



Alert – Severe coagulopathies and bleeding associated with Synthetic THC use

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 MORE INFO ATTACHED MORE INFO TO FOLLOW

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In the last month there has been a multistate outbreak of severe coagulopathies and bleeding associated with abuse of the synthetic cannabinoids (THC homologs, Spice, K-2). There were 70 confirmed cases in Illinois including 2 deaths. Additional potential cases have been in FL (4), AL (1), CA (1), KY (1), MD (1), MN (2), MO (2), NJ (1), NY (2), NC (2), OK (1), PA (1), TS (2), UT (1), VA (1), WI (1). It appears these cases were due to ingestion of adulterated synthetic cannabinoids (brands King Kong; Relief; etc.). Product was purchased at different places (even different states) and different names/brands. In at least 9 of these cases brodifacoum has been detected. Brodifacoum, a potent “super-warfarin rodenticide”, does not show up in lab analysis as Coumadin. Synthetic cannabinoids do not show up as positive in drug screens for THC.

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With brodifacoum, onset of coagulopathies and bleeding may be delayed by 48 to 72 hours after exposure. The initial patient history may not include use of synthetic cannabinoids, as the patient may not associate past use with the present symptoms. Clinical suspicion along with elevated INR/PT, new onset bleeding or altered clotting factors (II, VII, IX, X) would be critical in initial case recognition.

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At this point the extent of the outbreak is unknown but continues to grow. No case to date has been located in Ohio, but neighboring states (Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Kentucky) have all reported cases.

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Brodifacoum will respond to vitamin K therapy, but this may require high doses and prolonged therapy (weeks to months). FFP is indicated initially if patient is bleeding.

If you have a similar case in your hospital please contact the poison center (1-800-222-1222).

We are working with the Ohio Department of Health to track these cases and to address any treatment and patient management needed.

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