

TOXTALK



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

“When we least expect it, life sets us a challenge to test our courage and willingness to change; at such a moment, there is no point in pretending that nothing has happened or in saying that we are not yet ready. The challenge will not wait. Life does not look back. A week is more than enough time for us to decide whether or not to accept our destiny.” – Paulo Coelho



Dear SOFT
Colleagues and
Friends,

I hope you and
your families are
all staying healthy
and well. It is
hard to believe

that August is already coming to an end. We would have been talking about the most anticipated meeting in sunny San Diego at this time had it not been for the challenge posed by COVID-19. **It was unexpected but we had the courage and willingness to change.** The preparations for [SOFTember](#) are now in full swing. The working group, led by our Executive Director Beth Olson, is pulling together nothing short of a miracle considering there were less than two months to plan the entire program for this virtual event. [Registration](#) is now open so if you have not already registered, do it before the late fee kicks in on September 1st. This is the first extensive virtual content SOFT

is offering and it marks an important milestone in our 50th year. The program, beginning on September 9th, is packed with most of the elements of an in-person annual meeting with a plenary session to kick off the event, three workshops, nine scientific sessions, SOFT committee meetings, **SOFTtopics** discussion groups, on-demand poster sessions, exhibit hall, and much more. The board and the SOFTember task group decided to spread the content throughout the month of September to make it easy for the attendees. Much of the content is also going to be available on-demand. Read further details about the month-long program on Page 3 of this newsletter.

The SOFT board met several times in the last month to make key decisions about SOFTember and about the activities that were previously planned for SOFT's 50th anniversary celebration. The decision was made to postpone the charter member recognition and

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message	1-2
From the Executive Director's Desk	2
SOFTember Update	3-8
New Psychoactive Substances	9-11
Book Review - Disposition of Toxic Drugs and Chemicals in Man, 12th edition	12
JAT Information	12
SOFT Information	13

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED

past presidential medallion ceremony until next year when (hopefully) we can meet in person. The new SOFT awards that were instituted to commemorate the 50th anniversary will also be given next year so that we can recognize the awardees and celebrate their achievements in person. The History Committee is moving forward with the commemorative e-publication and with creating the SOFT family trees this year.

The Executive Committee (EC) of SOFT held the mid-year EC meeting virtually in July and spent two sessions lasting four hours each discussing various items of strategic interest for SOFT. The EC provided further guidance to the Finance Committee and tasked the

committee with creating a fiscal policy for SOFT and a handbook defining the purpose and scope of responsibilities for the committee. The quarterly internal audit of SOFT financials was done during the meeting and members of the EC participated in the audit. The EC also discussed the scope of responsibilities for the Culture, Values and Diversity (CVD) Committee and provided further guidance to the committee regarding their role in leading initiatives that support and encourage a culture of inclusion, values and professional conduct within the SOFT community that is respectful to all.

The SOFT board and our office staff continue to be resilient and we are

working hard to ensure our current external environment does not have a negative impact on the goals and purpose of SOFT, and we continue to serve the interests of our membership.



Sumandeep Rana, Ph.D.
SOFT President

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Submitted by: Beth Olson, SOFT Executive Director
beth@soft-tox.org



SOFTember is nearly here! The past six months have been marked with disappointments, both personal and professional, for

most of us. I know for me, and certainly for many of you, the cancellation of SOFT's Annual Meeting is near the top of my "biggest disappointments" list (both my daughters had to postpone their weddings so this is a relatively distant third!) The combination of hundreds of hours of work that had already been put into the meeting, as well as the lost opportunity for my yearly in-person reconnection with the membership left me feeling sad and discouraged.

Fortunately, I've been able to take this difficult situation and turn it into an opportunity: an opportunity for growth for myself, as well as SOFT as an organization. Our 2019 SOFT Survey clearly indicated that our members are looking for opportunities to participate in accessing continuing education in an online setting. This led to the development of the Continuing Education Committee's first webinar, Oral Fluid Drug Testing in DUI Cases, moderated by Dr.

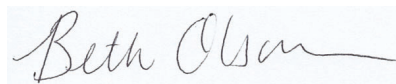
Robert Johnson, and presented by Dr. Curt Harper and Dr. Jarrad Wagner. With more than 200 registrants, and exemplary post-workshop feedback, this webinar really showcased the need for SOFT to be presenting online learning.

Who knew that we'd so quickly be presented with another opportunity for online experiences! Creating virtual programming is new territory for the SOFT staff and for most of the members of our SOFTember Working Group, however, we've been hard at work learning, exploring and practicing in preparation for SOFT's virtual program.

More than 100 people registered for SOFTember in the first week registration was open, and we have participation from 23 exhibitors and sponsors. Our program will be made up of things that SOFT has always done, such as scientific sessions, poster sessions and workshops, in a new format. It's also an opportunity to present new types of content, such as a keynote from TED Speaker Heather Younger, who will be exploring the idea of reimagining our work places in the post-Covid-19 world, to our brand-new SOFTopics Discussion Group facilitated by Dani Mata. SOFTopics will give participants the opportunity to discuss current topics in forensic toxicology in facilitated

breakout groups – a program that we hope to be able to continue after SOFTember ends.

In the spirit of reimagining our world, I hope that everyone will participate



Beth Olson, MBA
SOFT Executive Director



Join us for SOFT's first ever virtual program, **SOFTember!** September 9-30, 2020

What is SOFTember?

Our virtual program will launch on Wednesday, September 9 and run through Wednesday, September 30. Programming will be offered live (participate online in real time) and on-demand (view pages and recordings at your convenience for up to six months).

How much does SOFTember cost?

Virtual Registration

Member Pricing: \$200

Non-member Pricing: \$250

Registration fee covers access to full SOFTember program except workshops

Workshops

Member Pricing: \$150 Full day, \$75 Half day

Non-member Pricing: \$200 Full day, \$100 Half day

Workshop fee includes access to selected full day or half day workshops only

CLICK BELOW TO LEARN MORE:

[Register for SOFTember!](#)

[SOFTember Agenda](#)

[Scientific Sessions](#)

[Workshops](#)

[SOFTember FAQ](#)

We hope to see you VIRTUALLY at SOFTember!





SOFTopics - Dust off those webcams, SOFT is jumping on the breakout bandwagon!
Submitted by Dani Mata, Coordinator

I hope everyone is getting excited about the SOFTember schedule that the SOFTember Working Group has been working on. Now that it is time to register, I thought we should let attendees know what the three time blocks of SOFTopics will be about. Alanna de Korompay, Vanessa Meneses and I have picked three topics, Drug Facilitated Sexual Assaults, Designer Drug Trends and Workflows and QTOF Implementation for the attendees to discuss in an online, small group setting with a moderator. For each topic, there will be a short introduction to it and then we will break into smaller groups, **Brady Bunch style**, to talk about the way different laboratories handle the topics. You will be free to ask questions either through video chat or in the text group message to the others in your group. At the end, we will all reconvene with any follow-up that was discussed in the small groups. You will even get a summary of the discussion after the SOFTopics block is over. Our goal was to cover topics not discussed in a workshop or covered by too many scientific presentations, but if you have any suggestions on topics we should cover in the future, feel free to send them my way. We hope to be able to continue these SOFTopics virtually after all the SOFTember events have concluded.

We look forward to seeing everyone virtually in September!
Dani, Alanna and Vanessa

Here's the story

*Of **SOFTopics***

Who was bringing up three toxicology points

All of them important in their field

Like their association

The office support superb

It's the story

Of a group of toxicologists

Who were busy with diverse topics in the field

They were vast and debatable

Living separated

Yet they were connected

'Til the one day when a group was organized virtually

And to discuss areas where you may only have a hunch

That this group was somehow a toxicology family

That's the way we all became the SOFTopics bunch

The SOFTopics bunch, the SOFTopics bunch

*That's the way we formed the **SOFTopics bunch!***



SOFT**Topics**



DESIGNER DRUG TRENDS AND WORKFLOWS

SEPTEMBER 9



DRUG FACILITATED SEXUAL ASSAULTS

SEPTEMBER 16



QTOF IMPLEMENTATION

SEPTEMBER 23



Submitted by: Elisa Shoff, MS, D-ABFT-FT

Hello fellow SOFT members!

With the approach of our first ever virtual conference, SOFTember, I would like to update you on some changes as well as YFT's contribution to what we know will be a great virtual experience!

In lieu of our regularly held events (YFT Symposium, Student Enrichment Program, and Professional Development Fair), **YFT will be holding an open forum on Monday, September 28th from 3:30-5:00 pm EST/12:30-2:00 pm PST.** This forum will be directed towards YFT community professionals and students alike-with the purpose of answering any and all questions regarding our committee and our experiences being young forensic toxicologists.

Anyone interested in participating will be able to submit questions two different ways: The first way will be through the YFT email, softyft@gmail.com prior to the open forum. In addition, if you can't think of anything to ask us before then, we will have a chat function enabled for participants throughout the forum. We will also encourage several discussion topics and for any participants that would like to hold specific discussions, we will have the ability to have

separate break-out sessions for those purposes. We look forward to all your questions!

In addition to our involvement in the open forum, we will also be assisting with scientific session moderating. And as always, our online Professional Development Fair will be accessible through the SOFT website under the YFT section.

I would also like to highlight some of our committee members who will be contributing to the SOFTember scientific sessions by presenting their hard-earned work:

Erin Strickland will be presenting a platform on "Methemoglobin Saturation in Suicides Involving Sodium Nitrite or Sodium Nitrate" in the Post Mortem Scientific Session on Wednesday, September 30th.

Vanessa Meneses will be presenting a platform on "Evaluation of delta8- and delta9-Tetrahydrocannabinol Co-Elution in Blood Samples" in the General/Analytical Scientific Session on Wednesday, September 30th. Vanessa will also be helping the planning committee with organizing the SOFTopics.

David Cook will be presenting a

platform on "7 Year Trend Analysis of delta9-THC Blood Concentrations in Driving Under the Influence of Drugs Cases in Nassau County, NY from 2013-2019" in the DUID/Human Performance Scientific Session on Wednesday, September 16th.

Lastly, every year, the YFT Committee awards two young toxicologists with the Leo Dal Cortivo Award for best poster and platform presentation. Unfortunately, we decided not to give out the Leo Dal Cortivo Award this year as we feel it would not be fair to individuals who may have submitted eligible abstracts, but due to the change in format, and other pandemic-related reasons, will not be able to present those abstracts this year. However, we encourage all those who are eligible to submit for next year!

See you in SOFTember!

-Elisa Shoff, MS, D-ABFT-FT



YOUNG FORENSIC TOXICOLOGISTS



We would like to thank our SOFTember Sponsors and Exhibitors!
Thank you so much for your support of SOFTember!

Be sure to stop into the VIRTUAL Exhibit Hall during SOFTember. The hall will be open 24/7 and can be accessed until March 31, 2021! Our Program and Showcase Sponsors will also give a 30 minute showcase session so be sure to check the schedule to find out when your favorite sponsor will be speaking.

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NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

Submitted by: Dani Mata, SOFT Designer Drugs Committee Chair and Simon Elliot, TIAFT NPS Committee Chair

Short Communication for the Analysis of Isotonitazene

Date: May 2020

Synonyms:

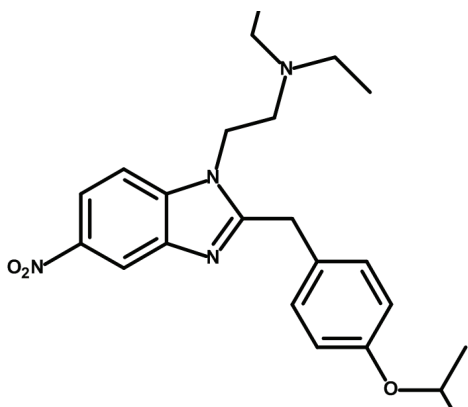
N,N-diethyl-2-[[4-(1-methylethoxy)phenyl]methyl]-5-nitro-1H-benzimidazole-1-ethanamine

N,N-diethyl-2-[5-nitro-2-({4-[(propan-2-yl)oxy]phenyl)methyl}-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl]ethan-1-amine

(N,N-diethyl-2-[2-[[4-isopropoxyphenyl]methyl]-5-nitro-benzimidazol-1

yl]ethanamine

Structure:



Formula: C₂₃H₃₀N₄O₃

Molecular Weight (nominal mass): 410.23

Theoretical M+H accurate mass: 411.2391

Pharmacological Drug Class: Opioid

Suggested LOD: 0.05 ng/mL

Suggested LOQ: 0.1 ng/mL

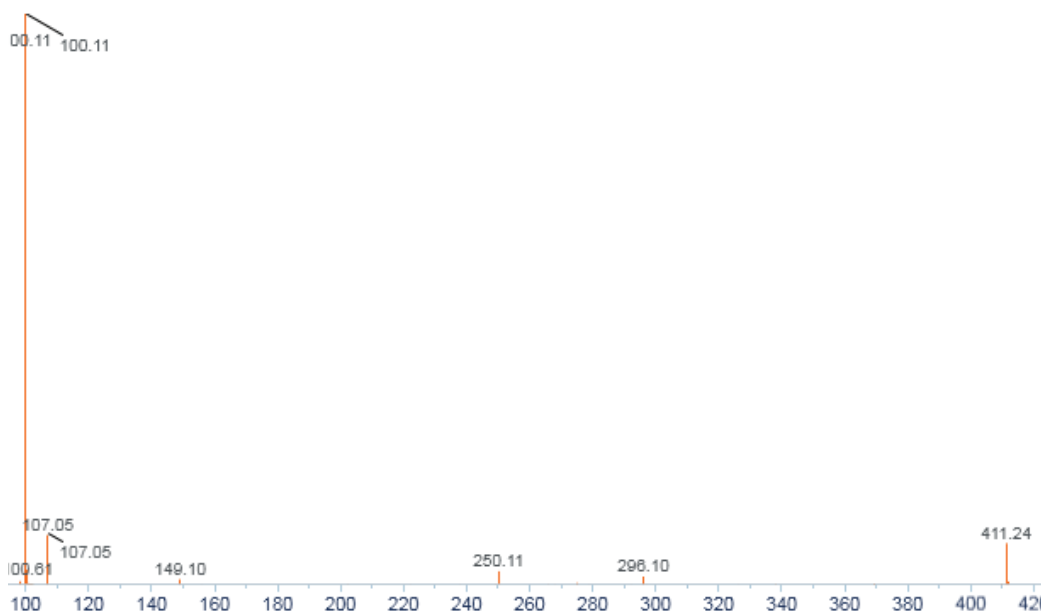
Isotonitazene is a nitrobenzimidazole synthetic opioid chemically related to the internationally controlled substance etonitazene. Isotonitazene has been shown to be a potent mu-opioid receptor agonist. Isotonitazene was first identified since mid-2019 in Europe, the USA and Canada with increasing detections throughout 2019 and into 2020. Case reports indicate it may be encountered as a white pow-

der associated with heroin use, similar to recent other synthetic opioids such as U-opioids and fentanils.

From the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) ToxPortal, isotonitazene has been reported in 8 fatalities in the USA with post-mortem blood concentrations between 0.4 and 4.4 ng/mL. In 18 recently published cases from the USA, isotonitazene was found at concentrations between 0.4 and 9.5 n/mL (median 1.75 ng/mL) in post-mortem blood, in urine the range was 0.4-6.0 ng/mL and vitreous humour, 0.1 ng/mL. These were somewhat comparable to measured concentrations in cases from Canada, in particular blood concentrations of 0.12 and 0.56 ng/mL. All these data indicate expected very low biological fluid concentrations as for other potent synthetic opioids.

Metabolite discovery during case studies have demonstrated that isotonitazene undergoes de-alkylation to form N-desalkyl and O-desalkyl metabolites with N-desethyl-isotonitazene and N-desethyl-O-desalkyl-isotonitazene as primary metabolites especially in urine. 5-Amino-isotonitazene was identified as a common metabolite in blood.

LC-QTOF-MS Spectrum:



[source: Orange County Crime Lab, Santa Ana, CA, USA]

References:

Blanckaert P, Cannaert A, Van Uyt-fanghe K, Hulpia F, Deconinck E, Van Calenbergh S, Stove C. Report on a novel emerging class of highly potent benzimidazole NPS opioids: Chemical and in vitro functional characterization of isotonitazene. Drug Test Anal. (2020) 12(4):422-430

EMCDDA initial report on the new psychoactive substance, isotonitazene (April 2020)

https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/system/files/publications/13028/EMCDDA-Initial-report_Isotonitazene.pdf

Krotulski AJ, Papsun DM, Kacinko SL, Logan BK. Isotonitazene Quantitation and Metabolite Discovery in Authentic Forensic Casework. J Anal Toxicol. 2020 Feb 24. pii: bkaa016. doi: 10.1093/jat/bkaa016. [Epub ahead of print]

NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

Submitted by: Dani Mata, SOFT Designer Drugs Committee Chair and Simon Elliot, TIAFT NPS Committee Chair

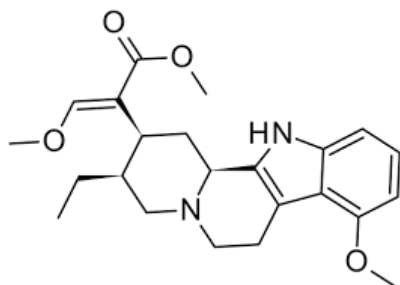
Short Communication for the Analysis of Mitragynine

Date: May 2020

Synonyms:

- ($\alpha E, 2S, 3S, 12bS$)-3-ethyl-1,2,3,4,6,7,12,12b-octahydro-8-methoxy- α -(methoxymethylene)-indolo[2,3-a]quinolizine-2-acetic acid, methyl ester
- 9-methoxy Corynantheidine
- Kratom

Structure:



Formula: C₂₃H₃₀N₂O₄

Molecular Weight (nominal mass): 398.5

Theoretical M+H accurate mass: 399.2278

Pharmacological Drug Class: Dependent on concentration. Low concentration; Central Nervous System Stimulant. Higher concentration; opioid-like analgesic.

Suggested LOD: 5 ng/mL

Suggested LOQ: 10 ng/mL

Mitragynine is an indole alkaloid from the plant *Mitragyna Speciosa* (also referred to as 'Kratom') and was originally used in Southeast Asia as a stimulant for manual labourers. It has both stimulant and opioid-like effects through action on the noradrenergic, serotonergic and opioid (mainly μ -) receptors. It can be ingested as a tea by boiling the leaves of the *Mitragyna Speciosa* plant or the leaves can be ground into a powder. It is not currently a scheduled substance in the USA nor is it a listed substance under

the international Conventions.

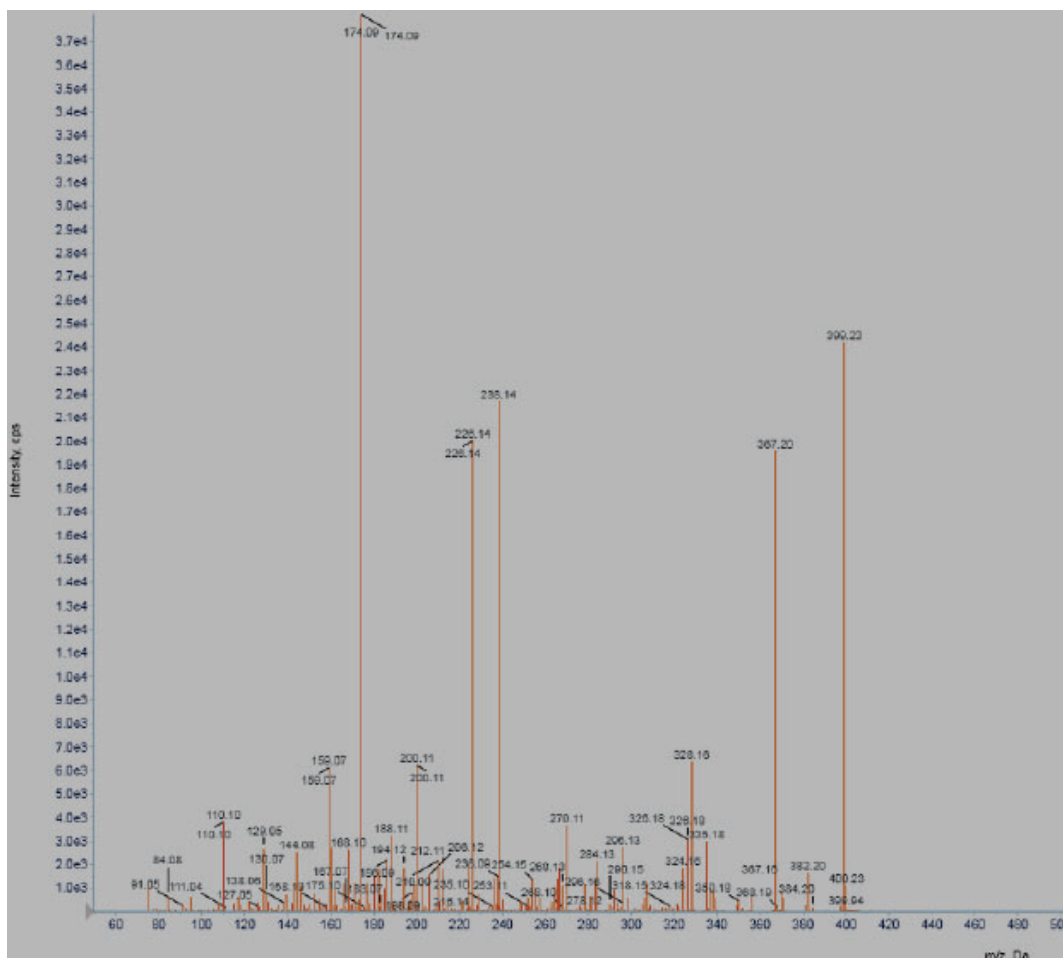
Analytical difficulties come from other constituents of *Mitragyna Speciosa*, speciogynine and speciocilatine, that are isomers of mitragynine. Retention time separation must be present to distinguish the drugs. 7-Hydroxymitragynine is a metabolite of mitragynine which has more than 40 times the opioid effects of mitragynine and should also be included in toxicological analysis (suggested LOD: 2 ng/mL and LOQ: 5 ng/mL).

From the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) ToxPortal, Kratom (as mitragynine and/or 7-hydroxymitragynine) has been reported 137 times from June of 2016 until

the end of 2019. Over 100 of those cases are from the United States with the rest occurring in Europe, Asia and Australasia. Reported blood concentrations range from 10 – 970 ng/mL for DUID cases and 10 – 4310 ng/mL for death investigation cases. Reported concentrations in literature have ranged from 5.6 – 29,000 ng/mL of mitragynine. Tissue mitragynine concentrations have been reported in literature and can be found in the references below. 7-hydroxymitragynine concentrations are rarely reported.

Mitragynine LC-MS Spectrum:

[source: Sciex X500R, Orange County Crime Laboratory, California, USA]

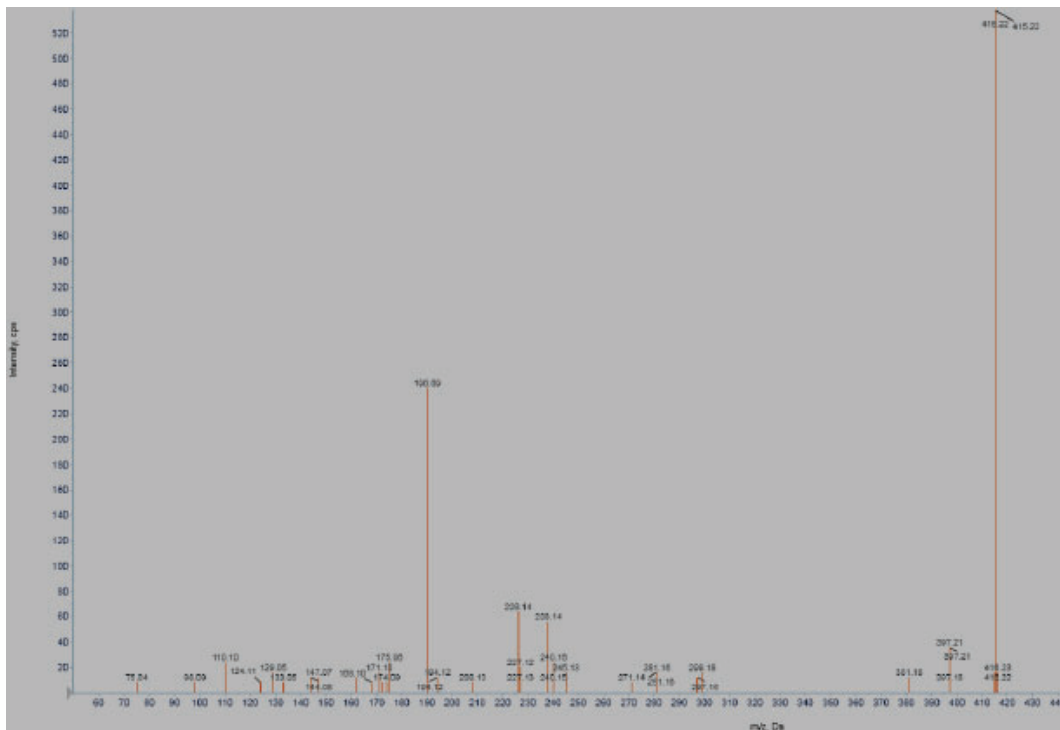


NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

Submitted by: Dani Mata, SOFT Designer Drugs Committee Chair and Simon Elliot, TIAFT NPS Committee Chair

7-Hydroxymitragynine LC-MS Spectrum:

[source: Orange County Crime Laboratory, California, USA]



Additional References:

Basiliere S, Kerrigan S. CYP450-Mediated Metabolism of Mitragynine and Investigation of Metabolites in Human Urine. *J Anal Toxicol.* (2020) 44(4):301-313

Corkery JM, Streete P, Claridge H, Goodair C, Papanti D, Orsolini L, Schifano F, Sikka K, Körber S, Hendricks A. Characteristics of deaths associated with kratom use. *J Psychopharmacol.* (2019) 33(9):1102-1123

Domingo O, Roeder G, Stöver A, Graw M, Musshoff F, Sachs H, Bicker W. Mitragynine concentrations in two fatalities. *Forensic Sci Int.* (2017) 271:e1-e7. doi: 10.1016/j.forsciint.2016.12.020

Lee MJ, Ramanathan S, Mansor SM, Yeong KY, Tan SC. Method validation in quantitative analysis of phase I and phase II metabolites of mitragynine in human urine using liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry. *Anal*

Biochem. (2018) 543:146-161

Matson M, Schenk N. Fatality of 33-Year-Old Man Involving Kratom Toxicity. *J Forensic Sci.* (2019) 64(6):1933-1935

Mata DC, Andera KA. Case Series: Mitragynine blood and tissue concentrations in fatalities from 2017 to 2018 in Orange County, CA, USA. *J For Chem* (2020) Vol 17.

Meier U, Mercer-Chalmers-Bender K, Scheurer E, Dussy F. Development, validation, and application of an LC-MS/MS method for mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine analysis in hair. *Drug Test Anal.* (2020) 12(2):280-284

Papsun DM, Chan-Hosokawa A, Friedrich L, Brower J, Graf K, Logan BK. The Trouble with Kratom: Analytical and Interpretative Issues Involving Mitragynine. *J Anal Toxicol* (2019) 43(8): 615 – 629

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) January 2020

https://www.unodc.org/documents/scientific/Current_NPS_Threats_Volume_II_Web.pdf

Wang C, Walker AE. Fatal Mitragynine-Associated Toxicity in Canada: A Case Report and Review of the Literature. *Acad Forensic Pathol.* (2018) 8(2):340-346



Submitted by: Dwain C. Fuller, F-ABFT, TC-NRCC

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Randall C. Baselt, Ph.D. – Editor

Biomedical Publications, ISBN 978-0-578-57749-4

Once again Dr. Baselt hits it out of the park with the 12th Edition of Disposition of Toxic Drugs and Chemicals in Man (DTDCIM), affectionately known in the field as the “Red Book”. Quite frankly, before I received my copy, I expected just the addition of a few more substances to the already huge lexicon. Those notions were dispelled before I even opened the book. The latest edition that I owned was the 10th edition, and admittedly some of these changes were reflected in the 11th edition. However, I was first struck by the readability of the cover font. It is refreshingly clean and modern and highly readable. The font change is also reflected on the inside

of the volume. The interior font is Arial Condensed, a change that was made in the 11th edition, however the font has now been reduced slightly in size and the line length extended. In other words, great care has been taken to keep this handy reference to a single volume. With that in mind, the paper weight was reduced from 30# at 1000 pages per inch in the 11th edition to 24# at 1280 pages per inch in the 12th. Even with this reduction in weight, the pages are sturdy and feel substantial.

Enough talk about the mechanics of publishing. The reference itself retains its highly useful nature as a “go to” source of information on toxic

substances it is well known for. Each substance is well summarized and is thoroughly referenced to allow the reader to easily pursue more detailed information about the substance. The 12th edition contains an additional 275 entries over the 11th edition for a total of over 2000 substances in one handy volume, indexed both alphabetically and by CAS number. Additionally, these indices are available on the Biomedical Publications website (www.biomedicalpublications.com) and are searchable and downloadable for convenience. As always, DTDCIM should be at the top of the wish list of any serious toxicologist.

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- February 1 for March Issue
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- August 1 for September Issue
- November 1 for December Issue

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FUTURE SOFT MEETINGS

2021

Gaylord Opryland, Nashville, TN
September 26–October 1, 2021
Jennifer Colby and Erin Karschner

2022

Huntington Convention Center, Cleveland, OH
October 30–November 4, 2022
Doug Rohde and Michele Merves Crosby

2023

Gaylord Rockies, Denver, CO
October 29–November 3, 2023
Dan Anderson and Jarrad Wagner

2024

Union Station, St. Louis, MO
Oct 27–Nov 2
TBD

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