

## Report: Krokodil Concerns Lack Teeth

By [Victoria Bekiempis](#)

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Reality bites hard for krokodil-crisis hawkers.

After reports went viral that an Illinois doctor had seen three cases of krokodil use, regional Drug Enforcement Administration officers quickly hit the streets to see whether the deadly opiate is circulating, according to the [Chicago Tribune](#). Agents there ran “quite a few buys in the city and suburbs” and then tested it – the same strategy they used six years ago to find fatally fentanyl-tainted heroin, the *Tribune* reports. Two-hundred DEA officers in five states participated in the sweep, making “finding krokodil a top priority.”

What they found?

“The lab tells us it’s just heroin,” Jack Riley, the special agent heading the DEA’s Chicago office, tells the paper.

Echoing krokodil skepticism previously evinced by [Newsweek](#), the *Tribune* writes that legal and health professionals had begun to question krokodil rumors, saying “it’s unlikely the drug will be widely used beyond the remote areas of Russia and eastern Europe where it became popular a decade ago.”

The paper even contacted officials in the nine states where krokodil is said to have surfaced.

“No agency, yet, has found conclusive proof that the drug is in use,” reporter Andy Grimm writes.

“The number of unverified cases recorded by poison-control centers in states where krokodil has been reported in the media is barely into double digits.”

The DEA’s most recent statement, sent by an agency spokeswoman to *Newsweek* on Monday, maintains the same position.

“DEA is aware of and tracking the nationwide reports of alleged abuse of the controlled substance desomorphine that is found in the drug krokodil, a homemade substitute for heroin invented and used in rural Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan,” the statement reads.

“DEA is investigating the matter by acquiring samples alleged to contain desomorphine, interviewing drug abusers, and monitoring intelligence reports. To date, none of our forensic laboratories has analyzed an exhibit found to contain desomorphine.”

Similar to Jeffrey Miron, a Harvard economist and Cato Institute senior lecturer who [told Newsweek](#) that demand for krokodil was unlikely, the DEA also doubts whether the American drug market would be amenable to krokodil.

“Krokodil was created in some [former Soviet Union] countries to be a heroin substitute for rural people who didn’t have access to heroin but did have access to uncontrolled, over-the-counter codeine. Neither of those circumstances is the case in the U.S., so we wouldn’t expect the demand for krokodil here to be the same as there.”

To be clear, it is still possible that krokodil is rampant in the U.S. and that authorities just don’t know about it. Nobody is required to send suspicious street drugs to the DEA for testing.

And the DEA did say it is still concerned about the scourge hitting the U.S.

Until confirmed krokodil evidence surfaces, however, it might be best to worry about another weird phenomenon – like [Florida’s herpes monkeys](#).