



# LAKE COUNTY NARCOTICS AGENCY

DAVID FRISONE, Executive Director



P.O. Box 490, Painesville, Ohio 44077  
(440) 350-3333 • (440) 918-3333 • Fax (440) 350-3313

## ALERT NOTICE

**TO:** Lake County Alert Notices  
**FROM:** Officer George "Pat" Willis  
**RE:** ZANNIE Air Freshener  
**DATE:** February 11, 2013

**ZANNIE**, phenazepam, a product marketed on the internet as a relaxing air freshener contains a prescription tranquilizer similar to Valium and Xanax.<sup>1</sup> Phenazepam is a benzodiazepine drug, which was developed and produced in Russia. In 1975 phenazepam was first synthesized in the USSR. In 2003 phenazepam is reported as a new recreational drug in Finland. In 2007 phenazepam is available in the UK as a powder. And, in 2010 phenazepam was found in the United States as the psychoactive ingredient in blotter prints (see picture) submitted to the DEA as suspected LSD. In isolated cases it has been around in the U.S. since 2010, but it now appears to be hitting main stream synthetic drug sites being sold over the internet. Two overdose deaths occurred in the United States in 2010. The first occurred in Georgia in September 2010, an 18-year-old died after using a combination of phenazepam and oxycodone. Three other individuals in the same incident were hospitalized.<sup>2</sup> The second death occurred in October 2010 in Charleston, West Virginia. A 42-year-old man died after ingesting both phenazepam and poppy tea.<sup>3</sup> The Federal Analog Act of the U.S. applies only to substances classified as Schedule I and Schedule II. Controlled benzodiazepines under the U.S. Controlled Substances Act are classified as Schedule IV. Phenazepam is a non-scheduled drug in the United States.

In Russia where phenazepam is legal it is used in the treatment of neurological disorders such as epilepsy, alcohol withdrawal syndrome and insomnia. Phenazepam is a long acting benzodiazepine with anti anxiety, euphoric, anticonvulsant, muscle relaxant, and hypnotic (sleep-inducing) effects. Its English name is a transliteration of the Russian name with alternate spellings: 'fenazepam', 'phenazeram'. It is also used as a premedication before surgery.<sup>4</sup> Mark Ryan, Director of Louisiana Poison Control Center is concerned that the product could be used as a predatory (date rape) drug. Phenazepam creates a type of sedation in which a person can't remember what happened.

Death can easily occur if **Zannie** is used along with CNS depressant drugs, opiates, alcohol, or barbiturates. "It has had some really bad effects when a person takes it with other central nervous system depressants," Ryan says. Side effects include: hiccups, dizziness, loss of coordination, drowsiness, and amnesia which can be quite pronounced at high doses. Abrupt stoppage following prolonged use results in: restlessness, anxiety, insomnia, seizures, convulsions, and death.<sup>5</sup>

**Zannie** comes in a 3-inch-long, slim spray bottle that could be concealed in the palm of a person's hand. According to directions "3 - 4 sprays in the mouth is assured to get you high." The directions go

<sup>1</sup> Louisiana Poison Center, Director Mark Ryan

<sup>2</sup> Terrapinzflyer (2010, September 20) Phenazepam leaves Cherokee teen dead, 3 friends hospitalized.

<sup>3</sup> Snouter Fancier (2010, October 4) Case Report: Fatality Involving the Ingestion of Phenazepam and Poppy Seed Tea.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.drugs-forum.com/forum/showwiki.php?title=Phenazepam>

<sup>5</sup> Donna Funderburke Mckinley and McKinley Consulting & Professional Life Coaching

on to warn people not to use it again for 48 hours. Like the other synthetic drugs **Zannie** bears the warning "Not for human consumption."

- **Zannie Air Freshener** sold on internet.
- Light blue/green color liquid.
- Sold on the street as yellow & white tablets or white powder.
- Product is intended to be sprayed into mouth like a breath freshener.
- Onset within 1 hr.
- Effects may last several days.
- Powerful, long-acting benzodiazepine.



Compared with other benzodiazepines, overdoses with phenazepam are both more likely and more problematic for these reasons.<sup>6</sup>

- Phenazepam is exceptionally potent. **Active doses start at 0.5 mg.**
- The visual appearance of a dangerous dose is not impressive. The visual size of a 2 mg (0.0002) alprazolam (Xanax) bar is equivalent to a 0.5 gram (500 mg) of phenazepam. If the user is accustomed to dealing with benzodiazepines in the form of tablets or bars and attempts to 'eyeball' an amount of phenazepam that looks similar, or is even a tenth as large, they will take a massive overdose. Likewise, snorting a 'line' of phenazepam similar in size to a line of cocaine or heroin is likely to produce an overdose.
- Compared to prescription benzodiazepines that have been diverted from regulated channels, phenazepam is inexpensive, and rarely sold in quantities of less than 100 mg. Any user who can afford to buy this drug will be buying a dose capable of causing prolonged coma.
- Phenazepam's effects are often delayed by 2-3 hours. The inexperienced user, noticing no effects within the first hour, may believe they have taken too little and re-dose, resulting in an overdose.
- Phenazepam's 60 hour half-life makes dosing mistakes hard to recover from. The overdose will last for days, possibly weeks.

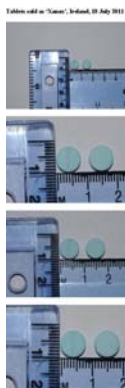
Users reported several administration routes. Injection, snorting, oral ingestion, rectal absorption, and cigarettes dipped in liquid phenazepam solution and then smoked. Smoking adds an additional health issue due to the fumes containing chlorine, bromine, and nitrogen oxide/nitrogen dioxide. All are toxic.<sup>7</sup>

Reports of **ZANNIE** use have been documented in the Cleveland area with an OD in February 2013. Drug testing is available to detect the use and/or possession of phenazepam.

*If you have any questions please contact Officer George "Pat" Willis, Lake County Narcotics Agency; 440-350-3302 or george.willis@lakecountyohio.gov*



Phenazepam Powder



Phenazepam Tablets



Phenazepam Blotter

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.drugs-forum.com/forum/showwiki.php?title=Phenazepam>

<sup>7</sup> LookChem (2010) Phenazepam.