Afternoon Insights: Exploring Xylazine Misuse and Prevention Evaluation Report

Presenters: Dr. Nichole Michaels' Lab at the Center for Injury Research and Policy (CIRP)
Nationwide Children's Hospital (Columbus, OH)
Aleah Cumberbatch, MPA
Jacob Holycross, MPH
Natalie Vargas, BS
Maddie Lewis

Event Host: Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service:
Holly Raffle, Ph.D., MCHES
Madison Wells, OCPSA

Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE)
Elika Whitney, M.Ed;

Event Location: Online (live virtual)

Event Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025

This evaluation report was made possible by grant G28RH46290 from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an operating division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of HRSA or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Background

The Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (COP-RCORP) Master Consortium is a multi-community consortium funded by a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The consortium includes the Ashtabula Mental Health and Recovery Services Board; the Fairfield County Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health (ADAMH) Board; Sandusky County Public Health, the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Ottawa, Sandusky, and Wyandot Counties; the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) and Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service. Each county government organization has a community-specific consortium that leads projects and activities within the communities to address the grant's goals.

In response to increases in xylazine found in Overdose Fatality Reports (OFR) and testing, COP-RCORP hosted a virtual learning event focused on xylazine awareness, prevention, and harm reduction. Participants learned about the health impacts, legal considerations, and harm reduction strategies related to xylazine; a veterinary sedative increasingly found in the illicit drug supply. The *Afternoon Insights: Exploring Xylazine Misuse and Prevention* session provided a free, virtual continuing education opportunity for professionals working in harm reduction, behavioral health, prevention, and public health. The 60-minute session was held on March 11, 2025, and is available to watch on COP-RCORPs' website.

A total of 112 individuals attended the event. Of those, 50 (44.6%) completed the post-session evaluation required to receive continuing education. This report includes data collected from those 50 respondents.

Demographics

Participants who completed the evaluation represented a diverse range of racial and geographic backgrounds. The majority identified as White/Caucasian (72%), followed by African American/Black (12%), Asian (6%), and Alaskan Native, American Indian, Indigenous, or Native American (4%). No participants identified as Middle Eastern/North African, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and 8% preferred not to disclose their race.

Participants had the opportunity to self-report their ethnicity through an optional question. Of the 50 individuals who completed the evaluation survey, three participants identified as Appalachian, and one identified as Hispanic. Six selected "Prefer not to answer" and "None of the above" was selected by the remaining 40 respondents.

In addition, participants were asked to list up to five counties in which they serve. Thirty-two participants provided county information. Table 1 displays the distribution of counties served, organized by the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health's (ODBH) six psychiatric hospital catchment areas: Northwest, Northcoast, Summit, Central Ohio, Heartland, and Appalachian. Additionally, the two out-of-state counties reported were Salt Lake County, Utah, and IHS – Navajo Nation.

Table 1. ODBH Catchment Areas Served by Participants		
	N	**%**
Northwest	9	28.1
Northcoast	6	18.8
Summit	2	6.3
Central Ohio	9	28.1
Heartland	3	9.4
Appalachian	11	34.4
Out of State	2	6.3

Figure 1. Ohio Counties Served by Participants

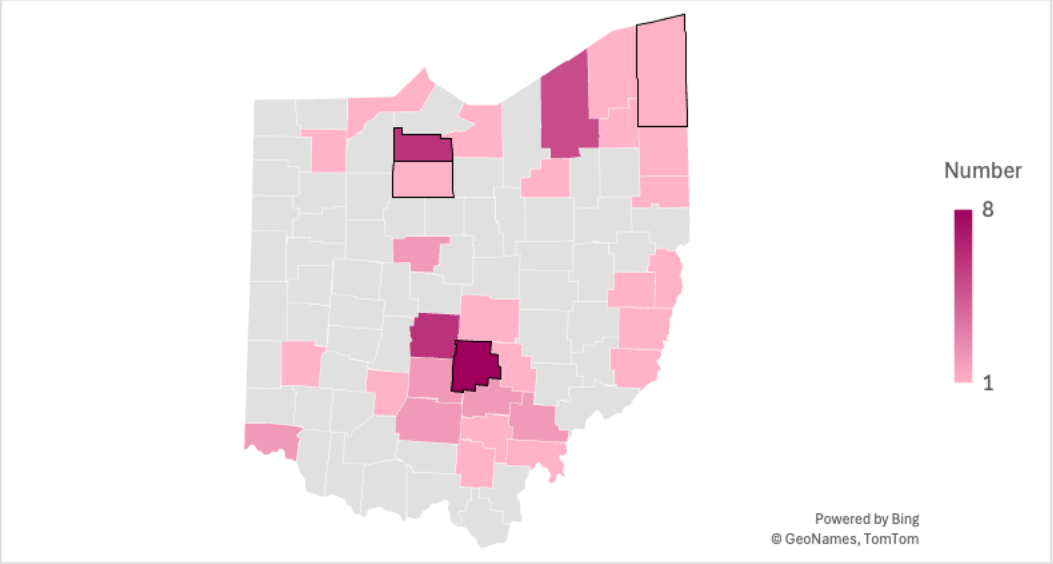


Figure 1 outlines the four Ohio counties-Ashtabula, Fairfield, Sandusky, and Seneca-included in the COP-RCORP Master Consortium.

Participant Credentialing and Continuing Education Overview

The virtual learning event offered continuing education for Prevention and Certified Health Education Specialists (CHES). To better understand participants' backgrounds and professional development needs, the evaluation survey collected data on current credentials/licensures and interest in continuing education. Table 2 breaks down participant requests for Continuing Education (CEUs). Table 3 displays the current credentials held by participants that requested CEUS.

Table 2. Do you need Continuing Education (CEUs)?		
	N	**%**
Yes	44	88.0%
No	6	12.0%
TOTAL	**50**	**100.0%**

Table 3. Current Credentials Held by Participants Needing CEUs (Select all that apply.)		
	N	**%**
RA	0	0.0%
OCPSA	6	13.3%
OCPS	2	4.4%
OCPC	2	4.4%
CHES/MCHES	22	48.9%
N/A (Would like a certificate for another licensure)	13	29.0%
TOTAL	**45**	**100%**

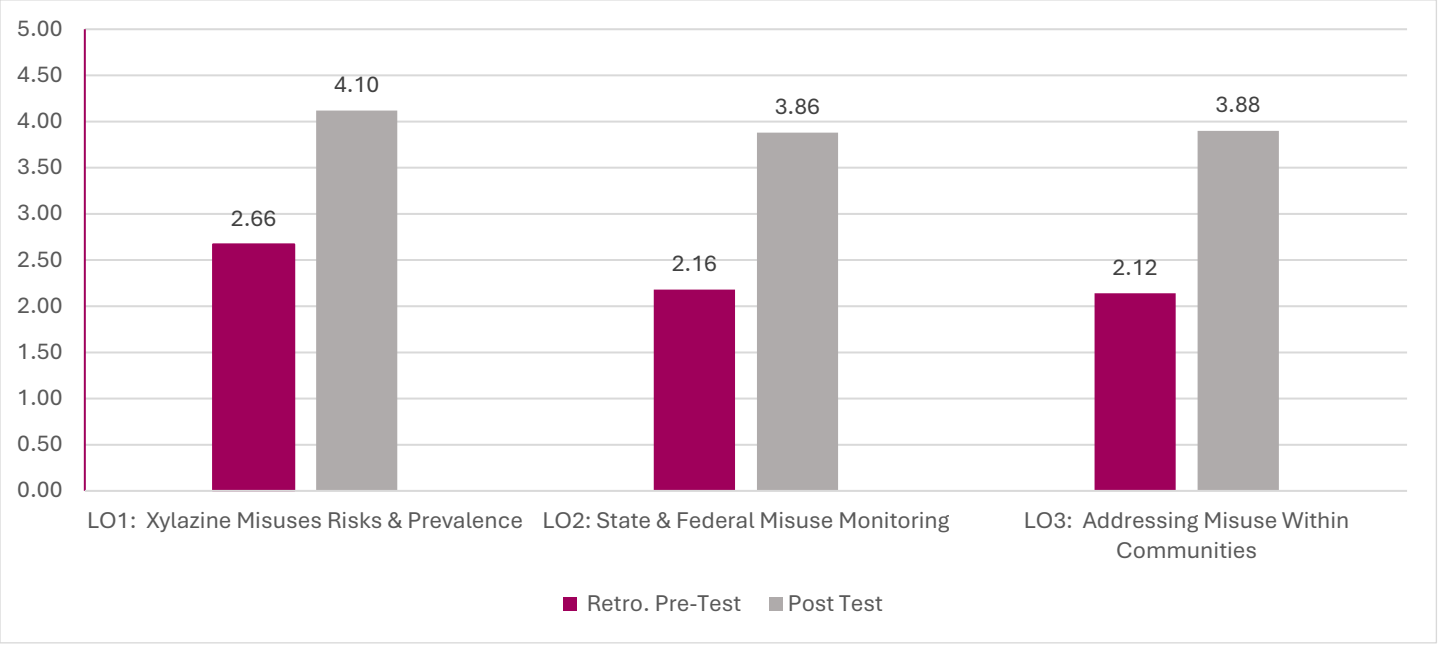
Knowledge

Knowledge gains from the Xylazine Virtual Learning Event were assessed using a retrospective post-then-pre design (UW–Madison Division of Extension, 2021). The evaluation survey, completed after the event, asked participants to rate their knowledge before and after the training. Participants evaluated their understanding based on the event's three learning objectives:

1. Describe the risks and prevalence of xylazine misuse.
2. Identify state and federal efforts to monitor xylazine misuse.
3. Discuss strategies to address xylazine misuse within communities.

Figure 2 illustrates that participants' knowledge scores increased across all three learning objectives following the training. Table 4 presents additional data on knowledge gains from the Xylazine Virtual Learning Event.

Figure 2. Comparison of Mean Knowledge Scores Assessed Using Retrospective Post-then-Pre design (*N*=50)



Note. All differences are significant (p<.001***)

Table 4. Retrospective Pre-Test vs. Post Test Comparisons (N=50)							
	Retro. Pre-Test		Post Test		Comparisons		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t(49)	p	d
LO1: Xylazine Misuses Risks & Prevalence	2.66	1.42	4.10	0.76	8.75	p<.001***	1.24
LO2: State & Federal Misuse Monitoring	2.16	1.17	3.86	0.97	12.61	p<.001***	1.78
LO3: Addressing Misuse Within Communities	2.12	1.12	3.88	1.06	12.43	p<.001***	1.76

p<. 05* p<.01** p<.001***

As an open-ended evaluation item, participants were asked to identify one thing they learned from the Xylazine Virtual Learning Event that they plan to apply in their work. Responses were reviewed and common patterns were identified across participants' answers. This informal thematic review revealed a range of practical takeaways, with recurring themes including:

- Increased awareness of the **risks and health effects** of xylazine misuse
- The importance of **harm reduction strategies**, including naloxone use and test strip education
- A better understanding of **state and federal regulations** regarding xylazine
- Sharing **educational resources** with colleagues and clients

These reflections show that participants are prepared to use the knowledge gained to inform their colleagues, educate clients, and advocate for public health responses. **Table 5** presents key themes drawn from participant responses, including representative quotes reflecting the major themes identified.

Table 5. One thing that I will apply to my work that I learned from presentation (open ended question)	
Theme	**Direct Quotes**
Participants expressed a clearer understanding of what xylazine is, how it affects the body, and its growing prevalence.	• "Just knowing what xylazine does to one's body..." • "The risk of xylazine use and how it is becoming prevalent in the state of Ohio." • "Understanding of what xylazine is and how it affects individuals who use it." • "That even trace amounts can be lethal."
Several responses highlight an improved grasp of the legal status of xylazine and related policy efforts.	• "Federal/state regulations about xylazine..." • "That xylazine is not scheduled at the national level." • "Actions taken by different states to classify xylazine."
Many learners mentioned test strips, Narcan use, and harm reduction techniques as key takeaways.	• "Realizing that naloxone should still be administered due to other illicit drugs mixed." • "A better understanding of test strips and the laws..." • "The graph showing most people are not seeking xylazine... test strips are needed..."
Some participants were focused on how they would share their learning with coworkers, clients, or the public.	• "I will share the information I learned with my colleagues." • "Educate others on the risks associated with xylazine misuse." • "Sharing signs of xylazine use with staff members..."

Satisfaction

This section asked participants to rate their satisfaction with the training (Table 6), the relevance of the information in the session to their practice (Table 7), and their confidence level in sharing knowledge from the presentation (Table 8).

Table 6. How would you rate your satisfaction with today's presentation?		
	N	**%**
Outstanding	27	54.0%
Good	18	36.0%
Average	5	10.0%
Fair	0	0.0%
Poor	0	0.0%
TOTAL	**50**	**100.0%**
Table 7. Was the information in the session relevant to your practice or professional development?		
	N	%
Yes	46	92.0%
No	4	8.0%
TOTAL	**50**	**100.0%**
Table 8. How confident are you in sharing knowledge from today's presentation?		
	N	%
Very Confident	10	20.0%
Fairly Confident	20	40.0%
Neutral	18	36.0%
Fairly Not Confident	1	2.0%
Not Confident at all	1	2.0%
TOTAL	**50**	**100.0%**

The evaluation also included an optional space for participants to leave any additional thoughts and feedback about the program, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Additional Comments (open ended response)
Shasta County (west coast in general) is recently experiencing the crisis that xylazine has caused in the East Coast. This is the second year in a row in which Millenium Health Lab Clinic has tested urine samples for xylazine so the influx is happening now here whereas Ohio might have already seen this happen in the last couple of years
Very surface level information but good to have that base knowledge; would be interested in a more in depth learning about this.
All of the presenters were great. Very knowledgeable and clear messaging.
Great Training and a great knowledgeable panel
Very informative webinar!
Great information!

References

UW–Madison Division of Extension. (2021). *Retrospective post-then-pre design*. University of Wisconsin–Madison. https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/programdevelopment/files/2021/12/RetrospectivePost-then-Pre.pdf\

University of Wisconsin. (2021). *Understanding the Retrospective Post-then-Pre Questionnaire Design.* UW-Madison Division of Extension: Program Development and Evaluation. https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/programdevelopment/files/2021/12/RetrospectivePost-then-Pre.pdf\