

Fentanyl's risk on the 'darknet'

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U.S. overdose deaths attributed to synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, have increased from under 3,000 in 2013 to nearly 20,000 in 2016, making up half of all opioid-related overdose deaths. These drugs are often purchased on the web's hidden "darknet." An analysis published in *Contemporary Economic Policy* that examined the darknet's opioid purchases from 2014 to 2016 found that vendors priced fentanyl in 2014 at a 90% discount compared with an equivalent dose of heroin.

Furthermore, [fentanyl's retail price](#) declined by 50% to \$0.21 between 2014 and 2016, exacerbating this difference. "By 2016 a lethal dose of fentanyl on the dark web had fallen to under \$2.50, and with bulk pricing a lethal dose cost approximately \$1.00," said author Jacob N. Miller, of Southern Utah University.

The research also suggested that although U.S. legal actions had minimal lasting effects of darknet market disruption, regulatory actions in China intended to curb the manufacturing of fentanyl coincided with a halt in the [downward trend](#) in fentanyl prices.

More information: Jacob N. Miller, THE WAR ON DRUGS 2.0: DARKNET FENTANYL'S RISE AND THE EFFECTS OF REGULATORY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION, *Contemporary Economic Policy* (2019). [DOI: 10.1111/coep.12447](https://doi.org/10.1111/coep.12447)

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