

CORRECTIONS CONTRABAND INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

BY DAVID HALE
Senior Security Advisor

HIGHLIGHTS

An observed increase in tianeptine smuggling attempts into correctional facilities.

Tianeptine is being introduced laced on paper, a preferred means of smuggling that is less visible than other methods of treating paper.

Tianeptine is an unknown substance in conventional drug identification test kits.

When combined with other dangerous narcotics, tianeptine can lead to overdoses and fatalities as well as resistance to opioid-reversing drugs such as Narcan.

Continued vigilance is strongly recommended in screening legal and privileged communications for possible laced papers.

EMERGING CONTRABAND SUBSTANCE ALERT: TIANEPTINE

OVERVIEW

Correctional facilities should be on the lookout for tianeptine being smuggled in mail, legal mail, and other documents. The easily obtained intoxicant is appearing in the form of treated papers, exploiting the ongoing trend due of smuggling less visible substances into facilities and the special allowances awarded to privileged communications.

When taken in large doses, the over-the-counter antidepressant produces opioid-like effects, increasing the likelihood of inmate overdoses. Tianeptine is easily obtained online and in convenience stores, earning it the nickname "Gas Station Heroin." It is marketed under ZaZa, ZaZa Red, Tianna Red, Pegasus, Neptune Fix and other brands.

CHALLENGES FOR CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Law enforcement and corrections staff will find it difficult to detect and identify tianeptine because, like other smuggled chemical intoxicants such as bug spray or oven cleaner, it is not included in drug identification libraries or test kits.

Tianeptine can come in powder and liquid form. Applying the liquid to paper renders it practically undetectable to the human eye, a smuggling method that has already been observed.

This is consistent with the increased use of treated paper to smuggle dangerous narcotics such as fentanyl, THC, liquid methamphetamine, cocaine, and other drugs, contributing to further narcotic use in correctional facilities.

THE DANGERS OF TIANEPTINE IN CORRECTIONS

Tianeptine can be combined with other potent drugs like fentanyl, heroin, or other opioids and result in severe respiratory and cardiac impairment. Additionally, combining these chemicals with real narcotics will make it resistant to opioid-reversal drugs such as Narcan.

Given this, it is expected that tianeptine smuggling will lead to an increase in inmate overdoses and fatalities.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR SAFE DETECTION AND RESPONSE

Due to the ease with which it can be obtained, the high that it produces, and the fact that a drug identification kit does not recognize it, it is expected that tianeptine will be found at more corrections facilities. Therefore, corrections staff must continue scrutinizing incoming legal and privileged correspondence and closely monitor the inmate population for adverse behaviors.

As a reminder, corrections officers and staff must protect themselves with personal protection equipment (PPE) during all contraband screenings. Any suspicious mail, parcels, or documents should be placed aside for additional investigation. Also, staff should be aware of the facility's current standard operating procedures and expected outcomes of contraband detection.

Advanced screening through RaySecur provides correctional facilities with a clear advantage in contraband detection. Operators see a real-time video of the contents concealed inside sealed envelopes, parcels, magazines, books, and other types of packaging, to quickly flag suspect items including powders, liquids, drug-laced papers, and other types of contraband. T-ray technology allows the user to manipulate the object to obtain alternate views in 3D freely without opening the mail item, reducing screening time and keeping the user safe.

“ The emergence of tianeptine is the latest development in the trend of smuggling legal and readily available intoxicants such as Kratom or drugs like Xylazine. These substances are dangerous on their own, or they can be combined with illegal narcotics, increasing the risk of overdoses and fatalities. Law enforcement and corrections staff need to reinforce best screening practices in an effort to limit staff and inmate harm. ”

– David Hale, Senior Security Advisor

For more insights on any information shared in this intelligence brief, contact the RaySecur Security Advisory Team at info@raysecur.com.



DAVID HALE
Senior Security Advisor

David Hale is a resident expert and trainer in narcotics and illicit drug detection in the Security Advisory Practice. He partners with customers across the country to assist in their mail screening operations to find dangerous substances and contraband in mail. Before joining RaySecur, David was a decorated law enforcement officer, where he worked on narcotics investigations, led special response teams, and was selected to be a member of the Federal Organized Crime and Drug Task Force. During his tenure, he frequently engaged with correction facilities on drug smuggling and trafficking investigations within the prisons. In addition, to law enforcement and investigations, he is skilled as a hazardous materials disposal and response operator.

RaySecur® is transforming correction contraband interdiction with safe, T-ray security imaging. With MailSecur®, operators see a live 3D video of the contents inside sealed objects to quickly detect hidden narcotics, drugs, treated papers, weapons, electronics, and more. Department of Corrections and law enforcement agencies trust MailSecur to safely detect smuggled substances in both mail and personal items. RaySecur's team of former law enforcement and military experts are available 24x365 for support and image analysis. MailSecur is the first desktop T-ray scanner to receive a Department of Homeland Security Safety Act Designation.

RAYSECUR®

corrections.raysecur.com | 617-855-9938 | info@raysecur.com