

MICHAEL'S STORY

Michael was a 33-year-old EMT, known by friends and coworkers for his calm under pressure and dedication to saving lives. He was active, stable, and respected – until the stress of long shifts and trauma on the job pushed him toward using opioids recreationally to “take the edge off.”

One night, without knowing, he took fentanyl that was laced with medetomidine. He blacked out for nearly 14 hours and woke up in a hospital bed after paramedics struggled to revive him with Narcan alone. His heart had slowed dangerously. That overdose changed everything – he lost his certification, his license, and nearly his life.

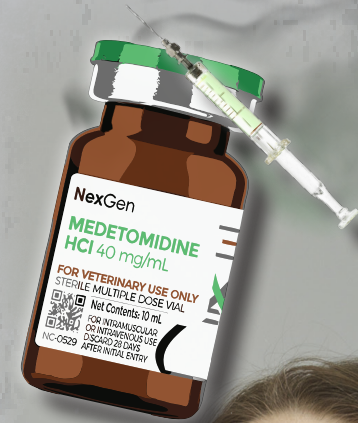
“I thought I knew what I was doing. I never even heard of medetomidine,” he later said. “That drug nearly stole everything I had built.”



TEST YOURSELF

1. Medetomidine is only used in veterinary medicine.
A. True B. False
2. Mixing medetomidine with fentanyl increases the risk of overdose.
A. True B. False
3. Medetomidine causes stimulating effects similar to stimulants like meth.
A. True B. False
4. Recreational drugs laced with medetomidine may result in longer-lasting sedation.
A. True B. False
5. Narcan (naloxone) alone is often enough to reverse a medetomidine-related overdose.
A. True B. False

MEDETOMIDINE



Answers: 1: False 2: True 3: False 4: True 5: False



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PREVENTING OVERDOSE
⚡ PROMOTING PUBLIC SAFETY

WHAT IS... MEDETOMIDINE?

Medetomidine is a potent central nervous system depressant, related to sedatives like xylazine and clonidine. Originally developed for veterinary and hospital use, medetomidine is now emerging in the illicit drug supply, often found mixed with fentanyl or heroin.

Though it is approved in medical settings for sedation and pain relief, it becomes highly dangerous outside of controlled environments. People using drugs may unknowingly ingest medetomidine, increasing their risk of overdose and death.

SIGNS OF MEDETOMIDINE EXPOSURE

If someone is experiencing an overdose or reacting poorly to street drugs, medetomidine might be involved. Look for these symptoms:

- Extreme sedation or unconsciousness that lasts longer than expected
- Slow heart rate (bradycardia) and low blood pressure (hypotension)
- Shallow breathing or difficulty breathing
- Hallucinations, confusion, or disorientation
- Poor response to naloxone (Narcan) alone



SOCIAL MEDIA & STREET MYTHS Don't Be Fooled by What You Hear

Social media often underplays or misrepresents new drug trends, including adulterants like medetomidine. Here's the truth:

- There is no safe "high" when mixing opioids with sedatives like medetomidine.
- Claims that xylazine or medetomidine make fentanyl safer are false and dangerous.
- Its street name, "dex," hides the reality of what's in the drug.
- Even experienced users are overdosing due to unknown chemical combinations.



DOOM MIXING — WHAT IT MEANS

"Doom Mixing" is a term used by harm reduction experts to describe the lethal mixing of depressants like fentanyl, xylazine, and medetomidine. These drugs stack their effects, leading to:

- Slowed or stopped breathing
- Heart failure
- Longer unconsciousness
- Non-responsiveness to Narcan



EXTREME RISK!

The Effects of Medetomidine on Your Body

Medetomidine isn't meant for unsupervised human use. It can have severe effects, especially when mixed with opioids:

- **Sedation** causes drowsiness and deep unconsciousness, which can last for hours.
- **Cardiovascular depression** leads to slow heart rate, low blood pressure, and potential heart failure.
- **Respiratory suppression** decreases breathing rate, which can become fatal when combined with fentanyl.
- **Muscle weakness & loss of control:** individuals may collapse or become immobilized.
- **Coma or Death:** Prolonged exposure to medetomidine-laced substances increases risk of fatal overdose.



STAY INFORMED & RESPOND SAFELY

It's critical to know what's out there:

- Carry Narcan (naloxone) and understand its limitations with non-opioid adulterants like medetomidine.
- Use test strips where available to check for fentanyl and xylazine — medetomidine detection is still developing.
- Stay connected to harm reduction resources and avoid using alone.
- Support public health efforts by spreading accurate, science-based information.