

Expert Committee on Drug Dependence

Thirty-ninth Meeting

Geneva, 6-10 November 2017



Expert Peer Review for 4-Fluoroisobutyrfentanyl (4-FIBF)

1. Comments based on the review report

a. Evidence on dependence and abuse potential

Dependence potential: There are no controlled studies on the dependence potential of 4F-iBF. Based on its μ opioid receptor agonist activity and opioid effects, it would be expected to produce typical opioid physical dependence.

Abuse potential: There are no controlled studies of the abuse potential of 4F-iBF. However, it has been discussed on user forums where it is described as having typical opioid effects. Based on its mechanism of action and these reports, it would be expected to have significant abuse potential.

b. Risks to individual and society because of misuse

There are a number of reported deaths in which 4F-iBF alone has played a causal or contributory role. Cases of overdose with 4F-iBF are characterized by typical opioid overdose signs including coma and respiratory depression.

c. Magnitude of the problem in countries (misuse, illicit production, smuggling etc)

A number of overdose deaths have been noted in several different countries. There have also been a number of recorded seizures of 4F-iBF. However, the extent of global use is not clear, in part because of the difficulty of testing for the presence of 4F-iBF.

d. Need of the substance for medical (including veterinary) practice

4F-iBF does not present any advantage over existing opioids used therapeutically and therefore it would not be expected that there would be any need of the substance for medical practice.

e. Need of the substance for other purposes (e.g. industrial)

None

f. Measures taken by countries to curb misuse

The DEA has temporarily placed 4F-iBF in Schedule I. In a number of countries it would be covered by generic or analogue legislation.

g. Impact if this substance is scheduled

Some impairment of research may occur.

2. Are there absent data that would be determinative for scheduling?

It would assist the committee to have available the original Swedish data on overdose cases concerning this substance as this information does not appear to be publicly available. This peer review is based on the conclusions about those cases given in the critical review without being able to consider the original data.

3. Other comments or opinions

None

4. Expert reviewer's view on scheduling with rationale

4F-iBF is an opioid that has effects similar to those of fentanyl and other fentanyl analogues that are included in Schedule I of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. It has no recorded therapeutic use and its use has resulted in fatalities. While evidence of its abuse is limited, and there are no controlled studies of its abuse potential, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that it is liable to similar abuse and similar ill effects as drugs currently in that Schedule. It is therefore recommended that it be placed in Schedule I of the 1961 Convention.