

# The rise and fall of **isotonitazene** and **brorphine**: 2 recent stars in the new synthetic opioid firmament

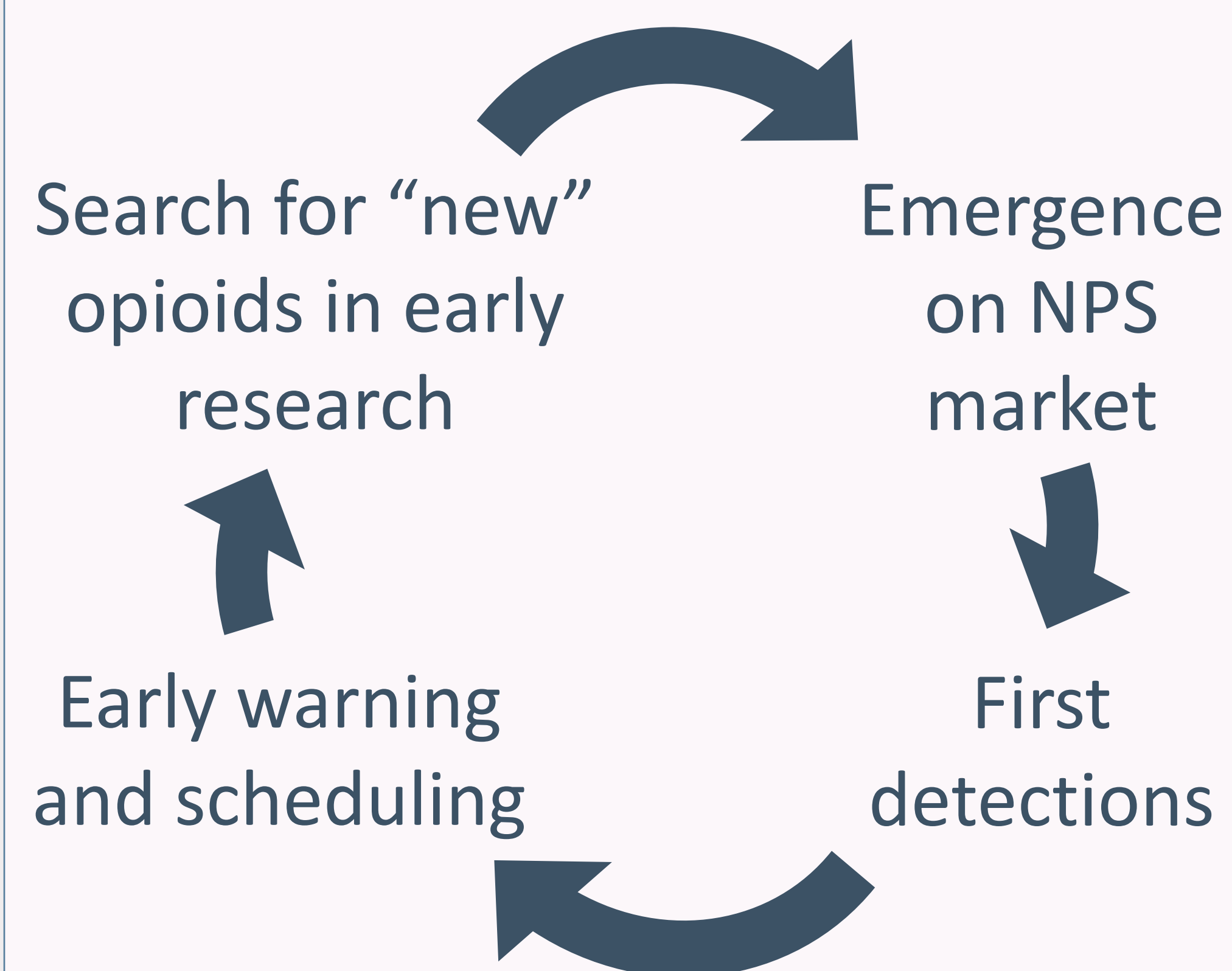
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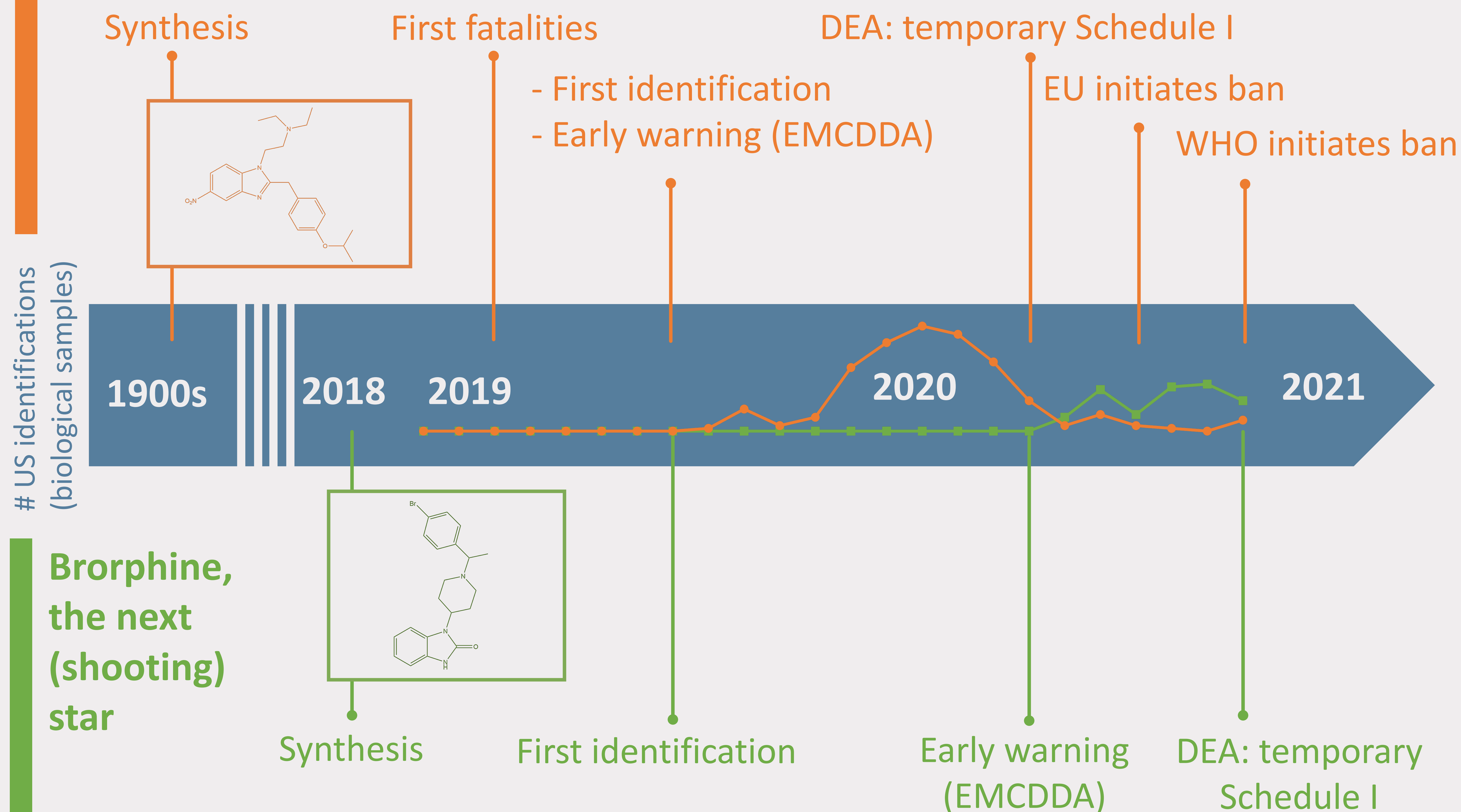
## Background

**Synthetic opioids** constitute one of the fastest-growing groups of NPS worldwide. With fentanyl analogues being increasingly controlled via classwide scheduling, many **non-fentanyl-related opioids** are now emerging. Amid this highly dynamic opioid landscape, some recent **patterns** have become apparent:



The **typical life cycle of an NPS opioid** is generally short (6-12 months). Here, we summarize the key events in the life cycles of **isotonitazene** and **brorphine**, 2 opioids that **sequentially dominated** the NPS opioid market in 2019 and 2020.

## All eyes on "iso"



## Take-home messages

The depicted life cycles illustrate the **persistent dynamic nature** of the recreational synthetic opioid market. Once scheduling (and/or other factors) impedes one opioid's availability, the emergence of (legal) alternatives is inevitable. For isotonitazene and brorphine, **increased awareness** and **(inter)national control measures** ultimately reduced their availability and distribution, underscoring the importance of a **coordinated & multidisciplinary approach of the international community** (incl. early warning systems, tox labs, policymakers).