Drug Facts: Xylazine

What Is Xylazine?
Xylazine, also known as “tranq,” is a non-opioid, central nervous system depressant that is approved for use in veterinary medicine. It is not approved for human use. However, xylazine has been linked to an increasing number of overdose deaths in the United States.

Why Do People Take Xylazine?
People often take xylazine unknowingly. Individuals who manufacture and sell illicit drugs frequently add xylazine to cocaine, heroin, and fentanyl. When someone purchases these drugs online or in the community, they are often unaware that xylazine has been added to them.

How Does Xylazine Affect The Body?
Xylazine can cause drowsiness and amnesia and can slow breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure to dangerously low levels. Repeated xylazine use is associated with skin ulcers, abscesses, and related complications. When xylazine is taken in combination with opioids such as heroin and fentanyl, it increases the risk of a life-threatening overdose.

How Is A Xylazine Overdose Treated?
Experts recommend administering naloxone in the event of a suspected xylazine overdose. Naloxone is the medication used to reverse an opioid overdose. Although xylazine is not an opioid, it is often combined with opioids, so naloxone will reverse the adverse effects of opioids. However, it will not address the impact of xylazine on breathing, so it is essential to call 9-1-1 to report the suspected overdose before administering naloxone.

Can A Person Become Addicted To Xylazine?
Yes, an individual can become addicted to xylazine with repeated use. Because xylazine is often combined with opioids, a person can become addicted to both substances. Individuals looking for treatment can call the 24/7 Access Line at 1.800.563.4086.

Connecticut Resources
CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
www.ct.gov/DMHAS
Access Line
1.800.563.4086

National Resources
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov
National Institute on Drug Abuse
www.nida.nih.gov

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