



Compassion Integrity Growth Drive Innovation



Oregon Poison Center
Serving Oregon, Alaska and Guam

The University of Washington(UW) has released a study that measured the concentrations of fentanyl and methamphetamine in air and on surfaces in trains and buses in Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon.

While the presence of drugs in a public place may initially seem alarming, we would like to try to put this data in perspective. As physicians who are medical toxicologists and Medical Directors of the Poison Centers of Washington and Oregon, we find that the results of the study are no surprise. Smoking in a public place produces very small amounts of that substance and we can identify those substances in the air and on surfaces with modern laboratory methods.

Fortunately, the amount of drugs that were detected in this study are extremely small. Exposures to the quantities of drug demonstrated in this study are too small to produce physical effects from a short-term exposure that a rider would experience. Therefore, individuals who use public transportation for travel needs should continue to feel safe doing so.

The UW study highlights the crisis that communities across the Pacific Northwest and the country are facing - an epidemic of opioid and stimulant use. Our communities must work to address the drivers of substance use and to support and provide help to those with substance use disorders to reach long-term recovery.

This study aimed to determine if drugs could be detected in public transit, and it can. This is reflective of the volume of drug use currently in our communities and a reminder for the community to develop solutions to decrease drug use over the long term.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Hendrickson".

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