

FENTANYL: THE CRIME ENTERPRISE

FENTANIL: A EMPRESA DO CRIME

FENTANILO: LA EMPRESA DEL CRIMEN

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ABSTRACT

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid (manufactured in laboratories), 50 times more potent than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. In Mexico, it is classified under the General Health Law as a narcotic whose medical use is legal and regulated and supervised by the Federal Commission for the Protection against Sanitary Risks (COFEPRIS). "Fentanyl is a chemical substance that began to be used for medical purposes, indeed as an anesthetic, replacing morphine. However, parallel to this use, an entire black market emerged to use it in the production of drugs sold on the streets of the United States, which has caused this public health crisis" (Ágreda, 2025). Initially, its use was restricted to cardiac surgeries, as it could assist both the required sedative effect and postoperative pain management. Currently, it is used in combination with anesthetics during surgeries or for very intense pain, such as in the terminal stages of cancer. After the original injectable medical formulation, several other forms were developed, including transdermal patches, tablets, sprays, and lozenges, with the aim of providing broader administration options. The Sinaloa Cartel (SC) was the first to identify the business potential represented by fentanyl, followed by the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) and other criminal groups. "One kilogram of fentanyl earns the cartel approximately USD 200,000 in the United States" (Grant, 2024). The leading cause of death from overdoses involving synthetic opioids in the United States is fentanyl, triggering a severe public health crisis; according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), from 2021 to 2023 overdose deaths exceeded 100,000 annually. The reduction in fentanyl overdose deaths is largely attributed to the use of naloxone, known as Narcan, which rapidly restores normal breathing in overdose cases; however, its effects last only 30 to 90 minutes and require immediate medical attention. In Mexico, naloxone is classified as a psychotropic medication and is highly controlled, intended mainly for hospital use and requiring a prescription. In the United States, organized crime groups based in Mexico control the fentanyl supply to the U.S. drug market, particularly the Sinaloa Cartel (SC) and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), and in several cases local and regional U.S. criminal groups have mixed fentanyl with heroin to maximize profitability.

Keywords: Fentanyl. Synthetic Opioid. Cartels. Business. Profitability. Naloxone.

RESUMO

O fentanilo é um potente opioide sintético (fabricado em laboratório), 50 vezes mais potente que a heroína e 100 vezes mais forte que a morfina. No México, é classificado na Lei Geral de Saúde como um entorpecente cujo uso médico é legal, sendo regulado e fiscalizado pela

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Comissão Federal para a Proteção contra Riscos Sanitários (COFEPRIS). “O fentanilo é uma substância química que começou a ser utilizada para fins médicos, de fato como anestésico, substituindo a morfina. No entanto, paralelamente a esse uso, abriu-se um amplo mercado negro para sua utilização na produção de drogas vendidas nas ruas dos Estados Unidos, o que causou esta crise de saúde pública” (Ágreda, 2025). Inicialmente, seu uso era restrito a cirurgias cardíacas, pois auxiliava tanto no efeito sedativo necessário quanto no controle da dor pós-operatória. Atualmente, é utilizado em conjunto com anestésicos durante cirurgias ou para o tratamento de dores muito intensas, como nas fases terminais do câncer. Após a apresentação médica original injetável, foram desenvolvidas diversas formulações, como adesivos transdérmicos, comprimidos, sprays e pastilhas, com o objetivo de ampliar as opções de administração. O Cartel de Sinaloa (CS) foi o primeiro a identificar o potencial de negócio representado pelo fentanilo, seguido pelo Cartel Jalisco Nova Geração (CJNG) e outros grupos criminosos. “Um quilo de fentanilo gera ao cartel cerca de US\$ 200.000 nos Estados Unidos” (Grant, 2024). A principal causa de morte por overdose de opioides sintéticos nos Estados Unidos é o fentanilo, desencadeando uma grave crise de saúde pública; segundo dados dos Centros de Controle e Prevenção de Doenças (CDC), de 2021 a 2023 as mortes por overdose superaram 100.000 por ano. A redução das mortes por overdose de fentanilo deve-se em grande parte ao uso da naloxona, conhecida como Narcan, que restaura rapidamente a respiração normal em casos de overdose; entretanto, seus efeitos duram apenas de 30 a 90 minutos, sendo necessária atenção médica imediata. No México, a naloxona é classificada como medicamento psicotrópico e altamente controlado, com uso predominantemente hospitalar e exigência de prescrição médica. Nos Estados Unidos, grupos de criminalidade organizada com base no México controlam o fornecimento de fentanilo ao mercado norte-americano, especialmente o Cartel de Sinaloa (CS) e o Cartel Jalisco Nova Geração (CJNG), e em diversos casos grupos criminosos regionais e locais dos Estados Unidos misturaram fentanilo com heroína para maximizar a rentabilidade.

Palavras-chave: Fentanilo. Opióide Sintético. Cartéis. Negócio. Rentabilidade. Naloxona.

RESUMEN

El fentanilo es un fuerte opioide sintético (fabricado en laboratorio), 50 veces más potente que la heroína y 100 veces más que la morfina. En México está clasificado en la Ley General de Salud como un estupefaciente cuyo uso médico es legal y está regulado y vigilado por la Comisión Federal para la Protección contra Riesgos Sanitarios (COFEPRIS). “El fentanilo es una sustancia química que se empezó a utilizar para uso médico, en efecto, como anestesia, sustituyó a la morfina. Pero, paralelamente a este uso, se abrió todo un mercado negro para utilizarlo en la producción de drogas que se venden en las calles en Estados Unidos, y que ha causado esta crisis de salud pública”. (Ágreda, 2025) Inicialmente su uso estaba restringido a cirugías de tipo cardíaco, porque podía ayudar tanto al efecto de sedación requerido como al dolor asociado postoperatorio. Actualmente, se le utiliza junto a anestésicos durante cirugías o para dolores muy intensos como son las etapas terminales de cáncer. Posterior a la presentación original inyectable para uso médico, se desarrollaron diversas formulaciones como parches transdérmicos, tabletas, spray y paletas comestibles, con el objetivo de proporcionar opciones de administración más amplias. El Cártel de Sinaloa (CS) fue el primero en detectar el potencial de negocio que representaba el fentanilo. Posteriormente, el Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG) y otros grupos criminales se sumaron al tráfico de esta droga. “Un kilo de fentanilo le hace ganar al cártel unos 200,000 USD en EE.UU.”. (Grant, 2024) La causa principal de muerte por sobredosis con opioides sintéticos en Estados Unidos es por fentanilo lo que ha provocado una grave crisis de salud pública, que según datos de los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades (CDC, por sus siglas en inglés), durante tres años consecutivos del 2021 al 2023 las muertes por sobredosis superaron las 100,000. La disminución de muertes por sobredosis de

fentanilo se debe en gran parte al uso del medicamento naloxona, conocido como narcan, ya que restablece con rapidez la respiración normal de una persona que respira lentamente o ha dejado de respirar a causa de una sobredosis de drogas. Aunque la naloxona revierta la sobredosis por opioides como el fentanilo, la heroína, la oxicodona (OxyContin), la hidrocodona (Vicodin), la codeína y la morfina, los efectos son temporales de 30 a 90 minutos, la cual requiere atención médica inmediata. En México, la naloxona está clasificada como un medicamento psicotrópico y, por lo tanto, es una sustancia altamente controlada. Su uso está destinado principalmente para el ámbito hospitalario y requiere receta médica para su adquisición. En Estados Unidos, los grupos de delincuencia organizada con base en México actualmente controlan el suministro de fentanilo al mercado de drogas estadounidense. Entre ellos se encuentran grupos bien establecidos como el Cártel de Sinaloa (CS) y el Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG). En varios casos, grupos delictivos regionales y locales de Estados Unidos han mezclado fentanilo con heroína para maximizar la rentabilidad.

Palabras clave: Fentanilo. Opioide Sintético. Cártel. Negocio. Rentabilidad. Naloxona.

1 INTRODUCTION

"Fentanyl is a synthetic drug, which was introduced in 1960, for clinical use (as an anesthetic and for the treatment of chronic and intense pain) in order to replace morphine and other opioids (derived from opium, which is a mixture of substances generated by the poppy flower or opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*)). It was first synthesized by Dr. Paul Janssen and approved by the Janssen Company of Beerse in Belgium in December 1960 and by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the United States of America in 1968." (Rosas Carrasco, 2023)

The drug epidemic in the United States known as the "fentanyl crisis" was due to medical malpractice in the 80s. Although opioids have always been used to treat very severe pain, 45 years ago the pharmaceutical company Purdue Pharma synthesized oxycodone, a semi-synthetic opioid, which it marketed under the name OxyContin.

"A letter published in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM), with a single paragraph of about 100 words, argued that prescription opioids, such as oxycodone, did not cause addiction, so it began to be cited by Purdue Pharma as evidence that opioid use posed no risk.

The letter written by Jane Porter and Dr. Hershel Jick, in 1980, described the analysis that was made of more than 11 thousand patients at Boston University Medical Center, who received opioids for pain, of which, the letter stated, only 3 developed dependence, but it referred to hospitalized patients under medical treatment.

From the 90s onwards, an aggressive marketing campaign was carried out, which argued that the drug was not addictive, this, coupled with the prestige of the medical journal, helped to flood pharmacies and doctor's offices throughout the country with oxycodone and to cement the idea that opioids prescribed for pain were safe.

The commercialization of oxycodone unleashed a great demand among addicts and became the breeding ground for the arrival of fentanyl illegally in the United States, which along with other opioids, has become the cause of the worst public health crisis in that country." (Avendaño, 2025)

It can be found mixed with other drugs such as heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine and ecstasy, which makes the use of any of these substances even more dangerous.

Ilicitly manufactured fentanyl has a process similar to pills and with a presentation similar to candy. It can be given as an injection, in a patch that you put on your skin, or as a lozenge that dissolves in your mouth.

It is a drug that is commonly used in surgical interventions as an anesthetic and as an analgesic to treat intense pain in multiple health conditions, including cancer or chronic pain that is resistant to other types of medications.

"Fentanyl acts on the central nervous system (CNS) to relieve pain, but in doses close to two milligrams it causes overdose. The production of fentanyl in Mexican territory, which is destined for the United States, is carried out in clandestine laboratories with the presence of criminal groups, while the precursors used are imported from China, Taiwan or India. It is worth mentioning that, in Mexico, the medical use of fentanyl is well regulated and penalized under the current General Health Law." (González Lozano, 2023)

In Mexico, fentanyl is classified as a controlled narcotic by the General Health Law (Article 234), as it represents a public health risk due to its potential for dependence or addiction.

At first, the fentanyl trafficked to the United States came from China, but according to reports from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Attorney General's Office (FGR) and the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP), the procedure changed in 2017, as Mexican cartels began importing chemical precursors to make fentanyl in their own laboratories.

In Mexico, criminal organizations carry out the production of fentanyl in clandestine laboratories, which according to data from the Ministry of National Defense (SEDENA) these narco-laboratories are located in towns in Michoacán, Jalisco, Sinaloa, Durango or Baja California with the presence of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) and the Sinaloa Cartel (CS); and where other drugs, such as cocaine and heroin, and chemical precursors are also introduced from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Various Mexican public security institutions "point out that the states of Sinaloa, Sonora, Baja California Sur, Durango, State of Mexico and Mexico City, is where they have located and destroyed the largest number of clandestine laboratories for the manufacture of fentanyl." (Flores Martínez, 2022)

"The production of fentanyl goes directly to the city of Tijuana in Baja California, facilitating its entry into the United States through San Diego, an area with the highest number of fentanyl seizures according to the DEA and Customs and Border Protection." (González Lozano, 2023)

The U.S. Department of Justice The U.S. indicates that there are 5,000 places in China that produce fentanyl or chemical precursors for the manufacture of this synthetic drug.

The precursor chemicals are transported from China to Mexico across the Pacific Ocean in containers from ships that arrive at the ports of Manzanillo, Colima and Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán. The main international airports to which these precursors arrive are Culiacán, Manzanillo and Mexico City.

This synthetic drug has acquired various names on the streets of cities in the United States: Apache, China Girl, China Town, Dance Fever, Friend, Goodfellas, Great Bear, He-Man, Jackpot, Kink Ivory, Murder 8, Poison, Tango and Cash. In Latin America, it is known as White or Synthetic Heroin, N-30, Fenta, Tango, China White or OxyContin. These terms are frequently used on the streets because fentanyl is sold alone or mixed with other substances, such as heroin, cocaine or methamphetamine, often without the consumer's knowledge and alludes to its potency or the effects that traffickers claim it produces.

Fentanyl can be consumed in different ways: powdered or smoked; in pill form it is ingested; There are also liquid presentations applied in patches or on blotting paper.

It is marketed alone or mixed with heroin, cocaine or crack. The tablets, known as rainbow fentanyl, usually have bright colors that, according to the DEA, only serve to identify the cartel responsible for distribution in each market.

In the case of patches, there are 12, 25, 50, 75 and 100 micrograms/hour. Illegal fentanyl in liquid form also circulates on the black market as a nasal spray, eye drops, applied on paper or in small treats.

"U.S. law enforcement authorities have documented the numerous ways Mexican criminal groups are trying to increase their ability to supply this market: Smuggling chemicals in legitimate commercial shipments; mislabeling shipments to avoid investigation by law enforcement authorities; diverting supplies from lawful purchases to the chemical or pharmaceutical sectors; and making open purchases of supplies on the web." (FATF, 2022)

2 OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

The main objective of this research is to analyze the diversification of the illicit activities of drug cartels, with special emphasis on the production and commercialization of fentanyl in its different presentations, due to the high profitability that this illicit market represents.

3 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main sources of this research are documents such as laws in force in Mexico, reports, bulletins, interviews, executive summaries, books and magazines that talk about the fentanyl crisis, national and local newspapers that on numerous occasions and very frequently present articles denouncing this type of crime, as well as official websites and studies that experts have carried out on the subject.

Therefore, it is considered that this work is of a documentary and descriptive nature.

4 RESULTS

The public health crisis facing the United States has its origin when the FDA authorized through its pharmaceutical companies the sale of synthetic opioids such as oxycodone, which is a medication used for pain, which can eventually generate dependence.

The DEA began detecting the problem in 2014, when some addicts of pain medications in the U.S., such as oxycodone, began using fentanyl in pills that looked like prescription drugs.

Mexican cartels visualized the profits from the big fentanyl business and, as they did with methamphetamines, they already dominate the U.S. market.

The current extensive clientele of Mexican criminal organizations was created by U.S. laboratories, by prescribing the indiscriminate use of highly addictive opioid painkillers.

Doctors were writing opioid prescriptions to patients who didn't need them, knowing they were maintaining their dependence and increasing the labs' revenue.

"The place that fentanyl now occupies in the position of demand for opioids and opioids in the United States is because of the restriction that has been given in North America to the liberal prescription of medicines, such as Vicodin, tramadol and oxycontin." (Reyes, 2020)

"Due to its high addictive potential, low cost and the relative ease of its illicit production, small amounts of the psychoactive substance can produce large economic gains for organized crime groups, which stimulates the growth of illicit markets." (CONASAMA, 2024)

There are already other synthetic drugs more potent than fentanyl on the consumer market, but this is still the most widely consumed in the U.S. and is present in most of the substances circulating in that country, such as cocaine, heroin and marijuana, with one kilo

of fentanyl a million doses are produced and on the black market it is usually mixed with these substances to obtain a more potent product.

According to DEA reports, "cooks" produce over-the-counter tablets with very low doses of fentanyl, and at other times increase them, to such an extent that a single pill can kill three people by overdose. This explains the high number of deaths due to excessive consumption of this synthetic drug.

"In Mexico, fake tablets are manufactured that look very similar to any other drug produced, apparently, legally in the United States, with very exact dosage information, but in reality they are adulterated pills that contain 1 or 2 milligrams of fentanyl, which makes them extremely dangerous. The data that confirms the above is based on seizures made by the Border Patrol, the DEA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), agencies that have analyzed the percentages of fentanyl in them and have discovered that the doses vary. Some are very low and others are fatal at the first consumption, as they are overrun." (Ravelo, 2025, p. 9)

Criminal organizations recruit children to help them traffic fentanyl. e.g. a 17-year-old drug trafficker and cartel hitman is paid about \$1,000 to take him north.

"One kilo of fentanyl generates half a million fatal doses, but criminal groups can obtain many more, up to twice as many." (Gómez Mena, 2024)

Traffickers often illegally mix fentanyl with other drugs such as heroin, cocaine, or methamphetamine, or press it into counterfeit pills, increasing the risk of accidental overdose for consumers who don't know they are ingesting this potent substance.

Someone can take a pill without knowing it contains fentanyl, it is also possible for them to take a pill knowing it contains fentanyl with no way of knowing if it contains a lethal dose.

The leading cause of death from fentanyl overdose is primarily due to illicitly manufactured fentanyl.

You can't tell if a drug is fake or legitimate unless it's prescribed by a licensed medical professional and distributed by a legitimate pharmacy. Without lab testing, there's no way to know how much fentanyl is in an individual pill or how much may have been added to another medication.

In the medical field, fentanyl requires exact doses so as not to cause respiratory arrest. However, the drug addict ends up consuming disproportionate amounts that cause death.

For the Sinaloa Cartel (CS), the cost of setting up the infrastructure of a laboratory ranges between 150,000 and 200,000 pesos per month, while accessing the recipe to manufacture fentanyl can be easily consulted on the Internet.

"The cost to produce fentanyl is also low, since it takes about 3,500 dollars to acquire a kilo of pure fentanyl, with which millions of doses can be generated without requiring large quantities of chemical precursors.

In addition, the payment for security can reach the sum of 20 thousand pesos and only between two and six people are needed to set up an industrial-sized operation. Profits reach up to 3 thousand dollars for each kilogram. Other reports indicate that producing 4.5 tons of fentanyl - enough to cover a year's demand - requires an investment of approximately 22.5 million dollars. However, the profits double that figure, as they exceed 41 million dollars." (Ravelo, 2025, p. 12)

"The FDA approved naloxone as a prescription drug decades ago, but access increased exponentially in 2023, when the agency approved an over-the-counter nasal spray version of the drug. And medications prescribed to treat opioid use disorder — specifically, buprenorphine and methadone — also save lives." (Mogg, 2025)

Fentanyl test strips, which identify whether another drug contains the opioid, are available over-the-counter, are inexpensive and typically deliver results in 5 minutes or less, which can mean the difference between life and death. Even if a negative result is obtained, the user should exercise caution: reactive tests do not always identify drugs similar to fentanyl, some of them much more potent.

The only way to avoid an overdose is to never use fentanyl without medical advice. "Any use of fentanyl without a prescription is life-threatening." (Mogg, 2025)

5 DISCUSSION

The public discussion about fentanyl in Mexico often mixes two different phenomena: medicinal fentanyl, legal and necessary in the health sector, and illicit fentanyl, produced in clandestine laboratories and linked to the overdose crisis in the United States. This confusion has generated misinformation, ambiguous policies, and reforms that make it difficult to access medical fentanyl, causing shortages and direct impacts on the work of the medical community.

While in the United States there is a crisis due to illegal fentanyl consumption, in Mexico there is no official evidence of a similar problem; however, the existence of

production and transit of illicit fentanyl is recognized. Even so, the Mexican government has adopted a war narrative focused on the "combat" of the substance, privileging security strategies and the participation of the armed forces, without distinguishing between medical and illegal uses.

Illicit fentanyl is presented in powder or pills without sanitary control, while medicinal fentanyl is manufactured by pharmaceutical companies under strict regulation and is used in anesthesia, intensive care and severe pain management. Despite this difference, official proposals such as the prohibition of medical fentanyl show the lack of clarity in public discourse.

In addition to the military approach, Congress has approved reforms that increase penalties for crimes related to fentanyl and its precursors, including automatic imprisonment, which violates human rights principles. At the same time, between 2017 and 2024, decrees were issued that further tighten the control of licit fentanyl, generating excessive procedures, new bureaucracies and restrictions that have affected the availability of the drug.

Interviews with anesthesiologists show that the shortage of the drug has led to cancellations of surgeries, the use of less effective alternatives and an environment of uncertainty and stigma towards doctors. "Between 2021 and 2024, the press reported the arrest of at least four anesthesiologists, whose accusations are related to medicinal fentanyl." (Treviño Rangel & Velázquez Moreno, 2025)

Taken together, these policies do not seem to curb illicit fentanyl trafficking, but they have negatively impacted medical work and patients' access to safe treatments, evidencing a more moral and punitive approach than public health.

In addition, the blows to the drug cartels have not been enough, despite the fact that many seizures have occurred in both the U.S. and Mexico. It is a crisis that keeps the U.S. government and now the Mexican government on alert. Seizures of the drug and its chemical precursors in ports, air terminals and highways are becoming more and more frequent.

One of the strongest blows dealt by the authorities to the Sinaloa cartel occurred in December 2024 when they seized 20 million pills in the Sinaloa demarcations of Ahome and Guasave. "With this seizure, it is estimated that 8 billion pesos or 400 million dollars will have an economic impact on organized crime. There is no precedent for a seizure of this magnitude." (Muñoz et al., 2024)

The expansion of fentanyl cannot be understood without looking at the pharmaceutical precedent in the United States. Firms such as Purdue Pharma created a market "based on corruption", where doctors were pressured and financially rewarded to prescribe opioids on a massive scale.

Mexican criminal groups cannot be exonerated for having expanded addictions, but there is a precedent. Pharmaceutical companies in the United States created a very large market based on corruption, corrupted many doctors with financial support to prescribe fentanyl for everything.

This network of complicities resulted in an entire population hooked on opioids, a scenario that was later exploited by Mexican cartels.

6 CONCLUSION

The United States is facing a serious public health crisis due to the ongoing epidemic of synthetic drug addiction, where fentanyl continues to be the leading cause of overdose deaths.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), for three consecutive years from 2021 to 2023, overdose deaths exceeded 100,000, above the number of deaths from traffic accidents and firearms.

The "anti-narco-terrorist" approach, which includes unilateral U.S. military action against drug cartels and other Latin American gangs or criminal groups now called foreign terrorist organizations, will not reduce drug use in the United States.

"U.S. supply-side drug policies, such as the so-called kingpin strategy (or the focus on the heads of criminal organizations), have proven ineffective in addressing the nation's drug epidemic. A focus on the demand and distribution of synthetic drugs within the United States is needed, which must be considered in order to implement a successful comprehensive anti-drug strategy, since the demand for drugs generates its own demand." (Correa Cabrera, 2025)

Fentanyl has established itself as the most profitable business of Mexican drug trafficking. Its low production cost, ease of transport, and high demand in the United States make it an ideal product for cartels. The multimillion-dollar profits have strengthened the operational capacity of groups such as the Sinaloa Cartel (CS) and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), which control the entire value chain, from the import of precursors to international distribution.

Combating this phenomenon requires more than military operations: it requires international cooperation, financial control, preventive education, and public health policies that reduce demand. Only a comprehensive approach will mitigate the health and economic crisis that fentanyl represents for North America and the world.

In Mexico, injectable naloxone is classified as a psychotropic medication and, therefore, its sale and use are strictly regulated, requiring a prescription for its acquisition in pharmacies.

Currently, it is not available for over-the-counter sale in the country. The official position of the Mexican government has been to maintain the regulation and not allow its commercialization without a prescription, unlike other countries such as the United States, where the nasal spray naloxone (Narcan) has been approved for over-the-counter.

Naloxone is listed in section IV of article 245 of the General Health Law as a psychotropic substance. It can only be purchased with a doctor's prescription. It is available in the health system and specialized pharmacies, but its access is limited to the general public due to the need for a prescription. There have been initiatives in the Senate to remove naloxone from the list of psychotropic substances and thus allow wider access, but so far, the regulation is maintained.

Because of these restrictions, there have been reports of people smuggling small amounts of naloxone from the United States for harm reduction programs, given the risk of fentanyl overdose.

In Mexico, naloxone should be declassified as a dangerous substance because it reverses opioid overdoses. This medication does not cause addiction; It allows the person to breathe and not die in a short time. In the United States the version is unassailable; with heroin you need one dose and with fentanyl two. The World Health Organization (WHO) has expressed that it should not be restricted, but in Mexico the drug is in injected form. A person with an overdose has to get a doctor who has prescriptions for controlled drugs, then go to the pharmacy to buy it and then have someone inject it, while this is happening he has already died.

"José Manuel Castrejón, director of the Monte Fénix Center for Higher Studies (CESMF), said that if naloxone were more available, first responders could use this resource. " In the United States, the police bring it and when they find someone with an overdose they administer it and save their life; the time it takes to get to a hospital is deadly, but in Mexico it is still in the category of controlled substance." (Gómez Mena, 2024)

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