



ADDICTION SCIENCE SERIES

## FLUALPRAZOLAM



Flualprazolam is an emerging novel psychoactive substance (NPS). It has few street names but may be known as “flualp”. It is a benzodiazepine, in the same class as its chemical cousin alprazolam (Xanax) as well as clonazepam (Klonopin) and diazepam (Valium). It is currently unregulated, and it is not included as a controlled substance in the United States. It was first synthesized in the 1970s, but never marketed. No animal research can be found in the scientific literature and the flualprazolam’s precise effects on humans is not well understood. In fact, most of what we know about flualprazolam has been learned from Internet sites such as Reddit and Blue light. Flualprazolam can be converted to alprazolam, but there is no evidence that this is occurring.

It is known that flualprazolam has the same effects as most other benzodiazepines: sedation, a sense of relaxed euphoria and respiratory depression (slowed breathing). It can be obtained through the Internet as a “research chemical” in the form of white powder or pellets, often packaged with the notation “Not for human consumption”. In other cases, flualprazolam has also been seen in counterfeit Xanax tablets (“bars”). It is sometimes taken by itself, sometimes with other drugs, and has been identified as a component in alleged heroin.

Flualprazolam was first noted “on the street” in mid-2019 and has been found across the country, but not in large amounts thus far. The dose of flualprazolam that produces noticeable effects is approximately 0.125 mg (1/224,000<sup>th</sup> of an ounce) and some users will take as much as 2 mg or more. In mid-July 2020, the DuPage County (Illinois) coroner announced that flualprazolam had contributed to five deaths in his jurisdiction. Other deaths have been reported in other parts of the U.S., including five deaths in Oregon that were reported in the medical literature.