

## SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS

The Illinois-Missouri area is experiencing increasing reports of "herbal incense" containing new synthetic cannabinoids such as JWH 018, CP 47497 and HU 210 being sold in smoke shops and "head shops". There are many different brand names which is causing confusion among first responders, hospital staff, and prevention professionals. In the fall of 2008 a high school student in our area was hospitalized after smoking "Spice" on the way to school. German researchers discovered the synthetic cannabinoids present in Spice and the U.S. Custom Service banned the importation of the product in late 2009.

However, other products have popped up to fill the void by the Spice ban such as "K2" in the St. Louis metro area which has been linked to at least 30 hospitalizations, and "Red Dragon Smoke" in the DePaul neighborhood of Chicago. These products can also be purchased over the internet for about

\$35 per gram. I suspect there are or will be many other brand names popping up containing the same synthetic cannabinoids as authorities attempt to control these intoxicants. If you have an incident where a subject is experiencing panic attacks, heart palpitations, dilated pupils, or other symptoms but the hospital toxicology report is negative for drugs, you may have a synthetic cannabinoid adverse reaction case. Currently there is no accepted urine drug test that I know of for the presence of these chemicals and no criminal laws for possession (however, several states are considering legislation at this time). It might be useful to ask the victim what product they smoked and then do a Google search on the name. Many pro-drug forums have multiple postings of specific product names with the degree of intoxication each product produces. The US DEA National Forensic Lab is asking for any encounters with these drugs to be reported at 202-307-7183 Attn: ODE section.

I was interviewed by Chicago Public Radio on the topic and the audio clip is available at:

<http://www.wbez.org/Content.aspx?audioID=40389>  
<blockedhttp://www.wbez.org/Content.aspx?audioID=40389>

I have a couple PowerPoint slides I can provide on the subject if you e-mail me off the list at [BruceRTalbot@aol.com](mailto:BruceRTalbot@aol.com)

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