



## **K-2 effects, unknowns concern for health officials**

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There is a current drug that is readily available in our community that is raising concern throughout the nation. It has been highlighted by major networks such as CNN, Newsweek and USA Today to name a few.

This drug commonly called K-2 is marketed as incense although reports indicate it is usually smoked by users, in spite of the fact that most packaging states “not for human consumption.”

This drug is available in convenience stores, online and in other specialty shops under various names and flavors. Even though some retailers require the buyer be 18 years old, there is no legal regulation concerning age.

This substance is known and marketed by names such as Spice, Blondie, Mr. Smiley, Genie, Standard, Blue, Pink and Summit.

Negative effects that have been associated with K-2 include: hallucinations, delusions, blurry vision, nausea, vomiting, agitation, elevated blood pressure, rapid heart beat and paranoia. There have also been deaths reported that have possible links to K-2 usage. The U. S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) currently calls K-2 a “drug of concern.”

K-2 is primarily produced in China and Korea and is not subject to current U.S. drug regulations; therefore it is legal to sell.

The identity of the manufacturer is unknown. Because of the unknown manufacturer and lack of regulation, there are no assurances that there are not impurities in substance or in the consistency of the makeup of the substance. It is a synthetic blend of

herbs and spices that also contains a synthetic form of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active ingredient in marijuana.

Reports from users indicate that smoking K-2 produces a high that is similar to marijuana. Many reports however, indicate that this substance is many times more potent than marijuana.

Dr. John Huffman who invented the key ingredients in K-2 while researching the effects of cannabinoids on the brain in 1995 has stated “It shouldn’t be out there.”

This is because little is known about the active ingredients in K-2 which have never been tested on humans. They were created to be tested on animals and cell cultures. On top of this they have a chemical structure shared with known cancer causing agents according to WebMD.

Local officials report that K-2 is “frustrating.” For instance, they report that they are being told that individuals who are on probation or are participants in their programs are now using K-2 in place of marijuana. However, there are plans to change the rules to make the use of K-2 a violation of the requirements of their programs.

K-2 already been banned in several states, counties and municipalities and others are working in that direction. At some point, there may be legislation in Indiana in the upcoming year to ban the sale of K-2.

However, some are worried that the manufacturer will be able to alter the makeup of the substance enough to get

around the ban. This has already happened in Kansas.

There is little known about the substance commonly called K-2. It seems to have the potential to pose significant problems in the areas of health and addiction. It is currently available in our community and raises cause for concern.

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