URGENT!

The Maryland Poison Center has witnessed a recent increase in synthetic cannabinoid exposures. Increased exposures have also been reported recently in NY, NJ, eastern PA, WV, Washington D.C., and the South, particularly Mississippi. For a map of the US with hot spots please see: [http://www.aapcc.org/alerts/synthetic-marijuana/](http://www.aapcc.org/alerts/synthetic-marijuana/).

This week, police crime laboratories in Maryland identified new synthetic cannabinoid compounds in materials obtained from police investigations. These newly isolated compounds have an alphabet soup of names (sometimes >1 compound was isolated):

- MAB- /AB- CHMINACA
- FUBINACA
- FUB-PB-22
- XLR11

CHMINACA and FUBINACA (and other synthetic cannabinoids) are thought to be potently agonists at the cannabinoid receptors 1 and 2 (CB1 and CB2). By contrast, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active ingredient in marijuana, is a partial agonist at CB1 receptors. Because of this different pharmacology, synthetic cannabinoids are not synthetic “marijuana”; and exposure to synthetic cannabinoids is different from exposure to marijuana.

In PA last month, 31 patients exposed to suspected synthetic cannabinoids developed the following: agitation, CNS depression, or a combination of agitation/CNS depression. Seizures were also reported. Some patients presented with tachycardia, others with bradycardia and hypotension. No hospital and no “send-out” laboratory can isolate these new compounds currently. Synthetic cannabinoids do not test positive for THC in the urine.

Management of these patients includes supportive care, including intubation if clinically indicated. Agitation and seizures should be treated with benzodiazepines. Intralipid rescue has not been used. The Maryland Poison Center is interested in hearing about all synthetic cannabinoid exposures, 1-800-222-1222. We will also be tweeting additional information on this topic as needed. Follow us on twitter! @MPCToxtidbits

*Did you know that...*

The first ever use of illicit “synthetic marijuana” in the medical literature dates back to 1976, when investigators reported that phencyclidine (PCP) was “misrepresented as synthetic marijuana” in Los Angeles. The original synthetic was PCP!