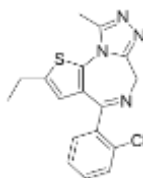




ADDICTION SCIENCE SERIES

ETIZOLAM



Etizolam is a thienodiazepine which is chemically related to the benzodiazepines (BDZ). It is most closely related to the BDZ hypnotic triazolam (Halcion™) and works through the brain's GABA-A receptor. Etizolam has anxiolytic (anti-anxiety), anticonvulsant, hypnotic (sleep-inducing), sedative and skeletal muscle relaxant properties. Although it is legal and may be prescribed in other countries, it has not received FDA approval to be sold in the US, and is a Schedule IV substance, in the same legal class as alprazolam (Xanax), clonazepam (Klonopin) and diazepam (Valium). It poses the same risks as the other BZDs, including a moderate risk for the development of a substance use disorder, physical dependence with major withdrawal symptoms and overdose death due to respiratory depression.

While etizolam is neither manufactured nor prescribed in the United States, it is available through the Internet for “research purposes”. In some cases, packages contain the warning “Not for human consumption”.

In the United States and Canada, etizolam has been found as a “cut” (adulterant) in opioid samples purchased on the street. Its presence has two implications: 1) overdoses are more common due to the synergistic effects of combining drugs; 2) medications used to treat opioid overdoses (e.g., opioid antagonists such as naloxone) may be less effective because they do not reverse BZD effects.

Etizolam has not emerged as a novel psychoactive substance in the United States. In other countries, it is used recreationally, and the consequences have been documented. In Scotland, for example, 548 etizolam-related overdoses occurred in 2018, almost double the number in 2017 (299).