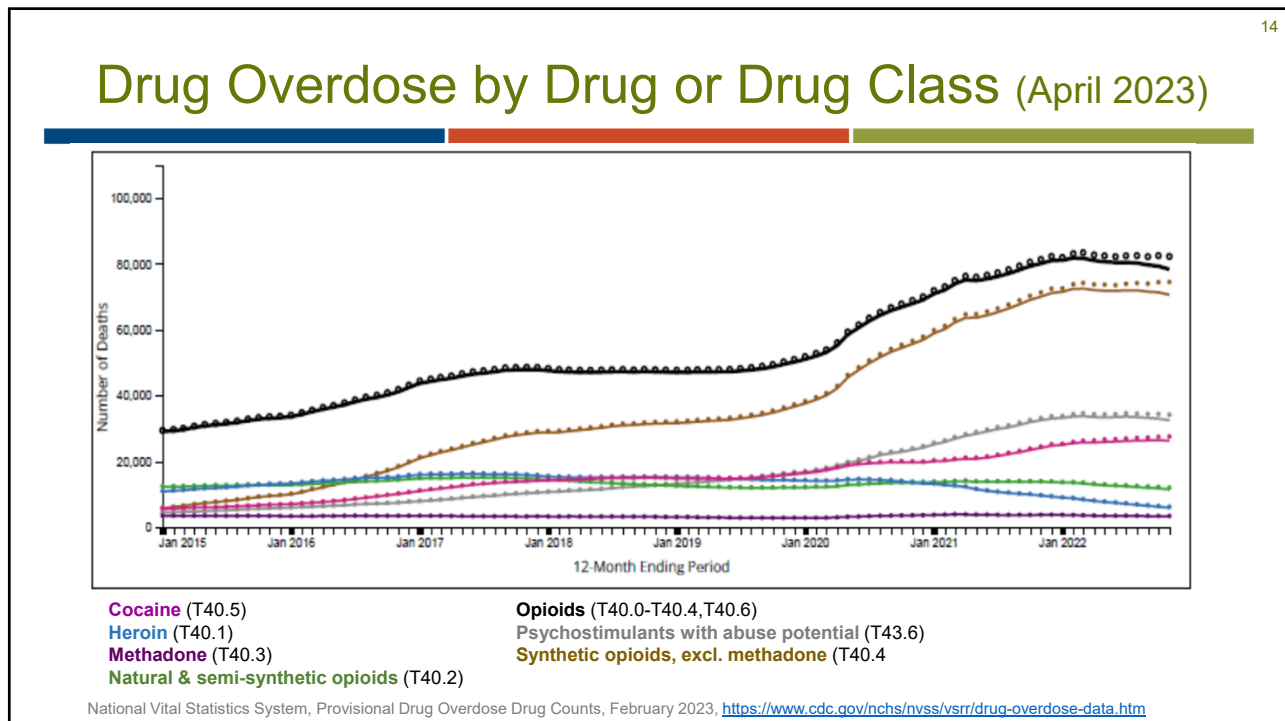
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'Lacing' with Fentanyl and Xylazine

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Overdoses Fueled by Fentanyl

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- Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that can be 50x stronger than morphine, heroin, or oxycodone:
 - Mixed-in with other drugs (cocaine, methamphetamine)
 - Involved in 80% of overdoses.
- Available on the street as fentanyl, heroin, pressed pills
 - Buyers are unaware what they purchase
- ***The fentanyl high is short, xylazine is added to extend the high***



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Xylazine (Tranq, Tranq Dope, Zombie Drug)



https://heller.brandeis.edu/opioid-policy/pdfs/xylazine-update-for-providers_community_july-2022.pdf

- Non-opioid used as a sedative, anesthetic, muscle relaxant analgesic for animals.
- Commonly present in opioids and contributes to oversedation alongside of opioids.
- Causes unresponsiveness or decreased consciousness, low blood sugar, low blood pressure, slowed heart rate, and reduced breathing.
- People may sustain serious injuries if oversedated and unresponsive for long periods.

New York State Department of Health, Xylazine: What Clinicians Need to Know, 2023, <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/12044.pdf>

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Xylazine Emergence

- Xylazine has long been noted in the street opioid supply of Puerto Rico. In the late 2000s, emerged in Philadelphia, more recently in New York.
 - In 2021, 91% of samples of heroin or fentanyl from Philadelphia also contained xylazine, making it the most common adulterant in the local drug supply.
 - Highest xylazine prevalence observed in Philadelphia (25.8% of deaths), followed by Maryland (19.3%), and Connecticut (10.2%).
 - Illicitly manufactured fentanyl (IMF) was present in 98.4% of overdose deaths involving xylazine.

PBS, Why the U.S. designated the animal tranquilizer xylazine an 'emerging threat,' <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/why-the-u-s-designated-the-animal-tranquilizer-xylazine-an-emerging-threat>

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Preparation and Route of Administration



- Xylazine comes as a liquid solution for injection in 20 mg/mL, 100 mg/mL, and 300 mg/mL strengths for veterinary.
- The routes of administration include intravenous, intramuscular, intranasal, and oral.
- It has rapid onset within minutes and can last 8 hours or longer depending upon the dose, the way it is taken, and whether it is mixed with an opioid or other drug(s).

Get Smart About Drugs, a DEA Resource for Parents, Educators, & Caregivers, Xylazine, a Drug that Naloxone Can't Combat, January, 2023, <https://gsadprod.dea.gov/news-statistics/2023/01/27/xylazine-drug-naloxone-cant-combat>, New York State Department of Health, Xylazine: What Clinicians Need to Know, 2023, <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/12044.pdf>

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Xylazine Effects

- Xylazine is a central nervous system depressant that can cause drowsiness, amnesia, and slow breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure at dangerously low levels.
- At very high doses, or with other central nervous system depressants, xylazine can cause:
 - Loss of physical sensation
 - Loss of consciousness
 - ***Intensification of the effects of other drugs, which can complicate overdose presentation and treatment.***



New York State Department of Health, Xylazine: What Clinicians Need to Know, 2023, <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/12044.pdf>

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Xylazine and Wound Care

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Xylazine Related Skin Ulcers

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- Using xylazine increases risk of skin ulcers at the injection site and around other cuts, often appearing to worsen more quickly than other skin wounds (arms, hands, legs).
- People using xylazine had a prevalence of skin ulcers compared to those who do not use xylazine (38.5% vs 6.8%).
- Causes necrotic (dead cells) tissue damage and severe abscesses after injecting and/or snorting xylazine that appear to be independent of injection sites.



The Philadelphia Enquirer, The Opioid Crisis, A powerful sedative in Philly's drug supply is causing severe wounds and agonizing withdrawals. It's quickly becoming unavoidable, Aril 2022, <https://www.inquirer.com/health/opioid-addiction/xylazine-tranq-withdrawal-philadelphia-fentanyl-addiction-detox-20220410.html#loaded>

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Preventing and Caring for Wounds

Ulcerations can appear anywhere there's an opening on skin, NOT just where the person injects. Try to keep all cuts/wounds/injection sites clean and covered.

- 1. Wash your hands:** Cleaning a wound with dirty hands can spread germs and infect of the wound. Avoid alcohol and hydrogen peroxide; use soap, water, saline.
- 2. Clean Your Wound:** Clean the wound with the saline and gauze. Person may feel a stinging sensation, pain, and/or see some drainage when you clean it, this is normal.
- 3. Check the wound:** Look for signs of infection (redness, heat, increased drainage, and odor/smell). A slow healing wound may have black, yellow or tan tissue.
- 4. Apply treatment:** An antibiotic ointment will prevent the growth of germs that may lead to an infection, use vitamin A+D ointment.
- 5. Cover the Wound:** Use a bandage or dressing to cover the wound. This will protect the wound from germs as it heals. Make sure the bandage/dressing is not too tight or too loose. Keep wound bed moist (helps dead skin soften/fall on its own) or debridement.

New York State Department of Health, Xylazine: What Clinicians Need to Know, 2023, <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/12044.pdf>

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WOUND CARE SUPPLIES

Sterile saline, A+D ointment, Medihoney, ACE bandage, Medical tape, Coban, Kerlix, Soap, Gauze

XYLAZINE
// zai · loh · zeen //

AKA "Tranq" or "Tranq Dope"

A cutting agent making its way into the drug supply. Contamination with xylazine increases risk of sedation, overdose, and wounds that are hard to heal.

This guide focuses on xylazine wounds >>>

Last updated: 02/2022. Design by: Maggie Zhang MD

SELF-CARE STEPS

- 1 Clean hands with soap & water or hand sanitizer before touching wounds
- 2 Gently wash wound with soap & water or with saline at least every 2-3 days
- 3 Put ointment on gauze & place on entire wound. Cover with more dry gauze
- 4 Wrap wound with kerlix and secure with medical tape. Make sure wrap is not too tight
- 5 Cover dressing with ACE wrap or coban or with long sleeves/pants if no other option
- 6 Change dressing every 1-3 days. Watch for red flags.

XYLAZINE WOUNDS

Xylazine wounds can appear anywhere on the body regardless of where you are injecting, particularly in **YELLOW** areas.

Check these areas regularly for any wounds that may develop.

Wounds can occur even if you're just snorting or smoking.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Keep your skin moisturized with A+D ointment
- Avoid using alcohol/hydrogen peroxide on wounds
- Keep wounds covered with a clean bandage
- Wear long sleeves, pants, socks, and gloves to prevent yourself from scratching your skin
- Eat protein & stay hydrated to help with healing
- Avoid injecting into or around your wounds
- Use new supplies every time and avoid sharing
- Not every wound is infected. Avoid taking non-prescribed antibiotics

RED FLAGS to SEEK MEDICAL CARE

- Fever or chills
- Skin burns dark or black
- Skin is red, hard, & hot to touch
- Thick, smelly yellow or green drainage
- Severe or worsening pain at wound site
- Pain & decreased ability to move joint
- Pieces of tissue falling off
- Exposed bone or tendon
- New numbness

Even though xylazine isn't an opioid, you should still give naloxone in an overdose as opioids are often present.

Grayken Center for Addiction, Training & Technical Assistance Boston Medical Center,
https://addictiontraining.org/documents/resources/337_Xylazine_Wounds_Handout_-_English_Version_pocket_size.pdf

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When to Seek Medical Care

- Shaking chills or temperature above 100 °F
- Bleeding that soaks the dressing
- Increased drainage from the wound or drainage that is yellow, tan, green, or has a bad smell
- Swelling, pain, heat (warmth) or redness in the skin around the wound
- Increase in size of the wound with black, yellow or tan color
- Feeling tired

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Harm Reduction

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Management of Xylazine Involved Overdose



- Xylazine test strips have been developed.
- Best way to know for sure whether xylazine is in the heroin/dope is through drug checking machines, which very few harm reduction programs have.
- While xylazine alone does not cause the severe respiratory depression observed with opioid intoxication, the profound mental status depression may cause airway compromise leading to suffocation.
- Naloxone should be administered for respiratory depression because xylazine and fentanyl are typically found together. Naloxone is effective for fentanyl and opioid overdoses.

Department of Public Health, City of Philadelphia, Evaluation to Xylazine Test Strips (BTNX) for Drug Checking Purposes, https://www.cfsre.org/images/content/reports/drug_checking/Evaluation_of_BTNX_Xylazine_Test_Strips_for_Drug_Checking_230322.pdf?emci=8945632c-9ec9-ed11-a8e0-00224832e811&emdi=4771d893-a4c9-ed11-a8e0-00224832e811&ceid=811328, New York State Department of Health, Xylazine: What Clinicians Need to Know, 2023, <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/12044.pdf>

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Xylazine Overdose Managementcontinued

- Be aware that the person may breathe normally after receiving naloxone, but still be sedated from the xylazine. More naloxone may not be needed.
- There is no reversal agent for xylazine that is safe for use in humans; supportive care is recommended, including rescue breathing.
- When overdose is not responding to naloxone, respiratory depression may need to be managed with rescue breathing/ventilation and oxygen in these situations.

New York State Department of Health, Xylazine: What Clinicians Need to Know, 2023, <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/12044.pdf>, California Dept of Public Health, Issue Brief, Xylazine, Health risks and Harm Reduction Strategies, https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDCPP/sabb/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Issue-Brief-Xylazine_ADA.pdf#:~:text=Fatal%20Overdose%20-%20Xylazine%20is%20not%20an%20opioid,and%20vital%20organs%20functioning%20during%20a%20xylazine-related%20overdose

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Harm Reduction Messages



- Educate patients about xylazine in the illicit drug supply and ask about atypical wounds.
- Providers should be aware of the heightened risk of skin and soft tissue wounds among people who use drugs and provide both wound care treatment and harm reduction education to reduce the risks of exacerbating local infections and acquiring communicable diseases.
- Educate patients to be aware of overdose risks no matter what drugs are used, and practice as much harm reduction as possible, as consistently as possible.

Photo by ACACI Network Outreach Unit, <https://acacianetwork.org/>, New York State Department of Health, Xylazine: What Clinicians Need to Know, 2023, <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/12044.pdf>

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Harm Reduction for Patients

- Go slow, use less
- Test your product if you can
- Sniffing or smoking is probably safer than injecting
- Try to avoid using alone. Because of the heavy sedation, be aware of your surroundings and your possessions, especially if you're somewhere that's not secure.
- If you are using alone, double down on other strategies. Have someone check on you. If you are using in a group, stagger your use so someone is always alert.
- Carry naloxone and know how to use it. Look out for each other.
- Call 911, be aware that a xylazine overdose may need more care than naloxone.
- Be sure the airway is open, as breathing may be blocked in slumped positions.

New York State Department of Health, Xylazine: What Clinicians Need to Know, 2023, <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/12044.pdf>

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Resources

- New Jersey Harm Reduction Coalition: <https://njharmreduction.org/more-resources/>
- State of New Jersey, Department of Health, NJHealth: <https://www.nj.gov/health/news/2022/approved/20220118a.shtml>
- Next Distro, New Jersey, Xylazine Quick Guide for People Who use Drugs, <https://nextdistro.org/resources-collection/xylazine-quick-guide>
- HarmReduction.org, Xylazine in the Drug Supply, <https://harmreduction.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Xylazine-in-the-Drug-Supply-one-pager.pdf>
- Philadelphia Dept of Public Health, Risks of Xylazine Use and Withdrawal in People Who use Drugs in Philadelphia, March 2022, https://hip.phila.gov/document/2524/PDPH-HAN_Alert_1_Xylazine_03.16.2022.pdf/
- FDA Alerts Health Care Professionals of Risks to Patients Exposed to Xylazine in Illicit Drug: <https://www.drugs.com/fda/fda-alerts-health-care-professionals-risks-patients-exposed-xylazine-illicit-14569.html#:~:text=FDA%20is%20aware%20of%20increasing%20reports%20of%20serious,in%20animals%20as%20a%20sedative%20and%20pain%20reliever>

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Contact and Survey

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Please fill out your evaluation forms – it will only take a couple of minutes! Just scan the code with the camera on your smart phone, click on the link in the chat box, or type the link into your browser: [\(LINK REMOVED\)](#)

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