

Mexico's 'Don't Drink the Water' is Now 'Don't Take the Vicodin'



By Josh Bloom — June 13, 2017



Real or deadly copycat? Photo: Drugs.com

The newest wrinkle in the assault of opioid drugs on Americans is just about the last thing we need: Killer pills.

Opioid pills, such as Vicodin and Percocet have (wrongfully) been blamed for the soaring death toll in the US (See: [No, Vicodin Is Not The Real Killer In The Opioid Crisis](#) [1]). But, in a perverse twist, pills are, in fact now making a greater contribution to the number of overdoses. But it is not the real pills that are doing the damage. Rather, it is counterfeit versions of those real pills, which can be indistinguishable from the real thing. And extremely dangerous.



Percocet (left), and its counterfeit version (right). Can you tell these apart? Your life may depend on it. Photos: Drugs.com, WXIA news

It is ironic, but not the least bit amusing that counterfeit opioids are showing up on the streets. For example, [five people just died in Georgia](#) [2], and many dozens more were hospitalized after taking what they thought were Percocet pills. Except they weren't. According to the Georgia Department of Public Health, the pills were found to contain fentanyl (big surprise) plus a second drug that has not been identified (1). The DEA believes that the tablets were pressed in Mexico by drug cartels.

"There is a concerted effort by these cartels to press fentanyl into pills illicitly and sell them."

DEA Special Agent Dan Salder

Perhaps the geniuses at the CDC and their buddies Physicians For Responsible Opioid Prescription (PROP) should have given this scenario some thought when they mapped out a plan to address the opioid overdose epidemic by focusing on a crackdown of (legal) prescription pills. What is unknown (and will probably remain so) is how many people bought these fake pills to feed their addiction, and how many did so to obtain pain relief that they can no longer get legally.

The latter group has been kicked to the curb. Imagine being in chronic, severe pain, having your opioid dose *mandatorily cut* (See: [Just Another Reason Why One-Size-Fits-All Opioid Laws Won't Work: Your Liver](#) [3]), and having to take you life in your hands on the streets to buy something illegal and probably dangerous.

Sure, let's keep elderly women with pain from psoriatic arthritis [awake at night](#) [4] because of legal limits on dosage, and keep burying our heads in the sand by sticking with a policy that has been an unmitigated disaster from the beginning. Or maybe someone will finally wake and realize that damage that has been done.

Too bad there's no pill for that.

Note:

(1) If this second drug is not one of the designer fentanyls, I will be absolutely astounded.

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[2] <http://www.11alive.com/news/mexican-drug-cartels-could-be-behind-deadly-fake-percocet-pills/448080815>

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[4] <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/maine/articles/2017-04-22/chronic-pain-patients-say-opioid-law-creates-new-crisis>