

Spice Strikes Again: One Dead, 27 Poisoned After Smoking Synthetic Marijuana

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One person died and more than 20 were hospitalized in southern Russia over the weekend after consuming a smoking mixture known as "spice," a designer drug that has killed dozens across the country in recent weeks, Russian media outlets reported Sunday.

A 16-year-old Ukrainian refugee who had fled to Russia's Krasnodar region choked on her own vomit and died in an ambulance after having consumed spice, a form of synthetic marijuana, Interfax reported.

Four others were found to be in critical condition and were transported to Krasnodar region hospitals after consuming the drug.

Another 23 people, aged 15 to 40, were admitted to a Voronezh hospital after having smoked

spice, which authorities say has claimed the lives of some 30 people and poisoned 700 others in the country in recent weeks, RIA Novosti reported.

Half the patients hospitalized in Voronezh between Thursday and Saturday have been discharged after experiencing dementia-like and other psychological symptoms, the report said.

In July 2013, the Russian government added the smoking mixture to the list of banned narcotic and psychotropic substances. Before being banned, spice was legally sold in stores and was advertised online as a medical substance or household chemical.

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