

25-I - NEW STREET DRUG CAUSING CONCERN AMONG MEDICS

BIRMINGHAM, AL (WBRC) - It's a new substance hitting the drug underworld and it's already put five people in the hospital.

The drug, in short, is called 25I and is said to be a hallucinogen. Experts say it can cause death, but some teens see it as a new way to get high.

In an online stream, users of 25-I say they've seen dots, streams of light, and stationary objects moving.

That would all make sense since the drug is a hallucinogen. "It's an experimental drug that was being used to research the path of brain waves with stimulation," said Lt. Jennifer Reese with Richmond Ambulance Authority.

Last week, paramedics rushed five people to the hospital after they used the drug.

Reese says they're symptoms were those similar to other hallucinogens, "violence, episodes of depression. They were unaware of their person, place and the time. We also had one that was experiencing seizure activity."

In the Virginia case, the patients were all in their teens. Experts say people are snorting or smoking the powder substance to get a high.

Luckily, no cases have been reported in Alabama, but word has already hit emergency rooms.

Hoover Fire Department EMS Officer Rusty Lowe first heard about the substance a few weeks ago.

"The drug was mentioned that other cities around the country had been having problems with it," said Lowe. Lowe says little is known about the psychedelic drug which makes it harder to treat a patient who's overdosing.

"It is very scary because we don't want to do anything that might be harmful to the patient," said Lowe. Because the drug is a fresh topic, we Googled 25-I. A list of forums comes up. One asks where can folks buy it.

"It's not surprising to me that it's readily available because we've even heard recently that some drugs that are out on the street are actually less expensive than alcohol," said Lowe.

Emergency crews in the Birmingham area haven't heard of any local cases but they're not taking any chances. Lowe and other emergency personnel continue to research the drug.

By keeping an eye on it he says will better prepare paramedics if and when a patient overdoses.

