

Drug School

Almost every night, in emergency rooms across the nation, patients can be found in various levels of consciousness, stupor, intoxication, and inebriation due to a wide variety of illicit substances. Due to their acute altered mental status, they are unable to tell their physician exactly what they took or how much they took. If the ED physician is lucky, the patient is brought in by EMS providers who are familiar with that particular street, club, or other paraphernalia on the scene and can relay vital clues to the physician to help solve the case. In many instances, however, the ED physician is not so lucky, the clinical toxidrome may not be obvious, and they must rely on a slightly-less inebriated friend of the patient for information. This friend, while less forthcoming, will weigh the benefits of helping to provide information which can save their friend against the risks of possibly giving up incriminating information, and the result will be a very abbreviated, cryptic story using slang terms that are foreign to many physicians who likely come from a...shall we say...less-illegal background. Okay, we can say it. Many physicians come from a rather privileged, if not completely sheltered background, and have no idea what someone means when they say that they “killed a speedball, booty-bumped some cold, and then went out with Stacy”. Or, if the physician thinks they understood, they may not necessarily be willing to base their clinical decision-making and further interventions on this tweaking friend who is clearly not speaking English as we learned it. This paper is not about clinical toxidromes or how to treat patients under the influence of drugs of abuse. It is simply to educate the providers on the common slang language, methods of use, and when accessible, prices of these products used among the patients who are likely to present to the ED under the influence of these illicit substances. While most clinicians are excellent at treating the toxidromes without necessarily knowing which substance the patient took, sometimes being able to identify the substance may mean the difference in life, disability, or death.

Disclaimer: This list is certainly not all-inclusive as many new drugs are discovered and combined in nearly infinite ways with even more slang terms, and these slang terms may vary by region and change constantly in order to protect the anonymity of the drug among consumers in public domains. To get the most up-to-date information for the area in which you are practicing, the author recommends enlisting the teaching services of your local drug task force or narcotics officers.

I. Heroin

- a. A highly addictive narcotic, derived from the opium poppy; usually sold as a white powder on the east coast (i.e. “China white” or “antifreeze”), and usually as a dark black solid on the west coast (i.e. “black tar”, “brown sugar”, or “Mexican mud”)
- b. Methods of use
 - i. Injecting into a vein – “mainlining”
 - ii. Injected in a muscle
 - iii. Smoked in a pipe, or mixed with a marijuana or regular cigarette
 - iv. Inhaled as smoke through a straw – “chasing the dragon”
 - v. Inhaled powder (i.e. snorting through the nose)
- c. Slang terms

- i. "A-bomb" → heroin + marijuana
- ii. "Bombitas" → heroin + amphetamines
- iii. "Speedball" or "dynamite" → heroin + cocaine
- iv. "Whiz-bang" → heroin + morphine
- v. Playful modification of the word "heroin" → "Big H", "horse"
- vi. How it makes you feel → "smac", "junk", "skag"
- vii. Others → "dope", "muc"

II. Marijuana

- a. A psychoactive drug, active ingredient is THC (i.e. tetrahydrocannabinol)
- b. Methods of use
 - i. Whole flower and leaf can be eaten (i.e. "magic brownies") or smoked. Smoked in small cigarettes or a water bong. It also serves as the stock from which these other forms are derived below
 - ii. Can saturate (or supersaturate) with PCP and formaldehyde and smoke it
 - iii. Kief – powder form, consumed directly, or compressed to form hashish cakes
 - iv. Hashish – pressed kief, concentrated resin cake or ball, consumed orally or smoked
 - v. Tincture – high-proof spirits (i.e. grain alcohol) are used to extract cannabis to drink (i.e. called "the green dragon"); can be used in tea also
 - vi. Any of the solid forms **can be adulterated** by adding chalk, glass, lead, soil, glue, engine oil, and/or animal feces to increase the bulk of the sample and thus the street value – the people who consume them are usually not aware of the adulterations and will suffer increased side effects as a result
 - vii. Concentrated after extraction – "budder", "honey"
- c. Slang terms
 - i. General – "pot", "reefer", "weed", "ganja", "hashish", "Mary Jane", "grass"
 - ii. If soaked in PCP → "sherm", "wet", "sheba", "wet weed", "happy sticks", "wack", "fry" – \$20-30 per cigarette
 - iii. Other not so common terms – "Home grown", "Honey Oil", "Jamaican", "jive", "Panama Gold", "sinse", "skunk", "stiva"
 - iv. If it's smoked – may be called a "blunt". The butt is called a "roach" and they want to smoke it down to the very end, so they use "roach clips" to hold the "roach" so they don't burn their finger tips!
- d. Prices
 - i. "Dime bag" – 1/10th of an ounce - \$10
 - ii. "Quarter bag" – 1/4th of an ounce - \$25
 - iii. Depending on the quality, the price is \$150-400 per ounce, or ~\$3000/lb.
- e. Synthetic marijuana, made up of THC "mimickers" to try and avoid the illegal status of the components of regular marijuana, is also a psychoactive stimulant. However, these are much more potent chemicals that often cause paranoia, agitation, and sympathetic hyperactivity, sometimes termed "spiceophrenia"

- i. Marketed sometimes as “herbal incense” in packages with different flavors like grape, strawberry, or cherry
- ii. Slang terms include “K2”, “spice”, “black mamba”, “Bombay blue”, “fake weed”, “genie”, “zohai”, “bliss”, “blaze”, “yucatan fire”, “skunk”, “moon rocks”

III. Cocaine

- a. Powerful nervous system stimulant and vasoconstrictor
 - i. Cocaine salt – most common, water soluble
 - ii. Cocaine base – “freebase”; water insoluble, usually smoked
 - iii. Crack cocaine – lower purity form of freebase; usually smoked; called “crack” b/c of the cracking sound it makes when the cocaine and its impurities are heated past the point of vaporization; gives immediate high (i.e. “rush”); also called “ready rock”, “sticks”, or “French fries”
 - iv. Also can be called “Charlie”, “coke”, or “C”
- b. Methods of use
 - i. Oral – powder rubbed on gum line or on cigarette paper and smoked to numb the gums and teeth, called “numbies”, “gummers”, or “cocoa puffs”. Also, can roll it up in cigarette paper and swallow it whole, called “snow bomb”.
 - ii. Chewed – coca leaves can be chewed like tobacco leaves, or used to make tea, but it has to be mixed with a highly alkaline substance, like lime
 - iii. Nasal insufflation – most common method of administration, “blow”; 30-60% absorption, peak effect in ~15 minutes, known as “snorting”, “sniffing”, and “blowing”. They use rolled up high-dollar bills (i.e. \$100 bills), cut straws, hollowed out pens, long pinky fingernails, and place it in “bumps”, “lines”, or “rails” on top of a flat, hard surface like a mirror, CD case, or book
 - iv. Injection – highest absorption with fastest time to peak effect, called “bell ringer”; when mixed with heroin, it’s called a “speedball”, which is responsible for killing John Belushi, Chris Farley, and River Phoenix.
 - v. Inhalation – freebase or crack cocaine “rock” is smoked, usually in a glass pipe
 - vi. Suppository – “plugging”
- c. Prices and packaging
 - i. “8 ball” – 1/8th of an ounce (i.e. 3.5g) – various levels of purity lead to various prices, anywhere from \$50-350 per “8 ball”.
 - ii. A kilogram (“kilo”, or “key”) may cost \$2000 when bought from Colombia or Peru, and climb in value as it travels north, bringing in \$10k in Mexico, and ~\$30k wholesale in the U.S. If it’s split up into grams and sold individually, that same “key” can bring in \$100,000 if it’s high quality and pure, or roughly \$100 per gram.

IV. Methamphetamine

- a. Psychostimulant
- b. Methods of use

- i. Injected IV, but only if it's "cut" with a water soluble substance, which constitutes most of the bulk of a 0.01mg to 1.0 mg injected dose
 - ii. Smoking (which is actually vaporizing it, not burning it), called "chasing the white dragon"
 - iii. Insufflation, "snorting", bypasses the first-pass metabolism effect
 - iv. Suppository – resulting in increased sexual pleasure and longer-lasting effects, called "butt rocket", "booty bump", "potato thumping", "turkey basting", "plugging", "boofing", "suitcasing", "hooping", "keistering", "shafting", "bumming", and "shelving" (if vaginal).
- c. Common slang terms
 - i. "crystal meth", "meth", "speed", "ice", "shard", "p", "shaboo", "glass", "crank", "batunas", "scante", "rizz", "rock", "tina", "cold"
 - ii. "peanut butter crank" – an impure form of meth sold as a crumbly brown rock or an off-white rock
 - iii. "Kamikaze" – meth with caffeine
 - iv. A "crankster" uses meth, whereas a "tweaker" is high on meth, and meth is made in a "lab", which is usually a kitchen, storage building, or apt living room
- d. Prices
 - i. Depending on the quality and experience of the "chef" or "cook", ~\$12-17K per pound

V. Amphetamines

- a. Psychostimulant, different than methamphetamine, but may possibly contain methamphetamine as an ingredient
- b. Some forms are prescribed for control of appetite, depression, narcolepsy, ADD/ADHD
- c. Methods of use
 - i. Prescribed as liquids or tablets/capsules which can be ingested orally, or ground down into powder and sniffed or injected
- d. Slang terms
 - i. "Bennies", "billy", "black beauties", "copilots", "crank", "crystal", "desoxyn", "Dexedrine", "dexies", "eye openers", "lid poppers", "meth", "pep pills", "Rx diet pills", "speed", "ups", "uppers", "wake-ups", "whizz"

VI. Ecstasy

- a. Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (i.e. MDMA), causes increased energy, hallucinations, and euphoria.
- b. Slang terms
 - i. Those which refer to the changes that the user feels, such as "hug drug", "doves", "lover's speed", "clarity", and "essence"
 - ii. Those which are a play on the actual name include "XTC", "X", "eccies", "echoes", "E", "Stacy"

- iii. Those which refer to where they are used include “burgers”, “disco biscuits”, or they may refer to using them at raves, dances, all-night parties, and clubs
 - iv. “Molly” (short for molecule) or “mollies” refers to a pure form of MDMA. “Mandy” is the term used in the UK.
 - v. Sometimes they are named after the imprint logo on the pill.
 - c. Prices and packaging
 - i. Usually only available in pill form, \$20-25 per pill if bought individually, or \$3-10 per pill if bought in batches (i.e. several hundred pills)
- VII. Bath salts
 - a. Derivatives of the naturally occurring cathinones, from the plant *Catha edulis* or khat. They are sympathomimetics, vasoconstrictors and hallucinogenic. In the USA, most contain mephedrone and MDPV (methylenedioxypropylone)
 - b. Slang terms: “Purple wave”, “zoom”, “cloud 9”
- VIII. N-bombs
 - a. Derivatives of LSD
 - b. Slang terms: “Smiles,” “25-I”, and “25INBOMe”, “new LSD”, “legal acid”
 - c. Methods of use: nasal drops, blotter paper (SL or buccal use)
- IX. **Inhalants**
 - a. Common household substances (most commonly toluene) which release fumes, which are sniffed to obtain a temporary high similar to acute alcohol intoxication
 - b. Slang terms
 - i. Chemical names, such as “glue”, “solvent”, “transmission fluid”, “night ox” (nitrous oxide)
 - ii. Playful names, such as “air blasts”, “boppers”, “buzz bombs”, “bullet bolts”, “hippie crack”, “laughing gas”, “moon gas”, “poor man’s pot”, “Texas shoe shine”, “toilet water”
 - iii. A person who uses inhalants is a “sniffer”, “huffer”, “bagger”, or “gluey”
- X. **Ketamine**
 - a. Powerful dissociative anesthetic
 - b. Methods of use
 - i. Water and lipid soluble, so can be IV, IM, nasal, oral, rectal. IM and IV are the most common, followed by snorting
 - c. Slang terms include “Special K”, “K”, “ket”, “cat valium”, “breakfast cereal”, “horse tranquilizer”, “new ecstasy”, “super heroin”, “k-hole”
 - d. Costs are about \$25 per gram
- XI. **Vicodin/Percocet/Oxycodone/Hydrocodone/Fentanyl**
 - a. Commonly prescribed narcotics, popularly abused by teenagers; known as the “white collar” drug
 - b. Common slang terms include “fluff”, “scratch”, “vikes”, “idiot pills”, “hydro’s”, “norco’s”, “Watson 387”, “hillbilly heroin”, “oxy’s”, “oxycotton”, “happy pills”, “big boys”, “cotton”, “perc’s”, “morph”, “kicker”
 - c. Common prices range from \$3/pill to \$25/pill

XII. Benzodiazepines

- a. Sedative tranquilizers
- b. Most commonly abused drugs are Xanax, Valium, Ativan, and Rohypnol (flunitrazepam). Rohypnol has been associated with drug-facilitated sexual assaults (“date rape”)
- c. Common slang terms are “benzos”, “rowies”, “moggies”, “vals”, “V”, “normies”, “downers”, “tranqs”, “sleepers”, “candy”, “sleeping pills”, “totem poles”, “French fries”, “z-bars”, “bricks”
- d. Specific for Xanax – usually 2mg tabs, called “dippers”, “bars”, “double G’s”, “handle bars”, “blue football” is 1mg, “peach football” is 0.5mg
- e. Specific for Klonopin – “pins”, “k cut outs”
- f. Specific for Ativan – “out-of-hands”
- g. Specific for Valium – “chill pill”

XIII. Barbiturates

- a. Sedative tranquilizers
- b. Most commonly abused drugs are mephobarbital, phenobarbital, and sodium pentobarbital
- c. Common slang terms are “barbs”, “reds”, “red birds”, “phennies”, “tooies”, “yellows”, “yellow jackets”

XIV. Miscellaneous

- a. Gamma-hydroxybutyric acid (GHB) is a CNS depressant, similar to the benzodiazepines. Commonly used as a “date rape drug”, similar to Rohypnol (flunitrazepam). Slang terms include “Georgia Home Boy”, “lollipops”, “juice”, “liquid ecstasy”, “mils”, “G”, “liquid X”, “liquid G”, “fantasy”
- b. Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD) is a psychedelic drug responsible for “tripping”. Slang terms include “acid”, “hit”, “tab”, “the goose”, “blotter”, “microdot”, “drop”, “trip”, “Lucy in the sky with diamonds”, “rainbow skittles”, “wacky tic-taks”, “delicious candy”, “French tic-tacs”, “European tic-tacs”
- c. Dextromethorphan, a common ingredient in cough syrup, is one of the most widely abused over-the-counter drugs among teens. Often referred to as DM, DMX, dex, drex, vitamin D, robo, rojo, and tussin. People who abuse this medication are known as syrup heads and are said to be Dexing, robotripping, or robodosing.
- d. Purple drank: promethazine/codeine syrup mixed with Mountain Dew or Sprite. Sometimes, a Jolly Rancher candy is added for color and sweetness. Is called “sizzurp”, “lean”, “syrup”, “drank” and “Texas tea”

References / Further Reading:

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