

UK government moves to ban 'zombie drug' xylazine

September 4 2024



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The British government announced legislation on Wednesday to ban the so-called "zombie drug" xylazine and 21 other drugs to tackle deaths and crack down on criminal gangs.

The high-strength animal sedative, also known as "tranq", often leaves long-term users in an unresponsive state and with non-healing skin lesions.

It has increasingly been used in combination with [opioids](#) such as heroin, with traces found in cannabis vapes as well, according to the UK Home Office.

Researchers at King's College London said the drug was "widespread" in the UK's illicit drug market.

Other drugs to be banned will include new variations of nitazenes, highly addictive synthetic opioids that can be hundreds of times stronger than heroin and easily lead to overdoses.

The UK's Misuse of Drugs Act sets out three separate categories for "controlled drugs", with Class A drugs deemed the most dangerous and the most harshly punished.

The [new legislation](#) would make xylazine a Class C drug. Anyone caught producing or supplying Class C drugs can be given an unlimited fine, jailed for up to 14 years or both.

The Home Office said other countries that have seen a rise in its misuse, including the United States, where xylazine-involved overdose deaths rose 30-fold between 2018 and 2021, have not yet taken similar action.

"We have seen what has happened in other countries when the use of these drugs is allowed to grow out of control, and this is why we are among the first countries to take action and protect our communities from these dangerous new drugs," said policing minister Diana Johnson.

"The changes being introduced this week will also make it easier to

crack down on those suppliers who are trying to circumvent our controls," she said.

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Citation: UK government moves to ban 'zombie drug' xylazine (2024, September 4) retrieved 6 September 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-09-uk-zombie-drug-xylazine.html>

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