



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



Clinical Advisory

To: Paramedics, Advanced Paramedics, Emergency Medical Controllers
c.c.: NAS Leadership Team
From: Medical Director
Date: September 6th 2011
Subject: **Contaminated heroin**

Dear colleagues,

The Early Warning and Emerging Trends (EWET) subcommittee of the National Advisory Committee on Drugs has advised of reports of heroin being mixed with benzodiazepines and sold as heroin, or powdered benzodiazepines without any heroin being sold as heroin.

Clinical implications of this are that apparent heroin/opioid overdoses may in fact have a significant benzodiazepine component. Therefore naloxone treatment may be ineffective.

Heroin overdoses should continue to be treated in the standard manner, but be aware that naloxone may not have the same effect as in a standard heroin overdose. Benzodiazepine poisoning is characterised by respiratory depression and hypotension, and should be treated as per existing CPGs for respiratory depression and hypotension.

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Seirbhís Náisiúnta Otharchairr
Teach Dara, Ascaill an Crann Teile, Páirc na Mílaoise, Nás na Rí, Co. Chill Dara

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