Counterfeit medication is a public health concern. This data set includes 23 postmortem cases with a strong case history indicating prescription drug use and toxicological results which indicated likely presence of counterfeit pills. Of the included cases, alprazolam (Xanax) was expected in 17, and oxycodone (Percocet, Roxicodone) was expected in 6. Postmortem toxicology found no reportable value of the expected medication in any of the decedents and in most instances contained either a novel psychoactive substance (NPS) or fentanyl. Demographics varied widely, indicating the diversity and prevalence of this issue. Ages ranged from 17-57, 65% were white, 22% were black, and 13% were multi-racial. Sixty-one percent had a recorded history of substance use disorder. All the NPS benzodiazepines found in the counterfeit pills had a first detection of the substance at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner occurring within the last 5 years.

**Background**

**Age of Decedent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Can you spot the fake Xanax?

**Confirmed Toxicology Results**

- Fentanyl 1.6 mg/L (F), Bupropion present (A), Theophylline < 0.25 mg/L (A), Metoprolol present (A), Naloxone present (A)
- Fentanyl 8.7 mg/mL (P), Ethanol 170 mg/dL (P), Naloxone present (P)
- Fentanyl 17 mg/mL (F), Ethanol 70 mg/dL (A), Naloxone present (A)
- Fentanyl 20 mg/mL (F), Methamphetamine 1.9 mg/L (F), Benzylpenicillin 0.35 mg/L (F), Amphetamine 0.19 mg/L (I)
- Fentanyl 3.1 mg/mL (F)
- Fentanyl 18 mg/mL (F), Methamphetamine 0.40 mg/L (F), Bupropion 0.074 mg/L (F), Hydroxybupropion 0.067 mg/L (F)
- Etizolam 0.027 mg/L (F), Oxycodone 0.951 mg/L (F), Gabapentin 20 mg/L (F), Oxycodone < 0.005 mg/L (F)
- Fluprazolam present (F), Etalolone present (F), Methamphetamine 0.25 mg/L (F), Naloxone present (V)
- 8-Aminoclonazolam present (F)
- Bromazolam present (I)
- Fluprazolam 0.033 mg/mL (I), Desalkylflurazepam present (A), Mitragynine 0.25 mg/L (I), 7-Hydroxymitragynine < 0.020 mg/L (I)
- Fluprazolam present (F), Buprenorphine 7.0 mg/mL (F), Norbup 12 mg/mL (F), Gabapentin 13 mg/L (F), Mirtazapine 1.7 mg/L (F)
- Fluprazolam present (F), Oxycodone 0.030 mg/L (F), Gabapentin 45 mg/L (F), Tramadol < 0.50 mg/L (F)
- Fluprazolam present (F), Fentanyl 53 mg/mL (F), Methamphetamine 0.25 mg/L (F)