

THE WORLD TOGETHER AGAINST FALSIFIED AND SUBSTANDARD MEDICAL PRODUCTS

14.10.2025

Belgrade

Dr. Ronny Berkovitz

Director, Division of Enforcement and Inspection

Ministry of Health, Israel

Lecturer in University



New Synthetic Opioids in Falsified Medicines
Laughing Gas new regulation
Falsified Dysport
Captagon

What are opioids?

Opioids are analgesics that are very effective in treating pain. The use of opioids is common for treating short-term (acute) pain and cancer pain. However, long-term use of opioids, is associated with adverse events, hospitalisations, addiction, overdose and death



The Black Market for Prescription Opioids

Diversion of opioids to the illegal drug market and their sale in physical places, or by using Instant Messaging apps

Threats to medical staff demanding opioid prescription

Falsified prescriptions

Over-prescribing demanding patients

Fentanyl

The most lethal opioid currently available in the drug market

For pain- usually administered to an area of the skin, applied for 72 hours

The patch slowly releases fentanyl to the blood stream

Can only be provided to a patient who has used opioids before

100 times more potent than morphine

May induce drowsiness, sedation, respiratory distress and eventually coma

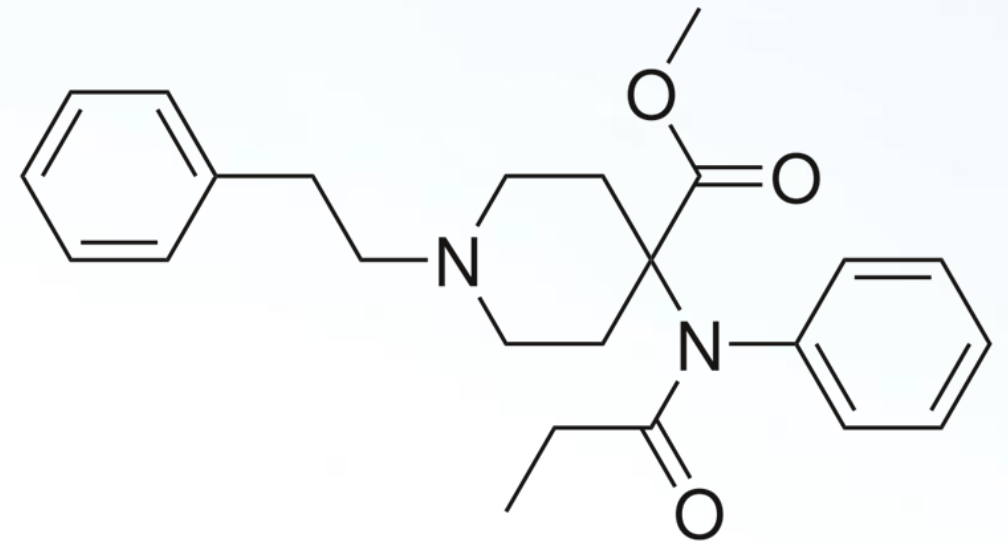
Adverse effects of Fentanyl

- If used continuously, 25% of users might develop addiction (inc. dependence)
- Opioid overdose: Respiratory depression, coma
- Use as illicit drug includes heating the patches and inhaling residue, sticking inside mouth, injecting after scratching and melting contents

Carfentanil

Carfentanil is a synthetic opioid approximately 10,000 times more potent than morphine and 100 times more potent than fentanyl.

Used as veterinary medicine (for elephant) the relative strength of this drug could lead to an increase in overdoses and overdose-related deaths, even among opioid-tolerant users.



Opioids seized in Israel

586 patches of Fentanyl in kiosk



Selling in Telegram



1 patch fentanyl in pharmacy = 3\$
1 patch fentanyl in telegram = 80\$

Opioids and other drugs seizure



Opioids seized in the car



NPS

NPS: “New narcotic or psychotropic drugs, in pure form or in preparation, not controlled by either the 1961 United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs nor the 1971 United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances, but which may pose a public health threat comparable to that presented by substances listed in these conventions”

Nitazene New Synthetic Opioids in Falsified Medicines

- Originally developed in the 1950s by the Swiss pharmaceutical company Ciba,
- Nitazenes were intended as opioid analgesics but were never approved for medical use due to their extreme potency and risk of addiction and overdose.
- Using benzimidazole opioids as a base, illicit manufacturers can quickly generate a wide array of modified substances, resulting in numerous new formulations and analogues of Nitazenes such as Protonitazene, Metonitazene, Etodesnitazene, that emerge rapidly on the market before effective measures are in place to monitor, control and regulate those substances.

Nitazene

- Nitazenes are highly potent synthetic opioids with toxicity levels that can be 10 to 40 times higher than fentanyl
- Nitazenes are available in various forms of administration, including ingestion, injection, and inhalation,
- Short-term effects of Nitazenes can include euphoria, drowsiness, pain relief, and nausea, while long-term use may lead to tolerance, dependence, and damage to vital organs like the lungs and heart.
- Mixing Nitazenes with other substances, such as alcohol, benzodiazepines, or stimulants, can result in unpredictable and dangerous interactions, increasing the likelihood of severe health complications.

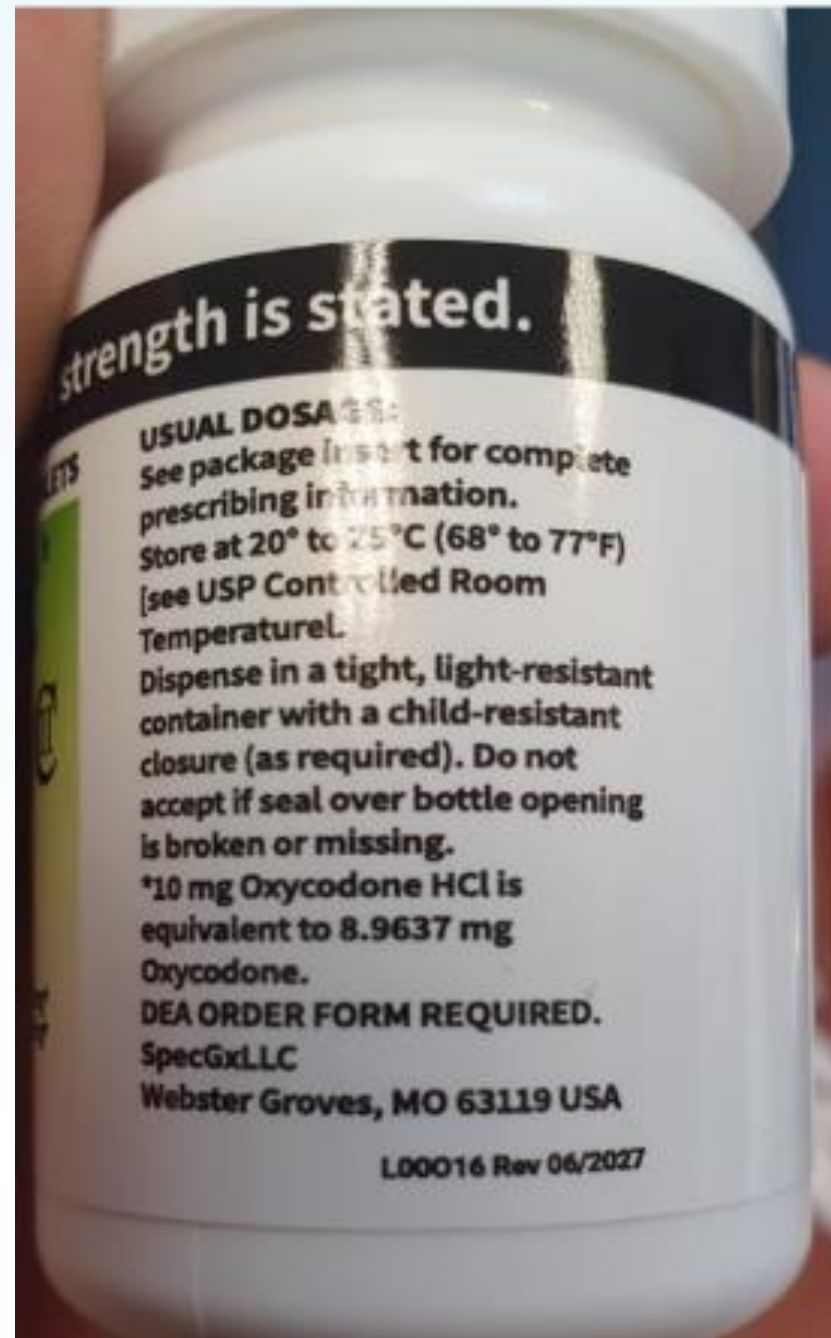
Case Study in Israel

Falsified Percocet contains Nitazene

Percocet

- Percocet contains a combination of acetaminophen and oxycodone. Oxycodone is an opioid pain medication
- Oxycodone is controlled substance appeared also in other controlled medications (Oxycontin tab. Oxycod syr.)
- Percocet is among the most commonly prescribed opioid and used to relieve moderate to severe pain
- The use of oxycodone and fentanyl has been increased over the last years. (both as prescribed medicine and “black market”)
- risks of addiction, abuse, and misuse, even at recommended doses, increase when it is sold in the “black market”
- Misuse of this medication can cause addiction, overdose, or death, when using the medicine without a prescription

Falsified Percocet Were Seized



Falsified Percocet

- More than 100,00 tablets were seized (estimate value more than 1 million \$)
- The bottles of the products have the logo of Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals which is pharmaceutical company that produces medicines including Percocet.
- The labels had signs of falsifications (no Lot no. , no expiry date, no leaflets)
- Based of the initial professional consult between the MOH to the police regarding the medicines, the suspects were arrested and the medicines were seized by the police



Falsified Percocet



Falsified Percocet

- Percocet pills were transferred to the forensic lab
- Lab results revealed that Percocet pills contained the synthetic opioid **N-Desethyl-Etonitazene (NDE)**
- NDE is about 1,000 times stronger than heroin.
- NDE is the most potent substance ever seized in Israel
- Joint investigation between MOH, and the police has been initiated with the DEA

Falsified Percocet

- NDE isn't scheduled in Israel yet
- we have initiated a process of fast track temporary control (both specific substance and generic approach for Nitazene family)
- The Penalty difference between offences related to medicine laws compared offences related to narcotic controlled substances are maximum 3 years compared to 20 years in jail

Genuine



Falsified



Falsified Percocet

Genuine Tab



Falsified Pills without any prints



Letter confirming falsification from Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals



February 13, 2024

Alina Poperno MPH, B.Pharm, B.Sc.
National Coordinator
Israeli Ministry of Health, Jerusalem

Reference: 340610
Product: Oxycodone & Acetaminophen Tablets, USP CII 10 mg/325 mg
Lot number: Not on bottle

Dear Alina Poperno:

We are writing in response to your request regarding the authenticity of product seized by the Israeli Ministry of Health.

SpecGx LLC can confirm the label on the bottle you received does not match our approved product label. The following are key anomalies, just to name a few; the GTIN number on the bottle is not a SpecGx LLC number, Percocet® is the branded trade name and SpecGx LLC has never labeled any SpecGx LLC product with branded name and never packaged in bottles of 20 tablets. In addition, there is no lot number and no expiration date.

The tablets found in the bottle do not match the Oxycodone & Acetaminophen 10 mg/325 mg tablet manufactured by SpecGx LLC. SpecGx LLC Oxycodone & Acetaminophen 10 mg/325 mg tablets have identifier markings (M523) not showing on the picture provided.

Thank you for taking the time to report this matter to us. We will maintain this report for future reference and monitor other reports for similar occurrences. SpecGx LLC is dedicated to providing quality products and services to our valued customers. Please contact the Product Monitoring Department at 800-778-7898 or pmquality@mnk.com if you have any further questions or comments.

Best Regards,

Product Monitoring Department
SpecGx LLC

cc: File



Points for discussion

- How to improve legal and operational strategies for Synthetic opioids medical falsifications
- Preventative tools for high risk uncontrolled synthetic opioids

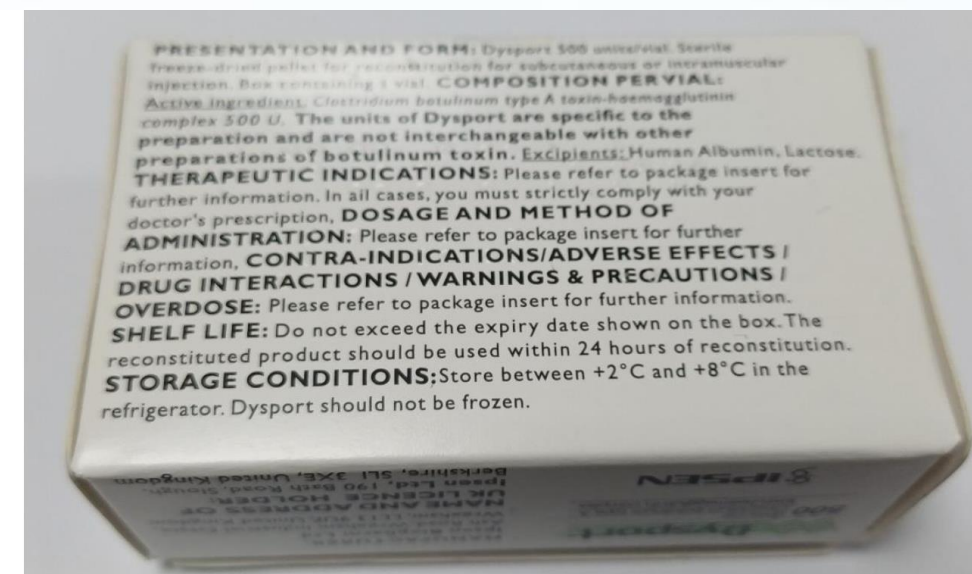
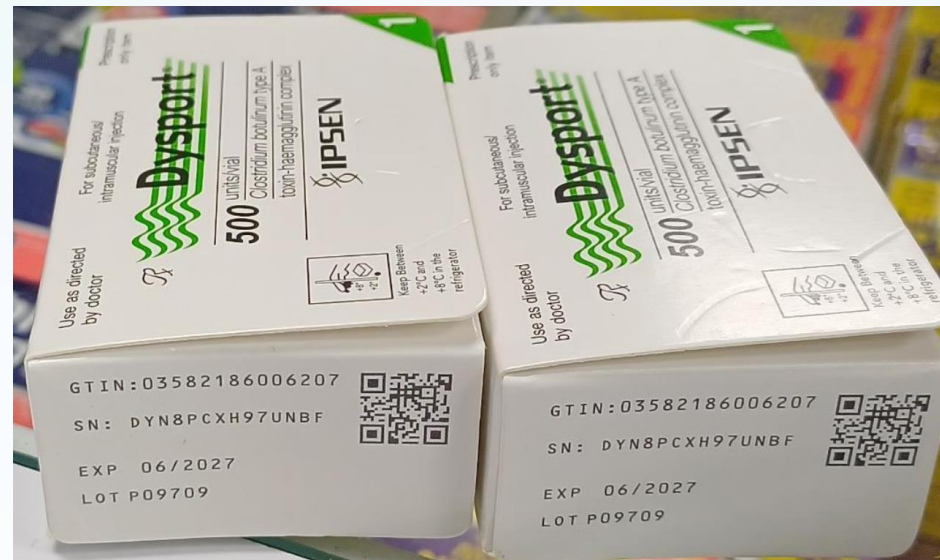
Falsified Dysport

Dysport



Dysport is a prescription medication derived from botulinum toxin type A — the same neurotoxin used in Botox

Dysport works by blocking the release of acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter that triggers muscle contraction. When acetylcholine is blocked, the targeted muscle relaxes temporarily, reducing unwanted movement or smoothing out wrinkles caused by repetitive facial expressions.

Falsified Dysport



Falsified Dysport

Counterfeit	Visual Difference
	<p>Serial number DYN7PCXH84UNBF Is the serial number that has been frequently copied and applied to multiple counterfeit cases</p> <p>QR code applied where Data Matrix should be</p> <p>Counterfeit carton has 08/2025, in expiry date instead of genuine Expiry date 04/2023</p>
	

According to manufacturer Ipsen: “Batch number U12523 manufacturing date 05 May 2021 and expiry date April 2023 are genuine for material code 1000691 Dysport 500U 1 Vial presentation for Jordan. A total of 2,506 cartons of for this packing batch were dispatched from Wrexham to Jordan on 9 JULY 2021. Record review has failed to identify any logistic issues registered for batch U12523”

Using counterfeit Dysport that contains eight times the amount of botulinum toxin type A compared to the original product poses a severe and potentially life-threatening risk



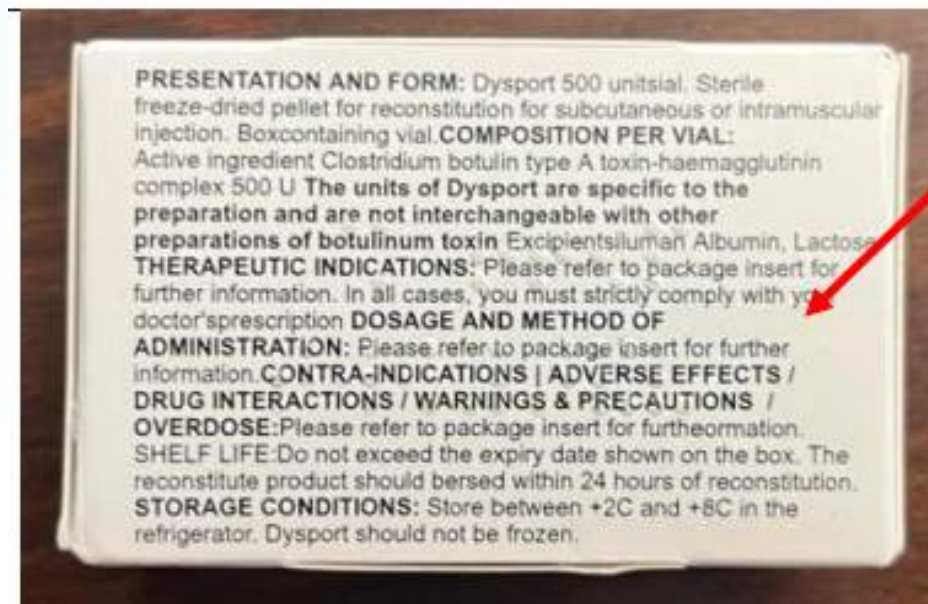
Falsified Dysport



Dysport wave is faded and inconsistent with genuine carton.

Lines missing.

Carton opening flaps cut in incorrect direction.



Many spelling errors throughout the carton.

Counterfeit Dysport

- Using counterfeit Dysport that contains eight times the amount of botulinum toxin type A compared to the original product poses a severe and potentially life-threatening risk.
- Botulinum toxin is one of the most potent biological substances known. When administered in excessive doses or under unregulated conditions, it can spread beyond the injection site and affect vital body functions.
- Possible dangers include:
 - Severe muscle weakness or paralysis, including muscles involved in breathing and swallowing
 - Respiratory failure, which can be fatal without immediate medical intervention
 - Difficulty speaking, swallowing, or holding up the head
 - Blurred or double vision due to paralysis of eye muscles
 - Drooping eyelids, facial asymmetry, and prolonged aesthetic damage
 - Systemic toxicity, potentially leading to generalized paralysis

Counterfeit Dysport

- Counterfeit products are not manufactured under sterile or controlled pharmaceutical conditions, meaning they may also contain contaminants, incorrect dosages, or impure formulations. Such products can cause serious infections, allergic reactions, or long-term nerve damage.
- Only licensed medical professionals should administer botulinum toxin products such as Dysport, and only authentic, traceable vials obtained from authorized distributors should be used.
- If exposure to a counterfeit or suspicious product is suspected, the individual should seek immediate emergency medical care and report the incident to local health authorities.

The Hidden Dangers of Nitrous Oxide: Understanding the "Laughing Gas" Crisis

Nitrous oxide, scientifically known as N_2O , is a colorless gas commonly referred to as "laughing gas" or "whipped cream gas." While it has legitimate medical applications for pain relief and anesthesia, and industrial uses in food production, its recreational abuse poses serious health risks that demand our immediate attention and understanding.



The Party Drug Phenomenon

- Nitrous oxide has emerged as one of the most popular party drugs, particularly valued for its immediate effects: tranquility, relaxation, and euphoria that appear instantly upon inhalation. At higher doses, the gas is associated with powerful hallucinations and significant neurological side effects.
- Usage has increased alarmingly in recent years, with consumption primarily among young people and teenagers at parties, clubs, and parks. Notable usage occurs especially at nature parties and major festivals – including events like Midburn and electronic music festivals, where the substance has become increasingly normalized within party culture.

Methods of Use and Immediate Dangers

The Dangerous Process

- The gas is sold in small metal containers containing compressed gas at 99% concentration. Users typically transfer the gas content to balloons before inhalation. This transfer is necessary because direct inhalation from compressed metal containers releases gas with extreme force and extremely low temperature, potentially causing severe frostbite burns to the mouth, throat, and lungs.
- In some cases, nitrous oxide is supplied in much larger containers, enabling more massive consumption patterns that significantly increase health risks.



Half- Million Canisters Have Been Seized



Medical vs. Recreational Use: A Critical Distinction

Safe Medical Application

In dental and medical settings, nitrous oxide use is considered very safe under professional supervision. It has been used for decades to reduce anxiety and alleviate pain, particularly in pediatric dental procedures.

- Precise, controlled dosing
- Mixed with oxygen in exact proportions
- Continuous medical supervision
- Immediate intervention capability

The Medical Safety Framework

Medical use involves careful monitoring throughout treatment. If abnormal symptoms such as dizziness or nausea appear, gas administration can be stopped immediately. Effects wear off within minutes of discontinuation, with no residual effects or significant side effects in the vast majority of cases.



Immediate Health Effects and Behavioral Risks

Neurological Effects

Euphoria often accompanied by uncontrollable laughter, loss of body sensation, impaired consciousness, loss of coordination, blurred vision, dizziness, memory loss, and tinnitus (ear ringing)

Dangerous Decision-Making

Users may make risky decisions, agree to things they wouldn't normally consent to, and enter life-threatening situations. This risk intensifies when combined with other substances like drugs and alcohol

Aspiration Risk

Users may vomit while under the influence, creating a risk of aspiration – inhalation of vomit into the lungs, which can be fatal

The effects resemble those of dissociative substances (such as ketamine), causing disconnection from surroundings and euphoria. Risk levels depend on usage patterns and frequency.

Long-Term Neurological Damage: The Hidden Catastroph

With frequent use, nitrous oxide becomes highly toxic to the nervous system. Regular and prolonged use can result in brain damage and seizures. It's crucial to understand that with recreational abuse, it's virtually impossible to control the dosage of nitrous oxide, making there no truly "safe dose" for this substance.

Signs of Nitrous Oxide Poisoning:

- Accelerated heart rate
- Breathing difficulties
- Coughing and choking sensation
- Psychosis and loss of consciousness

Prolonged use can lead to tolerance development and psychological dependence, though it's not physically addictive like nicotine or opioids. Visual and auditory distortions may affect hearing and vision, with users describing effects as "dreamlike," "psychedelic-like," or a general sense of disconnection from reality – dissociation.



Most containers are large



האגף לאכיפה ופיקוח



לחיים בריאים יותר



5000 large containers were seized



האגף לאכיפה ופיקוח

משרד
הבריאות
לחיים בריאים יותר

International Legislation: Strict Controls Worldwide

United Kingdom (2023)

Most stringent laws globally. Classified as controlled substance under Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, Class C. Illegal possession, production, supply, import, or export carries up to 14 years imprisonment.

Australia

Illegal to supply for recreational purposes. Two-year imprisonment for illegal supply. Must include warning labels and safety instructions under National Poisons Standard.

1

2

Belgium (2024)

Heavy fines or up to 5 years imprisonment for illegal use or sale. Online and physical sales prohibited except for medical or food additive purposes.

3

4

France

Sale prohibited to minors under 18. Restrictions on large container sales. Significant penalties including heavy fines for violations.



Israel's Legislative Response: The "Dangerous Substance" Framework

- In Israel, the situation is particularly complex. In July 2025, a new restricting considering the import and marketing of nitrous oxide have been approved in the parliament.
- The proposal is based on a unique mechanism – nitrous oxide will be defined as a "dangerous substance."
- This is a regulatory-administrative definition that allows the Ministry of Health, through a temporary and rapid order, to restrict marketing, sales, advertising, or distribution of a specific substance, even if it is not yet officially defined as a dangerous drug under the ordinance.
- Unlike typical "dangerous substance" declarations that are temporary (12 months), nitrous oxide will be declared a "dangerous substance" permanently. This means while not officially classified as a dangerous drug, relevant laws will still apply.

Israel: Severe Criminal Penalties Ahead

Criminal Consequences

3

Years Imprisonment

Maximum sentence for selling to adults over 18

5

Years Imprisonment

Maximum sentence for selling to minors

The practical implications are clear and severe. The risk is not only health-related but also legal, personal, and criminal.

Additional Restrictions Include:

- Volume limitations on imports
- Permit requirements for importers
- Sales restricted to adults only
- Strict documentation requirements for containers over 8 grams
- Enhanced tracking and accountability measures

Captagon Trafficking

Captagon is a highly addictive amphetamine-like drug produced in the Middle East.



Captagon

- On the morning of October 7, 2023, when Hamas terrorists crossed the fence and broke into Israel, they carried with them not only weapons and hatred.
- On their bodies and in their vehicles, large quantities of small white pills were found, embossed with two crossed swords.
- Captagon – the drug that turned human beings into killing machines, that enabled them to carry out the most horrific massacre in the state's history without feeling fear, pain or compassion.



The Historical Context of Combat Enhancement

The use of drugs for performance enhancement in combat is not a modern invention. Throughout history, in every culture and every era, warriors and their leaders sought ways to overcome basic human limitations – the fear of death, physical exhaustion, unbearable pain. Sometimes it was at the initiative of the warriors themselves, sometimes as part of a deliberate policy by commanders who sought to create soldiers who would not desert, who would not refuse orders, who could perform acts that a normal person would not be able to perform.

The Scythians: Cannabis Warriors of the Steppes

The Scythians, a nomadic people of cruel horsemen who lived in Central Asia and southern Russia in the eighth to third centuries BCE, documented ritual use of cannabis for combat purposes.

In the territories of present-day Iran, Kazakhstan, southern Russia and Ukraine, they developed a special ritual that preceded battles. In a steam tent that resembled a spiritual sauna, they heated stones until they glowed, placed them in special containers and threw cannabis seeds and flowers on them.

The thick smoke that rose filled the tent, and the warriors inhaled it together in a shared ritual. The effect was immediate – a feeling of euphoria, detachment from reality, absence of fear. They were ready for battle.

The Assassins: Hashish and the Promise of Paradise

Fifteen hundred years later, in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, the "Hashishins" operated in the region of Persia, Syria and the Alborz Mountains. Their historical name was the Nizari Ismailis, but the world knew them by a name derived from the drug they used – hashish.

The deadly warriors of the order assassinated political and religious enemies. According to historical traditions, and especially in the writings of Marco Polo, the warriors received hashish as part of their initiation rituals. Under the influence of the drug they were transported to magical gardens where they experienced paradise, and when they returned to reality they believed that their death in the mission would return them to that same paradise.



The Aztecs: Sacred Mushrooms and Divine Warriors

On the other side of the world, in the Aztec Empire that flourished in Mexico between the thirteenth century and the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century, they used psilocybin mushrooms – "flesh of the gods" as they called them.

Aztec culture, complex and rich, combined religion, war and spirituality.

The sacred mushrooms were not a "drug" in their eyes but a spiritual-shamanic tool for crossing the boundaries between the human and the divine.

When elite warriors went out to the most important battles, they consumed the mushrooms in special ceremonies. The effect was profound – visions, a feeling of merging with the gods, absolute knowledge that they were fighting in the name of superior forces.

Death in battle was not an end but an entrance ticket to paradise for warriors. The Spanish missionaries who came to Mexico documented this use in detail, shocked by the power with which the mushrooms turned ordinary people into fearless warriors.



World War I: The Industrial Scale of Combat Drugs

World War I, 1914 to 1918, marked a historical turning point. For the first time, drugs were not given only to elite warriors or in special ceremonies – they were supplied in an orderly and institutionalized manner to regular soldiers, as an integral part of military equipment.

Germany, Britain and France, which boasted the most developed pharmaceutical industries in the world, understood that in the extreme conditions of trench warfare – incessant shelling, poison gas, mud and cold, decomposing bodies in no man's land – soldiers needed chemical assistance to continue functioning.

Chemical Arsenal: Morphine, Cocaine, and Heroin

Morphine Distribution

Morphine flowed like water. The powerful painkiller from the opioid family was used not only for the seriously wounded but also to reduce anxiety and blur emotions.

Cocaine Applications

Cocaine was distributed in drops, tablets, ointments. It improved alertness, suppressed hunger and fatigue, treated depression on the battlefield. Sometimes soldiers received cocaine ointments for their eyes to improve night vision or reduce inflammation.

Heroin as Medicine

Heroin, a synthetic derivative of morphine, was marketed in those years as a legal medical substance for treating coughs and relieving pain. It was distributed in military clinics without anyone understanding how addictive it was.

Britain distributed the substances by prescription or in medical kits, Germany developed more efficient distribution methods. The short-term results were impressive – alert, fearless soldiers who felt no pain. The long-term results were catastrophic – an entire generation of addicts who returned from the war broken in body and soul.



World War II: Strategic Drug Warfare

World War II took the use of drugs to completely new dimensions. Between 1939 and 1945, drugs were no longer an addition but a strategic part of the war effort.

Amphetamines and methamphetamines, stimulant drugs that affect the central nervous system, became the secret weapon of all sides. Amphetamine increases levels of dopamine and norepinephrine in the brain, creating alertness, energy, self-confidence. Methamphetamine, a stronger and more potent version, affects for a longer time.

The Nazi Blitzkrieg and Methamphetamine

- Nazi Germany made methamphetamine an integral part of the Blitzkrieg a German term describing a **fast and concentrated combat method**.
- The drug was distributed in tablets to soldiers and pilots, especially to SS units and combat drivers on night campaigns. They called it "stimulating chocolate" or "wonder drug." Soldiers could stay awake and fight for entire days without interruption, without feeling fatigue or hunger.
- Japan supplied the drug to its kamikaze pilots – young men who had to fly to their certain death without hesitation.
- Britain and the United States distributed amphetamine to soldiers, drivers and pilots on extended missions. Everyone understood that in modern warfare, the physical and mental boundaries of man must be broken.



Modern Legacy: Captagon - The Contemporary War Drug

And today? Captagon is the modern heir to those historical war drugs.
Its scientific name is Fenethylline

- The vast majority of Captagon is produced in the Middle East
- Production hubs soon sprung up in Europe smuggled by gangs to the Middle East, according to a 2018 report by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)

Oman seized a shipment of 6 million Captagon pills – June 2023



Captagon – The Syrian Cartel

- Direct links between the multi-billion dollar Captagon drug trade and leading members of the Syrian Armed Forces and President Bashar al-Assad's family have been revealed
- The Fourth Division is an elite Syrian army unit tasked with protecting the government from internal and external threats. Since 2018 it has been formally led by Maher al-Assad, the younger brother of President Assad.



האגף לאכיפה ופיקוח

Captagon – The Syrian Cartel

- Maher al-Assad, the younger brother of President Assad.
- Maher al-Assad is subject to Western sanctions for carrying out brutal crackdowns on demonstrators during Syria's civil war and has also been linked with the alleged use of chemical weapons.

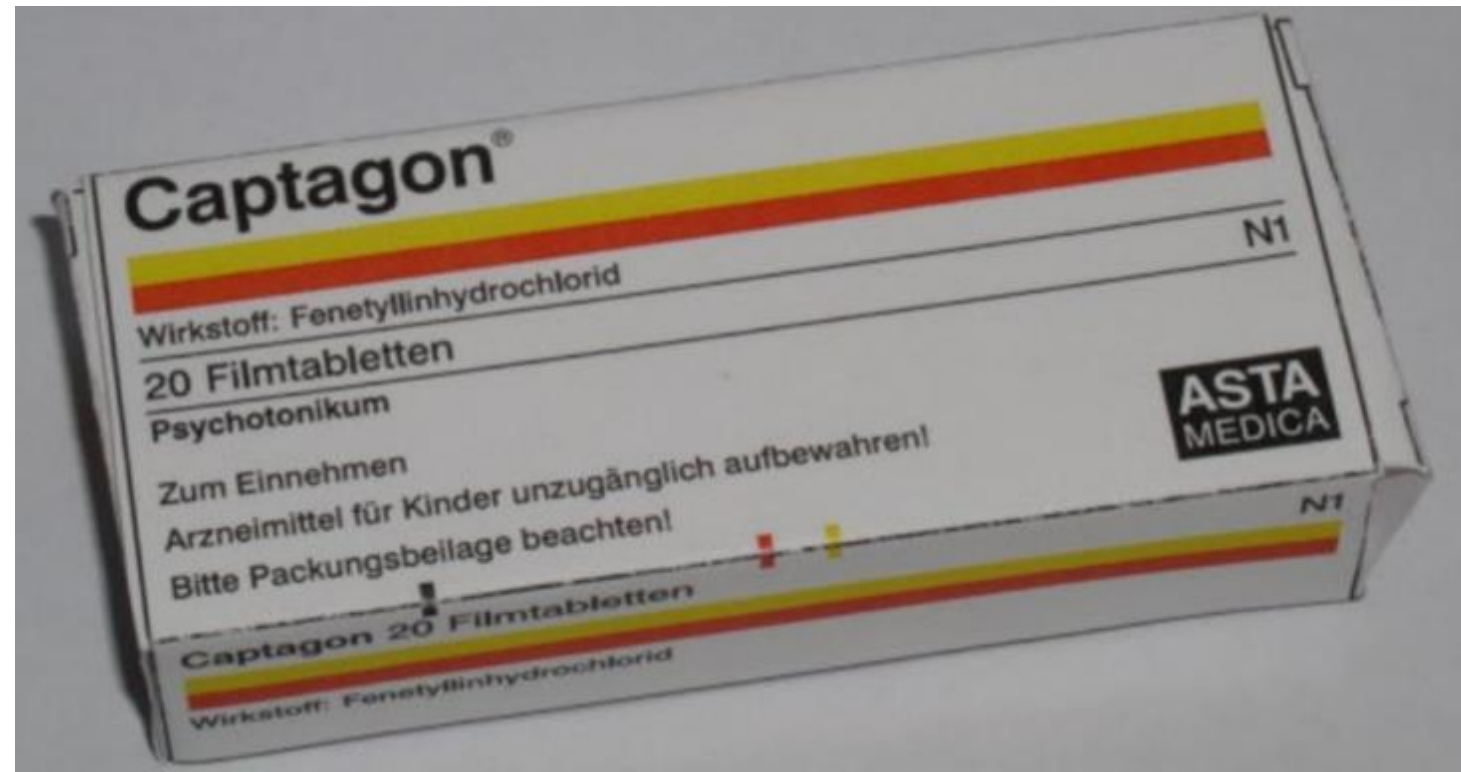


“Fenethylline” - The First Captagon

- Fenethylline was used as medicament for hyperactivity disorders in children, narcolepsy and depression, but it has also been used as a drug of abuse under the common name of 'Captagon'.
- Fenethylline was first synthesized by the German Degussa AG in 1961 and used for around 25 years in the treatment of "hyperkinetic children" (what would now be referred to as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder)
- Students take it for productivity; taxi drivers use the drug to stay up and perform in their jobs, while those facing food insecurity seek out Captagon to stave off meals



“Fenethylline” - The first Captagon



Fenethylline was included in Schedule II of the United Nations convention on the Psychotropic substances

Hezbollah production and transport of captagon

- Hezbollah is involved but is very careful not to have its members playing key roles in transporting and smuggling the Merchandise
- The drug trade has been a source of income for the Hezbollah organization for several decades.
- In the last decade, the USA waged a war of attrition against drug dealers from South America who ran drug trafficking networks in collaboration with Hezbollah.
- Hezbollah have played a key role in helping the Syrian government turn the tide in the civil war.
- They have long been accused of involvement in drug trafficking, but always denied it



85 million pills were seized in Italy

Italian police in 2020 seized some 14 tonnes of Captagon pills worth around €1 billion euros, describing it as the world's single largest operation of its kind.



Captagon seized among other illicit items in Greece and Germany - 2018.

Greece



Germany – seized in furniture



Europe as Transit

In April 2020 in the port of Constanta – Romania 372kg of Captagon was discovered in a container that arrived from Syria, in transit to Saudi Arabia

In August 2020 , 750kg of Captagon tablets and 1.4 tonnes of cannabis resin were again seized in Constanta, in a container from Syria, with the Captagon en-route to Saudi Arabia (the resin to Germany)



In October 2021 , 1.6 million Captagon tablets, concealed in a caravan from Germany, shipped to Antwerp, Belgium, were seized in Saudi Arabia.

In January 2019, 348,000 Captagon tablets concealed in a shipment of artificial grass from the Netherlands to Saudi Arabia, were seized.

In January 2022 , 2,060,000 Captagon tablets were found hidden in a shipment with medical gloves from the Netherlands to Saudi Arabia were seized.

Seizures of Captagon Tablets in the European Union (>60000 or > 10 kg) Nov.2018-Feb. 2022

Date	Country	Location	Weight (kg)	Number of tablets	Other drugs seized
Nov 18	Germany	Hamburg port	167*	1 000 000	
Dec 18	Greece		518*	3 100 000	6 tonnes cannabis resin
Jan 19	Greece	Pireus port	802*	4 800 000	
Jan 19	Greece	near Crete	43*	258 000	6.5 tonnes cannabis resin
Mar 19	Greece	Igoumenitsa port	62*	370 000	
Jun 19	Greece	Pireus	5 511*	33 000 000	
Apr 20	Romania	Constanta port	372	2 232 000*	
Jun 20	Italy	Salerno port	187	1 122 000*	2.8 tonnes cannabis resin
Jul 20	Italy	Salerno port	14 028*	84 000 000	
Aug 20	Romania	Constanta port	750	4 500 000*	1.4 tonnes cannabis resin
May 21	Germany	Bavaria	234	1 404 000*	
Aug 21	Germany	Bavaria	170	1 020 000*	
Nov 21	Germany		60	360 000*	
Jan 22	Greece	Rhodes	30*	180 000	
Jan 22	Greece	Kastellorizo	13*	80 000	
Feb 22	Greece	Rhodes	15*	88 880	
Totals			22 962	137 514 880	16.7 tonnes cannabis resin

More than 137 million tablets were seized

Mediterranean- Gulf region

- At least 370 million pills were seized in 2022 in the Mediterranean- Gulf region
- In August 2022, Saudi authorities conducted their largest-ever anti-narcotics operation, busting 46 million amphetamine pills hidden in a shipment of flour.
- In Saudi Arabia the total seized pills in 2022 stood at 107.1 million, in 31 reported seizures
- Jordan foiled an attempt to smuggle 16 million Captagon tablets in February 2022 - more than the entire amount seized in 2021.

Precursors

- The production of illicit drugs such as heroin, cocaine and amphetamines requires the use of chemicals, referred to as 'drug precursors'.
- A logical means of halting illicit drug production is to prevent illicit drug producers from getting their hands on such drug precursors
- It is therefore very important to gather information and hard evidence to prove any diversion and actual use of a particular pharmaceutical product in the illicit manufacture of drugs, and provide the authorities of the countries concerned with a factual basis to deny shipments of such products.

What are Captagon ingredients

- Fenethylline seems to display its own stimulatory effect to the same extent and at a similar time course as its precursors (amphetamine and theophylline).
- Theophylline is a medication used to treat asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease as a second-line drug. It is a bronchodilator. It does not have any psychoactive effect.
- Most Captagon products in the current market are synthetic stimulants consisting of an amphetamine molecule.
- Captagon tablets can contain a combination of several substances beside amphetamines, including caffeine, ephedrine, lidocaine, theophylline acetaminophen, and diphenhydramine that have synergic effects with amphetamines .

Trends in trafficking in precursors

- Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are precursors used in the illicit manufacture of amphetamines and methamphetamine.
- They also account for a significant proportion of legitimate trade in substances in the form of both raw materials and pharmaceutical preparations.
- Ephedrine is a central nervous system stimulant used to treat breathing problems, nasal congestion, and low blood pressure problems.
- Pharmaceutical preparations containing pseudoephedrine or other controlled precursors are not under international control, meaning that sending pre-export notifications for such preparations, although highly recommended, is not mandatory.
- Increase partnerships and cooperation with industry as an effective strategy to confront chemical diversion.

Dubai 14.09.2023

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Police in Dubai seized 86 million tablets of the amphetamine known as Captagon hidden in a shipment of doors and decorative building panels
Authorities estimated its street value at just over \$1 billion.



Syria new regime

- In December 2024, the Assad regime fell.
- Ahmad al-Sharaa, formerly known as Abu Muhammad al-Julani, declared in his victory speech at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus that the new interim government would cleanse Syria of its image as a “narco-state.”
- The military operations department launched a broad campaign against drug traffickers. In Damascus and provincial cities, raids were carried out, suspects were arrested, and major production laboratories, storage sites, and trafficking hubs linked to the former regime were seized.
- Whether this marks a genuine change or merely rhetoric remains an open question.

Israel's Standpoint and Seizures

- Israel is joining a growing list of countries that are concerned about the Captagon drug production and trafficking.
- Seizures of Captagon have occurred at several border crossings in Israel.
- Collaborations between several organizations in Israel and a number of organizations and agencies abroad have already been established
- Thousands of Captagon tab were seized in Israeli border, and **police lab results revealed methamphetamine,**



Captagon seized in Germany, Revealing a similar shape to that found in Israel



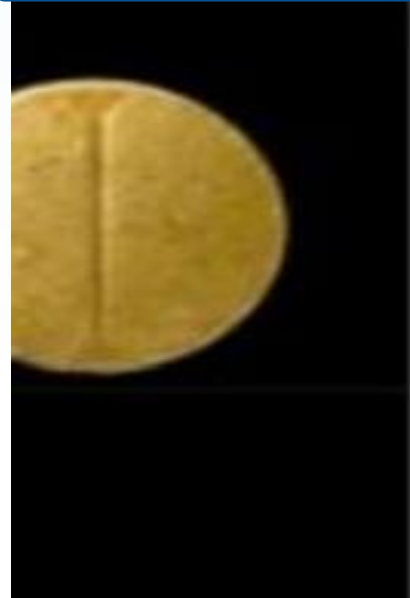
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Source: BKA Forensic Science Ins

Captagon seized in Israel

Captagon seized in Germany



Conclusions

- To gather more information about the precursors and hard evidence to prove any diversion and actual use of a particular pharmaceutical product in the illicit manufacture of drugs
- A regional and international coalition and enhanced co-ordination between the allies
- Drug traffickers are always looking for new markets – the drug's seizure data last year shows that the trade has grown more transnational, with emerging transit sites and potential consumer markets in Europe, North Africa and South-East Asia.
- Criminal organization shipments have also been involved in trafficking cannabis resin and cocaine, together with Captagon

Thanks for Listening

