



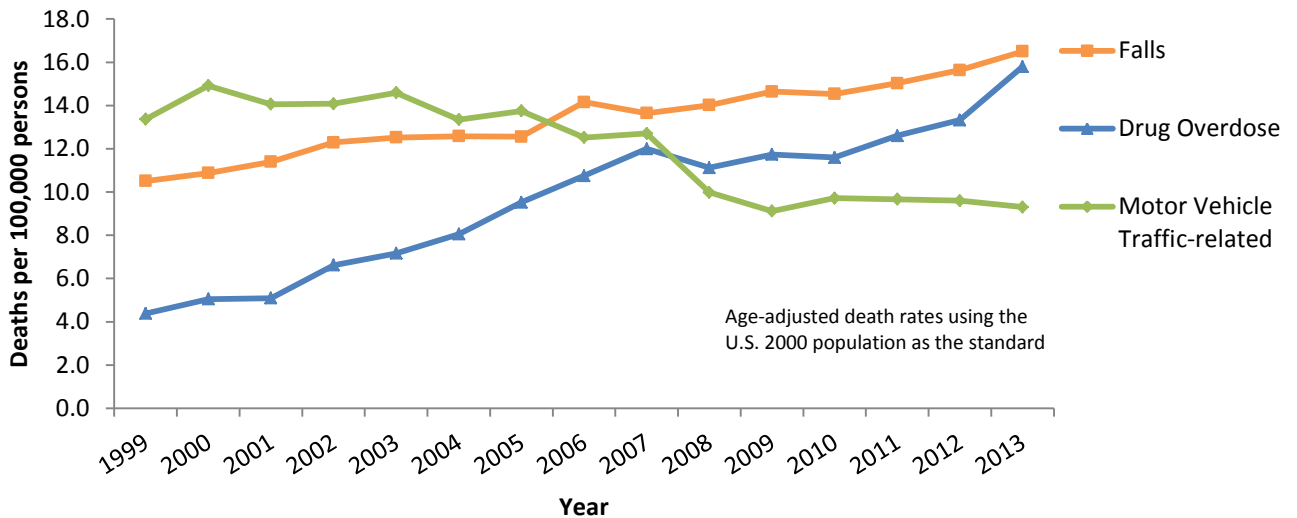
Wisconsin

Special Emphasis Report: Drug Overdose Deaths, 1999-2013

A Public Health Crisis Continues

After falls, poisoning is now the leading cause of injury deaths in Wisconsin, and drugs cause 97 of 100 poisoning deaths. Deaths from drug poisoning, also called “overdose,” have doubled since 2004 and surpassed motor vehicle traffic deaths in 2008 (Figure 1). In 2013, the state recorded 15.8 drug poisoning deaths per 100,000 persons compared to 16.5 fall deaths and 9.3 motor vehicle traffic deaths. More Wisconsin residents died in 2013 from drug poisoning than from suicide, breast cancer, colon cancer, firearms, influenza, or HIV.

Figure 1. Age-adjusted drug overdose death rates compared to other leading injury death rates, Wisconsin residents, 1999-2013



Drugs Caused 97 of 100 Poisoning Deaths

In 2013, drugs and medications—prescription drugs, illicit drugs, and over-the-counter medications—were the underlying cause of death for 97 percent of all poisoning deaths in Wisconsin. Of the drug overdose deaths, 82 percent were unintentional, and 14 percent were suicides (Table 1). The average age of drug poisoning death was 43 years old. Death rates were 59 percent higher in males than in females.

Table 1. Drug overdose deaths (n=843) by sex, age, and intent, Wisconsin residents, 2013

		Number	Percent	Crude rate per 100,000 persons
Gender	Female	328	38.9	11.4
	Male	515	61.1	18.1
Age, in years*	12-17	4	0.5	0.9
	18-25	113	13.4	18.0
	26-64	684	81.1	23.1
	65 and older	41	4.9	4.8
	Intent	Unintentional (also known as “accidental”)	691	82.0
	Suicide	118	14.0	2.1
	Homicide	1	0.1	0.0
	Undetermined	33	3.9	0.6

*0-11 age group not included due to small numbers





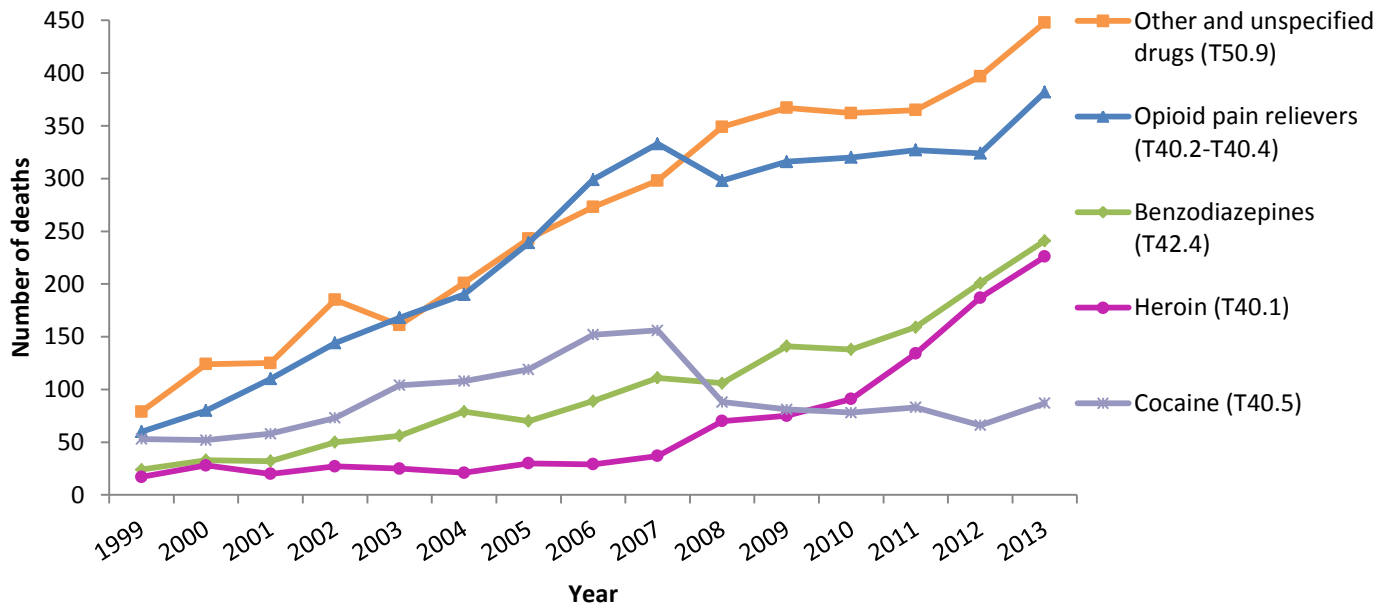
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Opioid Pain Relievers Contributed to 45 Percent of Overdose Deaths

Oxycodone, hydrocodone, methadone, and other prescription opioids contributed to 382 (45 percent) of the 843 drug overdose deaths in 2013, while heroin contributed to 226 (27 percent) of the deaths (Figure 2). Some drug poisoning death records include more than one type of drug. The code for “other and unspecified drugs” is used for deaths caused by drugs that have no code or drugs that are suspected but unidentified.

Figure 2. Number of drug overdose deaths involving opioid (morphine-like) pain relievers and other drugs, Wisconsin residents, 1999-2013



Addressing the Issue

Like other disease epidemics, drug poisoning has multiple personal, social, and environmental determinants that must be identified and modified.

The Division of Public Health is advancing a public health approach to prevent drug poisoning deaths through disease and risk factor surveillance and control.

DHS objectives include: (i) reducing the incidence of fatal and non-fatal drug poisoning and (ii) increasing the number of people who receive appropriate treatment for drug abuse and pain.

DHS strategies include quarterly reports on the frequency and characteristics of key indicators drawn from death certificates, coroners, law enforcement, hospitals, prescribers, and surveys.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

Division of Public Health

Bureau of Community Health Promotion

Family Health Section

Injury and Violence Prevention Program

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/injury-prevention/index.htm

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