

SIXTY-SECOND REGULAR SESSION
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**CHALLENGES IN THE CONTROL
OF SYNTHETIC DRUGS**



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GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Washington DC, 13 December 2017

CHALLENGE



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- World supply of illicit drugs is **more abundant, more sophisticated** and **more diverse** than it has ever been
- Illicit drug markets are now saturated with a full array of synthetic drugs and the access to precursor chemicals is really easy
- Criminal structures operating the current drug scene are **as well organized and managed as legitimate multinational companies**
- Serious regulating challenges to the legal and health authorities due to the **New Psychotropic Substances (NPS)**



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THE DRUG MARKET

- The range of substances available on drug market is very wide and the drug market is thriving
- Economic growth in some regions has resulted in the production and diversion of precursor chemicals used to manufacture drugs
- The advent of ever-improving communication technology has paved the way for criminal organizations to access consumers easily
- Rapid changes in trafficking routes, modi operandi and concealment methods combined with traditional ones.
- Main concern: the NPS market continues dynamic with the appearance of large numbers of new substances belonging to diverse chemical groups

SYNTHETIC DRUGS PANORAMA



- Almost impossible to establish an estimation of the manufacturing volume of synthetic drugs
- Methamphetamine market: expanding in East and South-Asia and Oceania. Increasing concerns in Europe, North America and South-West Asia.
- For first time East and South-Asia surpassed America in quantity of seizures of meth.
- Amphetamine confined to fewer regions as Middle East and Europe is now increasing in Central America and South-West Asia
- Ecstasy market has grown in complexity and variety
- Large number of NPS in drug market but size of the market is still relatively small. The cause of its expansion is low price. The rapid appearance of new substance as main concern.

INTERPOL PROPOSAL FOR 2018



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- INTERPOL will enhance the use of its I-24/7 communication system to exchange information and intelligence and to distribute at global police level Drug Alerts of its partner organizations (i.e. INCB – Project PRISM Alert dated 10-10-2017)
- INTERPOL DRUGS GLOBAL CONFERENCE will take place the third week of April 2018 in Spain.
- INTERPOL in the framework of the initiatives developed against Drug Trafficking is increasing its activities of capacity building and training, workshops and operations.
- INTERPOL will coordinate a Global Drugs Operation between September and October 2018 where tackling chemical precursors and NPS will be one of the main objectives.

Way forward

- Change in the assessment of the situation and own activities based in seizures
- Exchange of information and intelligence
- Need to enhance the use of available tools
- Training of the different actors, mainly Law Enforcement Agencies
- Knowledge of the international capabilities at the disposal of the governments
- Commitment to exchange intelligence and information

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MODUS OPERANDI

Type(s) of offence:	Importation of Commercial Quantity of Narcotics
Date of the offence:	5 October 2017
Place of offence:	Perth
Country of offence:	Australia
Circumstances of offence:	Illicit narcotics concealed in "sand art" kits imported into Australia

Description of modus operandi: On 07 September 2017, a consignment ex Malaysia containing 25 "sand art" kits, intended for an address in Adelaide (South Australia) was examined. Each box contained 30 plastic bottles of various colours. Deconstruction of one of the bottles revealed a crystalline substance. Testing was conducted on the substance and returned a presumptive positive result for methamphetamine. The weight of the detection was estimated to be 16.13 kg.

On 05 October 2017, a consignment ex Malaysia containing 35 "sand art" kits, intended for an address in Perth (Western Australia) was examined. Each box contained 30 plastic bottles of various colours. Deconstruction of the bottles revealed a coloured sand-like substance with white specks. Testing was conducted on the substance and returned a presumptive positive result for epinephrine. The weight of the detection was estimated to be 9.45 kg.

The following similarities were present in both importations:

- The same "master of sand art" packaging was used in both consignments;
- Both consignments had "sand art" in the goods description;
- The narcotics in both consignments were concealed as coloured sand;
- Both consignments were ex Malaysia;
- Both consignments arrived via the air cargo stream.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The method of mixing powder/crystalline narcotics with a similar granular substance (sand in this case) has previously been identified as a method of concealment. Prior detections have identified narcotics mixed with black powder of a similar consistency, and concealed in toner pouches. The use of "sand art" kits is possibly an evolution of the toner pouch method of concealment.

Do you authorize the general secretariat to record the information related to individuals with the status "suspect" and the purpose "obtain information"? (1)

Yes No

Please be aware that you can also record the information directly using I-link.

Do you authorize the general secretariat to share part of this information with the public? (2)

Yes No

Compliance confirmation:

By submitting this Notice request and any subsequent update, we confirm that we have checked and verified that all data contained in the Notice comply with INTERPOL's rules, national laws and applicable international obligations.

MODUS OPERANDI

FENTANYL



RISE IN USE, OVERDOSE, AND EXPOSURE TO AN OPIOID PRESENTING A LETHAL RISK FOR CONSUMERS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND FIRST RESPONDERS

Date of the offence:	ONGOING
Place of offence:	WORLDWIDE
Country of offence:	WORLDWIDE

Circumstances of offence: Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that mimics the effects of morphine in the human body. Responsible for an epidemic of overdose deaths in the United States, fentanyl can be 50 to 100 times stronger than morphine, and 30 to 50 times more powerful than heroin.

Fentanyl and its analogs are being mixed with heroin to increase potency. It is also being pressed into counterfeit tablets and sold as commonly misused prescription opioids such as oxycodone and hydrocodone. In addition, it has been found in samples of cocaine, methamphetamine, and other non-opioid substances.

During the last two years, the distribution of clandestinely manufactured fentanyl has been linked to an unprecedented outbreak of overdoses and deaths numbering in the thousands. In the United States, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says the number of synthetic opioid deaths increased 72.2% from 2014 to 2015.

Description of modus operandi: Fentanyl and its analogs pose a potential hazard to police, law enforcement officials, public health workers, and first responders who could unknowingly come into contact with these drugs in their different forms. Police working dogs are also at risk of exposure.

Responders are most likely to encounter illicitly manufactured fentanyl and its analogs in powder, tablet, liquid, patches, and spray form. Potential exposure routes of greatest concern include inhalation, mucous membrane contact, ingestion, and percutaneous (needle) exposure. Skin contact is also a potential exposure route but is not likely to lead to overdose unless large volumes of highly concentrated powder are encountered over an extended period.

While absorption of fentanyl through skin contact commonly occurs through prescribed use of the drug, inhalation of powder is the most likely exposure route for illicitly manufactured fentanyl. Inhalation exposure can quickly result in respiratory depression. Two to three milligrams of fentanyl – an amount equivalent to five to seven grains of table salt – is enough to cause respiratory depression, cardiac arrest and possible death.

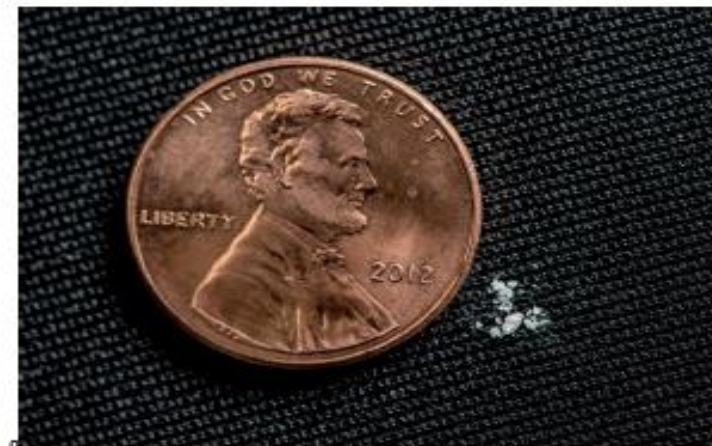


Figure 1: Two – three milligrams of fentanyl: A potentially lethal dose.



Figure 2: Fentanyl in pill form.



PRISM

Alert No. 4/2017
10 October 2017

INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD

PROJECT PRISM SPECIAL ALERT

Syrian Arab Republic – suspension of the granting of import authorizations for pseudoephedrine and related substances

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has recently informed INCB of circular number 18301/28 of 12 July 2017, which suspends the granting of import licences for pseudoephedrine and related substances until the end of 2017.

The Board appreciates the active cooperation of the Syrian Government in matters of chemical diversion control and encourages the competent authorities of exporting countries to continue to be vigilant towards requests for supply of precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants by companies in Syria. Specifically, the authorities of exporting countries are encouraged to provide copies of any documentation that may help to identify those behind any unlawful attempts to obtain such chemicals.

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QUESTIONS



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Thank you

INTERPOL General Secretariat