

TRAINING BULLETIN

Los Angeles Police Department

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NARCOTIC ANALGESICS

Opiates (natural alkaloids of opium and opium derivatives), and synthetic opiates (opioids) make up the category of drugs called Narcotic Analgesics. They relieve pain, induce euphoria, alter mood, and produce sedation. Heroin gets the most publicity, but other opiates/opioids, such as codeine, meperidine (Demerol), and fentanyl, also create problems and can be used compulsively.

BACKGROUND

Opium comes from the poppy plant *Papaver somniferum* which was grown in the Mediterranean region as early as 5000 BC, and has since been cultivated in a number of countries throughout the world. The milky fluid that seeps from incisions in the unripe seed pod of this poppy has, since ancient times, been scraped by hand and air dried to produce opium.

There are over 25 alkaloids in opium. The three most prevalent (called opiates) are morphine, codeine, and thebaine. Although a small amount of opium is used to make antidiarrheal preparations, such as tincture of opium and paregoric, virtually all the opium coming into this country is first refined into its alkaloid constituents. Opium extracts can be slightly modified to form other active derivatives, such as heroin, Percodan, or Dilaudid.

There are also fully synthetic opiate-like drugs called opioids, such as Demerol, methadone, and Darvon. Synthetic opioid antagonists, which block the effects of opiates and opioids, include Narcan (naloxone) and naltrexone. These are used to treat overdose and reverse the effects of opiates/opioids.

OPIATES (Natural Alkaloids - Opium Poppy Extracts)

Drug Name	Trade Names	Street Names
Opium	Pantopon, Paregoric, Laudanum	"O", Poppy
Codeine (usually with aspirin or Tylenol)	Empirin with codeine Tylenol with codeine Doriden with codeine	Number 4s Number 3s Loads, sets, 4s & doors

OPIATES (Natural Alkaloids - Opium Poppy Extracts)

Drug Name	Trade Names	Street Names
Morphine	Various	Murphy, morph, "M"

OPIUM DERIVATIVES

Drug Name	Trade Names	Street Names
Hydrocodone	Hycodan, Vicodin	Vics
Hydromorphone	Dilaudid	Dillies, drugstore heroin
Oxycodone	Percodan, Tylox	Percs

SYNTHETIC OPIATES (OPIOIDS)

Drug Name	Trade Names	Street Names
Propoxyphene	Darvon, Wygesic	Pink ladies, pumpkin seeds
Meperidine	Demerol	Street derivatives of meperidine and fentanyl are misrepresented as China white
Fentanyl	Sublimaze	Street derivatives are misrepresented as China White
Pentazocine	Taiwin NX	Part of T's and blues
41-Oacetyl alpha methadol	LAAM	Lam
Buprenorphine	Buprenex	
Alpha or 3 methyl fentanyl	Analogues of Sublimaze	Designer heroin or China White
MPPP, etc	Analogues of Demerol	Designer heroin or China White

EFFECTS

Physicians prescribe narcotic analgesics to deaden pain, control coughing, and stop diarrhea. Most illicit users take these drugs to experience euphoric effects, or to try to feel normal by preventing withdrawal symptoms.

The effects of the various narcotic analgesics are similar to each other. The differences are in how long the drug lasts, how strong

it is per gram, and how toxic it is to the body. For example, codeine and Darvon will affect the user from three to four hours, heroin four to six hours. As with nearly all drugs of abuse, the effects produced by narcotic analgesics depend on the tolerance that the user has developed for the drug. Tolerance means that the same dose of the drug will produce diminishing effects, or conversely that a steadily larger dose is needed to produce the same effects.

Possible effects of opiates/opioids include the following:

- Constricted pupils (below 3.0 mm)
- Little or no visible reaction to light
- Slowed reflexes
- Slow and deliberate movements
- Slow, low raspy voice
- Cool skin
- Vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, and temperature) will be down
- Sedation (on the nod)
- Dry mouth
- Droopy eyelids (ptosis)

METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION

Narcotic analgesics are ingested in a variety of ways depending on the drug. Common methods of ingestion include:

- Oral
- Suppositories
- Smoked
- Snorted
- Injection

PACKAGING

Most narcotic analgesics, other than heroin and opium, are pharmaceuticals diverted for illicit use. Packaging varies from loose pills in a pocket, baggie, or tin foil, to prescription bottles.

CONCLUSION

Narcotic analgesics are drugs used mainly to relieve pain. They are so powerful and highly addictive that all are illegal without a prescription, and some are not prescribed at all. The widespread legal use of these drugs makes it more difficult for patrol officers to investigate narcotic abuse and possession. Through effective interview skills and an understanding of the signs and symptoms of opiates/opioids, officers should be able to make the distinction between legal and illegal use.

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