

Xylazine Test Strips: Reducing Stigma and Embracing Harm Reduction

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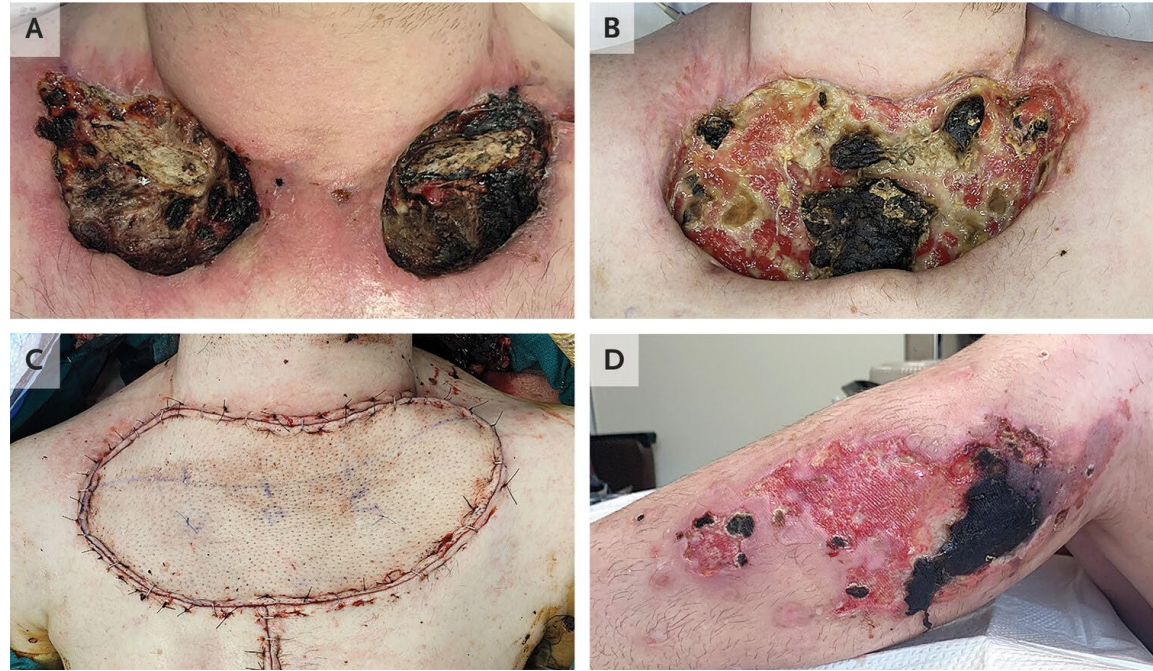
Harm Reduction

- needle exchange programs
 - free naloxone distribution
 - free fentanyl test strips
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- **14,329 people** visited the syringe exchange program with **977,275 syringes** distributed in Hamilton County
(2022 Hamilton County Public Health Report)



Xylazine

- Animal Tranquilizer
- Increasingly prevalent in the drug supply
- Causes overdose similar to that of opioids
- Naloxone (Narcan) is **ineffective** in reversing Xylazine overdose
- Causes necrotic skin lesions
 - Infection
 - Sepsis
 - Death



O'Neil J, Kovach S. Xylazine-Associated Skin Injury. **N Engl J Med**. 2023;388(24):2274.
doi:10.1056/NEJMicm2303601



Current Policy

- Xylazine test strips are currently **illegal** in Ohio
 - Results in significant increase in adverse health effects and barriers to care
 - (Network for public health law)
 - increases the strain and cost due to preventable injury and disease
 - (Joseph Friedman et. al)

Proposed Solution

Since the implementation of Hamilton County Health Department's distribution of fentanyl test strips, emergency department visits due to overdose calls have trended down overall.

Xylazine continues to be rampant problem across Hamilton County
43% of drug overdoses show the presence of xylazine contamination.

Xylazine test strips should be made available to decrease harm within the community.

