NCHS Data on Drug Poisoning Deaths

About NCHS

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is the Nation's principal health statistics agency, providing data to identify and address health issues. NCHS compiles statistical information to help guide public health and health policy decisions.

Collaborating with other public and private health partners, NCHS employs a variety of data collection mechanisms to obtain accurate information from multiple sources. This process provides a broad perspective to help us understand the population's health, influences on health, and health outcomes.

NCHS Drug Poisoning Data

In recent years, the rate of poisoning deaths in the United States has been on the rise. Drugs – both legal and illegal – cause the vast majority of poisoning deaths.

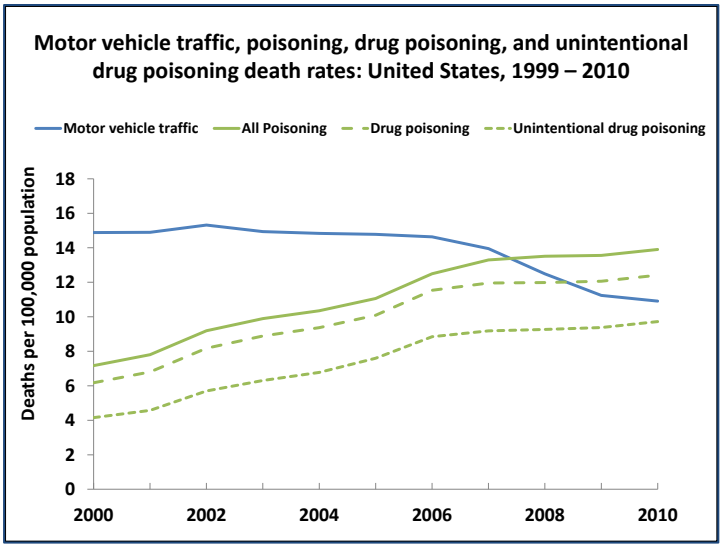
NCHS uses the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) to monitor deaths due to drug poisoning. The NVSS collects and compiles mortality information from death certificates in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. Policymakers and public health professionals use the NVSS data to design and direct program and policy intervention efforts at the national, state, and local levels.

NCHS identifies the number of drug poisoning deaths from statements about the underlying cause of death on death certificates. Drug poisoning deaths can result from unintentional or intentional overdoses of a drug, being given the wrong drug, taking the wrong drug in error, or taking a drug inadvertently.

Nearly 9 out of 10 poisoning deaths are caused by drugs. Opioid analgesic pain relievers were involved in more drug poisoning deaths than other specified drugs, including heroin and cocaine.

Recent Trends

- Over the past decade, the age-adjusted drug poisoning death rate nearly doubled, from 6.2 per 100,000 population in 2000 to 12.3 per 100,000 in 2010.
- Since 2009, more people have died each year from drug poisoning than from motor vehicle crashes.
- In 2010, 78 percent of drug poisoning deaths were unintentional, 14 percent were suicides, and 8 percent were of undetermined intent.
- The age-adjusted unintentional drug poisoning death rate more than doubled, from 4.1 per 100,000 population in 2000 to 9.7 per 100,000 in 2010.



Note: "Drug poisoning" is a subset of "all poisoning" and includes unintentional, intentional, and undetermined intents.
Source: National Vital Statistics System, 2000-2010

Who is Most at Risk?

From 2000 to 2010, the drug poisoning death rate per 100,000 population increased for males and females, all race and ethnicity groups, and all age groups.

Sex

- From 2000 to 2010, drug poisoning death rates increased more than 130 percent for females and about 80 percent for males.
- In 2010, the age-adjusted rate of drug poisoning deaths for males (15.0) was 1.5 times that of females (9.6).

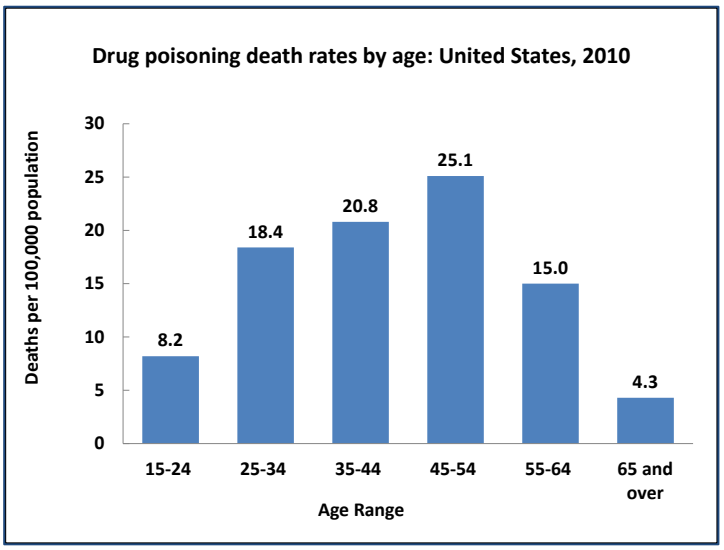
Race and ethnicity

- From 2000 to 2010, drug poisoning death rates increased nearly 140 percent for non-Hispanic whites, compared to an increase of 10 percent for non-Hispanic blacks.
- Age-adjusted death rates in 2010 were highest among American Indians/Alaska Natives (16.8)*, followed by non-Hispanic whites (15.7), non-Hispanic blacks (8.0), Hispanics/Latinos (5.6), and Asians/Pacific Islanders (1.9).

*Mortality for AIAN is understated because of net underreporting of AIAN on the death certificate; interpret comparisons to other races with caution.

Age groups

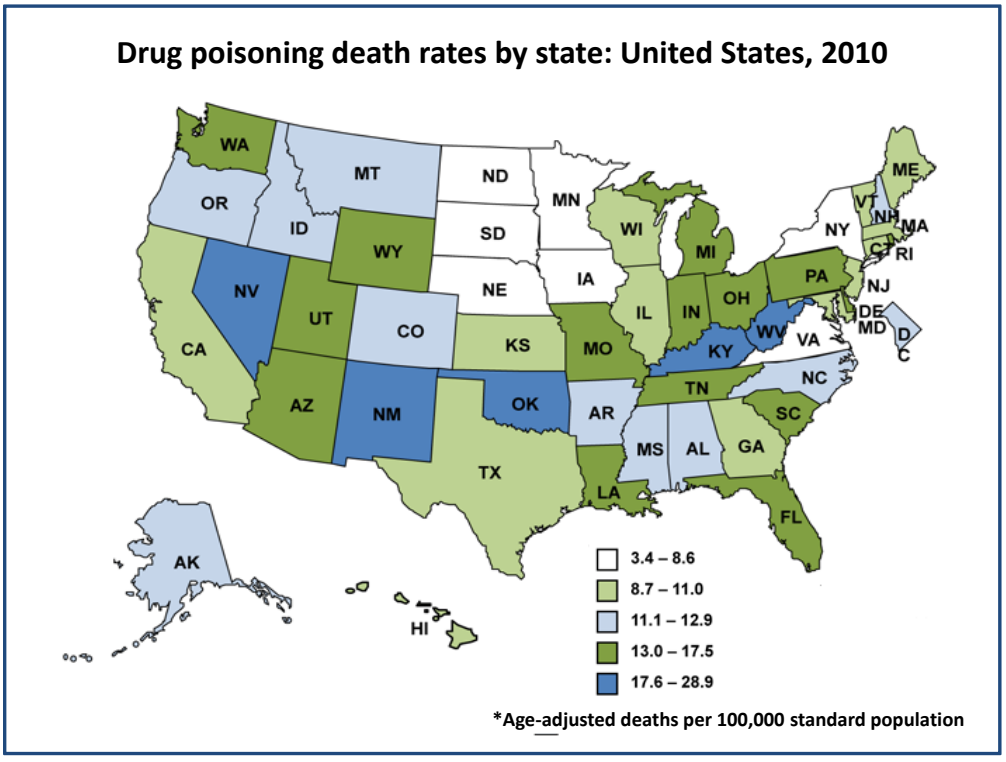
- Since 2004, the drug poisoning death rate has been highest among 45–54 year olds.
- From 2009 to 2010, the largest age-specific increase in death rate was among 55-64 year olds, with a nearly 10 percent increase.



Source: National Vital Statistics System, 2010

Drug Poisoning Death Rates by State

In 2010, the age-adjusted drug poisoning death rate for the United States was 12.3 deaths per 100,000 population. Deaths per 100,000 population varied by state, ranging from 3.4 in North Dakota to 28.9 in West Virginia. The five states with the highest drug poisoning death rates were West Virginia (28.9), New Mexico (23.8), Kentucky (23.6), Nevada (20.7), and Oklahoma (19.4).



Source: National Vital Statistics System, 2010

For further information about NCHS and its programs, visit **http://www.cdc.gov/nchs** or call the Office of Planning, Budget and Legislation at 301-458-4100.

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