



Alert from the NDEWS Web Monitoring Team: Online mentions of Medetomidine

What was found? According to a May 2024 public alert from the Center for Forensic Science Research and Education (CFSRE), medetomidine has been rapidly proliferating across the United States and Canada, being implicated in the recreational opioid drug supply and has been involved in outbreaks. The report notes that medetomidine has appeared as a fentanyl or heroin adulterant alongside other adulterants such as xylazine. The report notes that heightened sensation and profound bradycardia have been found as effects of recreational medetomidine use.

What is Medetomidine? Medetomidine, also known as "Domitor", is a highly potent alpha-2 adrenergic receptor agonist primarily used as a veterinary sedative and analgesic. Medetomidine has a rapid onset of action and produces significant sedative, amnestic, and analgesic effects.

How is it being discussed? Online discussions on platforms like Reddit reveal that medetomidine is often used in combination with opioids for recreational purposes. Reddit users report that the drug's potent sedative effects are an order of magnitude greater than those of xylazine. Some users mention that medetomidine may have reduced peripheral vasoconstriction and hypertension compared to xylazine. The combined CNS depression of a fentanyl-medetomidine mixture is highlighted by commenters as a major danger, potentially leading to severe respiratory depression and overdose. The discussion also notes that the potency difference between medetomidine and other sedatives like xylazine may not be well understood, leading to unintentional overdoses.

Drug Terms Searched: Medetomidine, Domitor