

BZP (Benzylpiperazine)

BZP, benzylpiperazine, piperazines, PEP pills, Part-E pills, legal ecstasy, Frenzy, Smileys.

What are BZP pills?

BZP (Benzylpiperazine) is a synthetic stimulant derived from piperazine, often seen as an alternative to ecstasy or amphetamine, although usually considered to be less potent than these drugs. It is sold as a tablet, capsule or as an off-white powder. BZP pills are marketed under a huge variety of names and the tablets come in many different shapes.

Prevalence

It is not known how many people in the UK use BZP pills. Before BZP and related piperazines were brought under the Misuse of Drugs Act in December 2009, most sales were conducted on the internet. The number of UK websites that sold the drug or websites based abroad that shipped to the UK suggested that there was a fairly significant number of users in this country.

The law

BZP and related piperazines are Class C drugs.

BZP and related piperazines were brought under the control of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 as Class C drugs on 23 December 2009. It is as yet unknown what the effect of the new legislation will be on sales or prevalence of the drug. Prior to its control under the Misuse of Drugs Act, the drug was sold online, with vendors labelling the drugs as plant feed or not for human consumption to attempt to evade prosecution under the Medicines Act.

Effects/risks

The use of BZP has similar effects to other synthetic stimulants such as ecstasy or amphetamines. Users report a sense of euphoria and increased alertness, enhanced senses and a raised heart rate. Depending on the dose taken, the effects of the drug can last for up to 6-8 hours.

It is not clear exactly what the risks are to health as large scale studies have not been carried out, but users report a number of adverse side effects. These include vomiting and nausea, headache, palpitations, anxiety, strange thoughts, mood swings, confusion and tremors. Some of these effects occurred in the comedown period while some were experienced for up to 24 hours after use. There are reports of users not being able to sleep for up to ten hours after taking BZP pills.

More severe adverse effects may include fits and potentially life-threatening seizures. The National Programme on Substance Abuse Deaths reports that piperazines were implicated in (i.e. considered to be connected to, alongside other substances) 16 deaths between 2006 and 2008. ⁽¹⁾

Reference:

⁽¹⁾ National Programme on Substance Abuse Deaths Annual Report 2009
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