

Dear Colleague

SEVERE REACTIONS TO *IVORY WAVE* LEGAL HIGH

1. I am writing to you to highlight a cluster of admissions to Accident and Emergency departments in NHS Lothian associated with a legal high branded as *Ivory Wave*. The UK Government's Department of Health has also informed the Scottish Government of 5 further cases presenting to A&E in Bournemouth and Poole, again associated with *Ivory Wave*.

2. Presently no single active ingredient has been associated with *Ivory Wave*, although a substance branded as such was added to the TICTAC database in 2009. This database is managed by St. George's Hospital University of London and is used for the visual identification of drugs, primarily tablets and capsules, and substances that may resemble drugs. On this database the active ingredients of *Ivory Wave* were identified as MDPV (Methylenedioxypyrovalerone) and Lidocaine. Other reported ingredients include *Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)* and some anecdotal reporting that the recently banned cathinone substances mephedrone and Naphyrone are being "rebranded" as *Ivory Wave*.

3. The severity of the symptoms are unusual and may give cause for concern. Symptoms may include:

- Grand mal seizures
- Agitation
- Hallucinations
- Delusions
- Possible cardiac toxicity
- A significant rise in creatinine kinase,
- High temperature
- High blood pressure (although blood pressure levels may show significant variation both high and low); and
- Tachycardia

4. The purpose of this letter is to ask Medical Directors to circulate this information to relevant clinical services and to monitor the situation in their Board areas.

From the Chief Medical Officer
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Addresses

For action

Medical Directors
Scottish Ambulance Service
NHS 24

For information

Chief Executives, NHS Boards
Nurse Directors, NHS Boards
Directors of Public Health, NHS
Boards
General Practitioners
Consultant Physicians
CPHMs (CD&EH)

Further Enquiries:

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Drugs Policy Unit
St Andrew's House
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5. Specifically, I would be grateful if Medical Directors could identify a single individual for their Board to collate reports of any A&E admissions, clusters of cases or additional intelligence that has been associated with *Ivory wave* – or indeed to any other so-called legal high. Other reported substances have included *Benzo fury*; *Jamaican Bubbles*; *NRG-1*, *NRG-zone*, *Ivory Coast* or *Purple Wave*. Medical Directors as both NHS 24 and the Scottish Ambulance Service should likewise be aware that individuals could present to their services.

6. Any such reports should be fed back to John Somers in the **Scottish Government's Drugs Policy Unit** at john.somers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk. This information will help us build a more accurate picture of:

- prevalence across Scotland;
- local action taken;
- any requirement for further national action; and,
- so that we can share intelligence with the relevant agencies and other UK administrations.

7. Your co-operation in this matter is much appreciated and should the situation escalate, further guidance will be issued.

8. **I would be grateful if this letter could be shared with appropriate clinical services including A&E, Medical, Mental Health and Primary Care.**

Yours sincerely

Harry Burns

HARRY BURNS