Krokodil Information – narconon.org

Krokodil is a new drug that has appeared in Russia since 2002. It started showing up in Siberia and has spread throughout the country since then. While several drugs are quickly and harshly addictive and physically damaging, krokodil sets a new standard for fast destruction of mind, spirit and body. The medical name for the drug is desomorphine. It is made at home by acquiring codeine, sold over the counter for headaches, and cooking it with paint thinner, gasoline, hydrochloric acid, iodine and the red phosphorous from matchbox strike pads. The resulting liquid is injected into a vein. The high from this drug lasts 90 minutes to two hours, and it takes about a half-hour to make the drug. So a krokodil addict does little other than get the ingredients and cook up the drug.

Migration from Heroin to Krokodil

Russia has a severe problem with heroin addiction, but when a heroin addict can no longer afford that drug, he can make up krokodil which has a stronger kick and costs about a tenth the price. But while the life expectancy of a Moscow heroin addict is four to seven years, the life expectancy of a krokodil addict is just a year or two. At one meeting of drug enforcement officials, two regional governors reported that krokodil accounts for about half of all addictions and drug-related deaths in their regions. And in some other areas, krokodil has nearly replaced opiates as the drug of choice. It is estimated that somewhere between a few hundred thousand and a million people are injecting this deadly drug. Between 2009 and 2011, the amount of krokodil seized by law enforcement increased 23-fold. In just the first three months of 2011, 65 million doses were seized.

Why is it Called Krokodil?

Krokodil gets its name from the fact that the caustic drug causes an addict’s skin to become green, scaly and bumpy like a crocodile’s. If the drug misses a vein and is injected into flesh, that flesh will develop abscesses. It is common for addicts to develop gangrene and require amputations. The flesh on some body parts affected by krokodil injections will rot off completely, leaving bare bone.

Withdrawal is savage, much worse than heroin. Heroin can cause sickness and pain for up to ten days but withdrawal from krokodil can result in a month of unbearable pain. Extremely strong tranquilizers are used during withdrawal so the addict does not pass out from the pain. Doctors dealing with addicts say that this is the strongest level of addiction and the hardest to cure. If a person does manage to get clean from krokodil, they may be left with permanent damage like a speech impediment, vacant gaze and erratic movements.