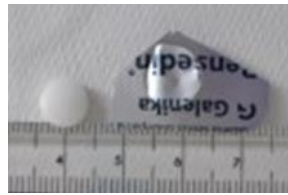


Are you getting what you think you're getting?

Over the past several years WEDINOS has been reporting on and highlighting concerns relating to *substitutions within the illicit benzodiazepine market*.

Primarily, these substitutions have involved other, albeit more potent, benzodiazepines.

Since, September 2023, WEDINOS has seen an increase in the number of samples submitted as *benzodiazepines*, particularly diazepam, that have been profiled as containing a *nitazene*, and on occasion another benzodiazepine, but *no diazepam*.



Since September 2023, 25 samples, from across the United Kingdom, submitted in the belief, they were **diazepam**, were profiled following analysis as containing the nitazene, **metonitazene** (Sept =8, Oct=12, Nov=5), and on 23 of those occasions, this was identified alongside the benzodiazepine, **bromazolam**.

Nitazenes were originally developed in the 1950s as analgesics. Found to have potent analgesic effects, the clinical development of nitazenes was abandoned due to the increased risks of adverse events. Currently, there are no drugs of this class approved as human or veterinary medicines.

Metonitazene is a high potency synthetic opioid that exceeds the potency of fentanyl and morphine.

Benzodiazepines are a class of sedative substances. These work by increasing the effects of a naturally occurring chemical in the brain gamma aminobutyric acid (GABA). Where prescribed, they are recommended for short-term use at the lowest possible dose. This is to reduce the risks of tolerance, dependence and withdrawal symptoms

Bromazolam is a triazolobenzodiazepine, structurally related to alprazolam. Originally developed as a candidate medicine, it was never approved for use. There is currently little scientific literature available relating to bromazolam. A “common” oral dose of bromazolam, as described by users of the substance, is 1 to 3mg. The onset of effects is between 15 and 45 minutes, with a duration of action of 5 to 8 hours

With the emergence of nitazenes within the illicit benzodiazepine market, we recommend, individuals who are consuming unprescribed benzodiazepines, speak to their local drug treatment service about **Naloxone** (often described as the opioid antidote) or visit **DAN 24/7** and see their click and collect service (for those living in Wales) <https://dan247.org.uk/naloxone-click-and-deliver/>