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New Zealand School Nurses Ltd

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Aotearoa and fentanyl – preparing a health response

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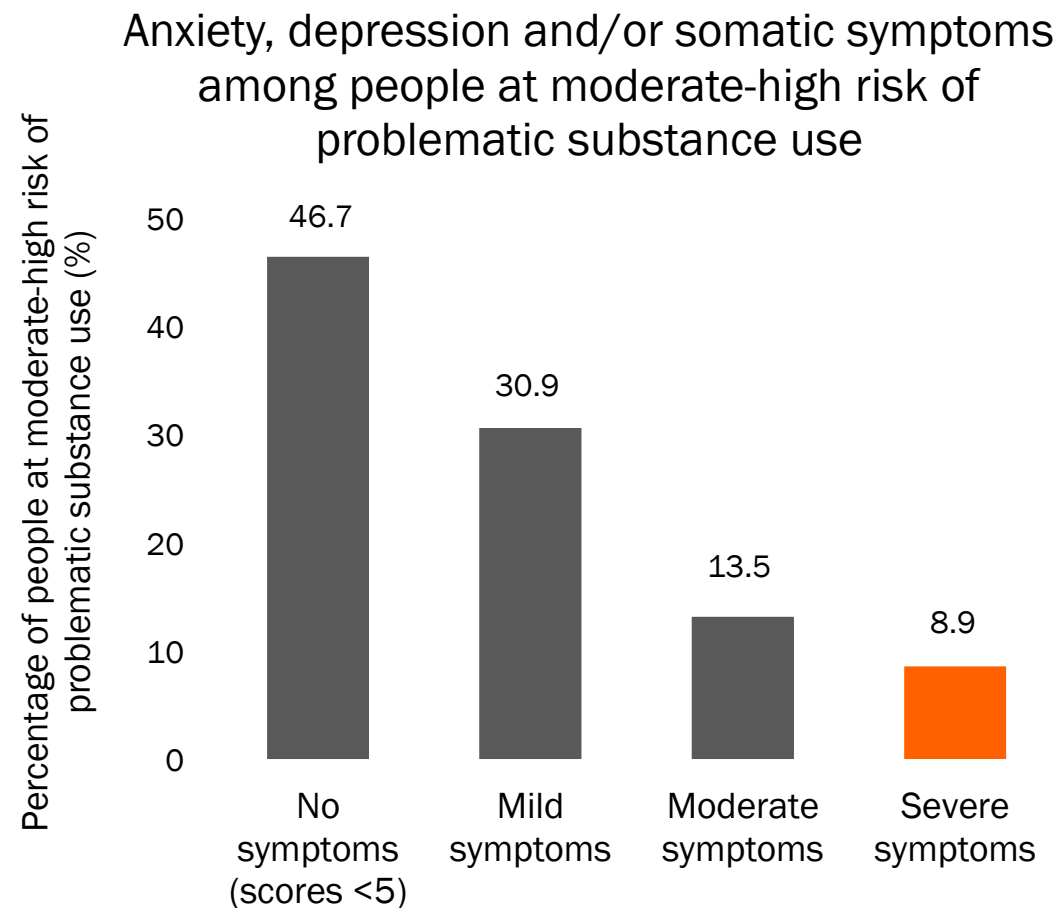
**AT THE HEART
OF THE MATTER,
NZ DRUG
FOUNDATION.**

Te Tūāpapa Tarukino o Aotearoa

When we start the conversation when people are “struggling” we miss most of the people we are trying to reach.

1.2M

New Zealanders are estimated to be at moderate-high risk of problematic substance use (NZ Health Survey 2016-17)



NZ Health Survey 2016-17

<https://minhealthnz.shinyapps.io/nz-health-survey-2016-17-mental-health-explorer/>

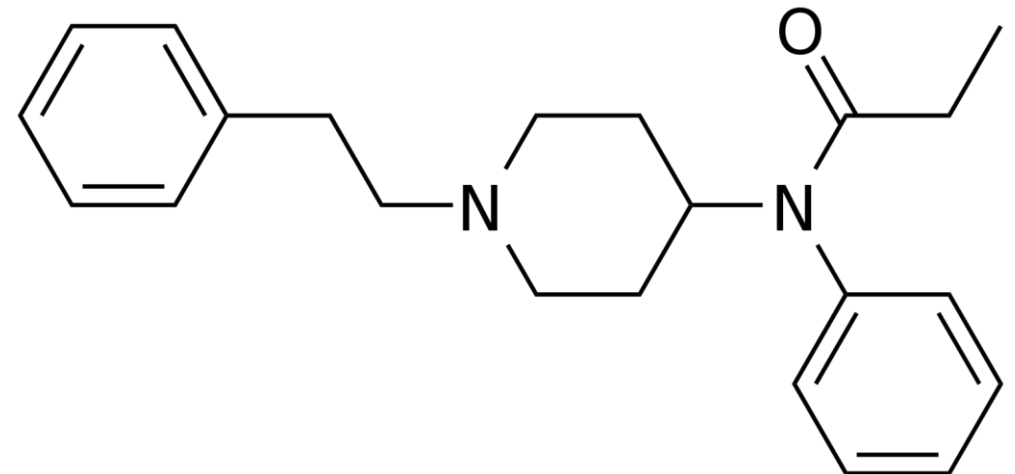
Recent events

- **12 hospitalisations within 24 hours** in the Wairarapa area on the 24th and 25th of June. They displayed the same symptoms as an opioid overdose and all responded well to naloxone – a drug that temporarily reverses an opioid overdose.
- These people had taken **white powder that they had purchased as cocaine**. A sample of the substance was tested and found to be fentanyl and mannitol (a binder).
- There was one further hospitalisation a week later in the Manawatu that was linked to this situation.
- We have not heard of further incidents relating to this situation.



Fentanyl and Fentanyl-type substances

- Fentanyl is a potent opioid used to treat pain and as an analgesic.
- Some people choose to use fentanyl in Aotearoa.
- Like most drugs, fentanyl and fentanyl analogues are most dangerous when someone thinks they have something else.

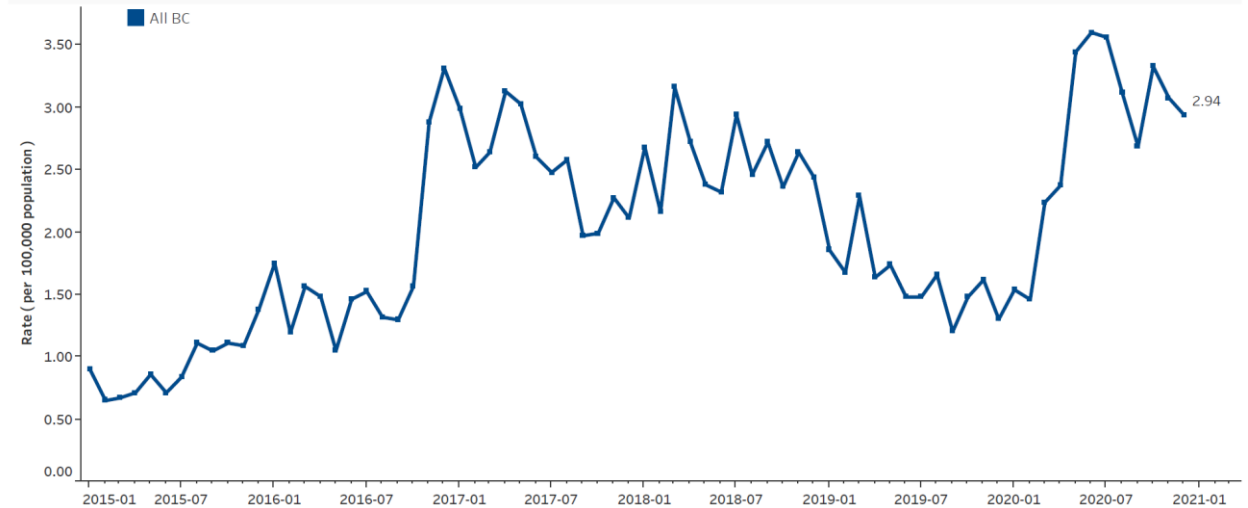


North America

- The adulteration of fentanyl and fentanyl analogues into the drug market (e.g. in MDMA or methamphetamine) led to spikes in deaths.
- While Aotearoa is unlikely to experience exactly the same situation as North America because of different prescribing practices, our drug market is small and adulterated or substituted products can saturate our market quickly.

Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths

Breakdown by Health Authority, Rate per 100,000 population, All Sex, All Age Group



(BC Centre for Disease Control, 2021)

DRUGS ●

'Dangerous' drug eutylone being sold as MDMA in New Zealand

11/02/2020

Rachel Sadler



The Acute Drug Harm Community of Practice helps us prepare and respond

- This network is growing. It includes a *New Psychoactive Substances* group who track new substances and prepare harm reduction information and approaches before they reach Aotearoa.
- A crisis response scenario involving a surge in opioid overdoses was ran with the Community of Practice last year. That helped us respond to the recent hospitalisations over Matariki weekend.
- **When we're connected and prepared, we can better help people, their whānau, the community, and services to respond quickly when needed.**

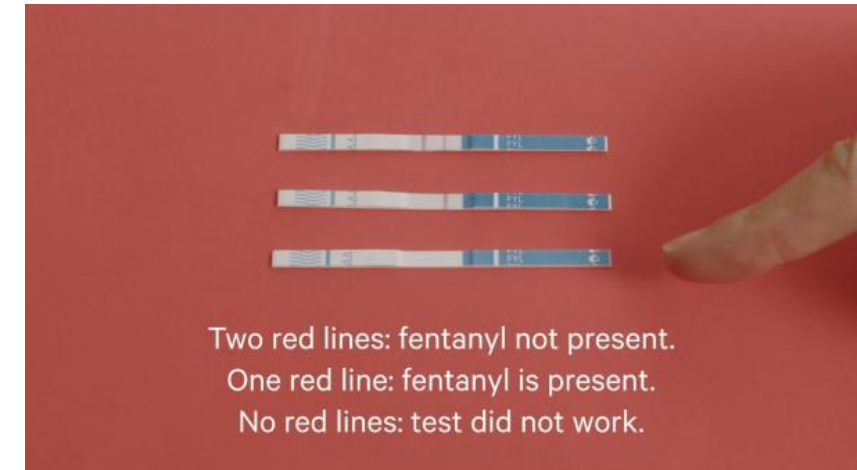
Contact us to join the
Community of Practice

Preparing a health response

- **Fentanyl test strips** can detect the presence of small amounts of fentanyl and some fentanyl analogues in a substance. We and the other drug checking providers are distributing them for free.

How to use them: <https://thelevel.org.nz/news-and-stories/how-to-test-your-drugs-for-fentanyl/>

- **Drug checking services** are a crucial part of our health response to drugs. They help us see what is out there and provide an opportunity for someone to talk about drugs and ways to prevent harm – with no agendas or access criteria.
- Having **naloxone** available where people might use drugs can save lives.



How to spot an opioid overdose

- Three signs to look out for.

How to spot an opioid overdose

If you notice someone who:

● Is not completely awake or is totally unresponsive



● Is breathing slowly or not at all (they may be snoring)



● Has 'pinpoint' pupils



Immediately phone 111 and follow the instructions from the emergency call-taker.



Naloxone

- How to use injectable naloxone:
<https://thelevel.org.nz/news-and-stories/how-to-use-naloxone-ampoules/>
- How to use naloxone nasal spray:
<https://thelevel.org.nz/news-and-stories/how-and-when-to-use-nyxoid-nasal-spray-to-respond-to-an-opioid-overdose/>
- Naloxone is safe, even when used on someone who is not having an opioid overdose. Many places in North America give naloxone out for free to anyone who wants it. Australia has a take-home naloxone pilot that is showing promising results.





Schools

- It is not common for students to use the type of drugs that might get adulterated with fentanyl while at school.
- The **competencies in the health learning area** are important. These help young people learn how to make sense of what they see, hear, and experience. They will see news stories about fentanyl and if we get adulterated supply of drugs such as MDMA and methamphetamine in Aotearoa we are likely to see some deaths.
- Schools and school health centres may be a place where people run to for urgent help if someone overdoses nearby.

Schools

- Visit tuturu.org.nz for information, resources, and opportunities to partner with a local health service to strengthen your school's approach to wellbeing.



The Level thelevel.org.nz

- A straight up guide for people who use drugs

