Opioid Toxicities and Access to Treatment among Adolescents and Young Adults in Ontario

This study reports trends in opioid-related harms and access to treatment among adolescents (aged 15 to 17 years) and young adults (aged 18 to 24 years). Comparisons are also made with adults (aged 25 to 44 years).

Opioid-Related Toxicities and Treatment Patterns among Adolescents and Young Adults between 2014 and 2021

opioid-related inpatient hospitalizations

5,401 opioid-related emergency department visits

opioid-related

While opioid-related toxicities among adolescents and young adults increased over the study period, rates of treatment decreased.

Opioid-Related Toxicities



Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder



increase in emergency department visits 3.9 to 17.7 per 100,000

decrease in rate of **opioid** agonist therapy (OAT) recipients 245 to 112 per 100,000

A 3X

increase in **rate of** deaths 1.2 to 3.4 per 100,000

decrease in residential treatment admission 29 to 7.9 per 100,000

Note on OAT: The declines in OAT appear to be unique to young adults (aged 18 to 24), as the rate of individuals receiving OAT remained low and generally stable in adolescents (aged 15 to 17 years) and adults (aged 25 to 44 years).

Opioid Toxicity Deaths among Adolescents and Young Adults

Pre-Pandemic March 17, 2019 - March 16, 2020

During Pandemic

March 17, 2020 - March 16, 2021

115 deaths

169 deaths

Living Arrangement

Adolescent and Young Adult Opioid Toxicity Deaths During the Pandemic

Demographics

2 in 3 🙌 deaths occurred among males

>90% of deaths occurred among young adults (aged 18-24)

rate of deaths among young adults was

After adjusting for population size, the



with 63% occurring at their home address

5X higher than among adolescents (aged 15-17)



There was an individual present Among deaths where an individual

HELP 23% of deaths

who could intervene in

naloxone was administered only 50% of the time

was present to intervene,

Substances Directly Contributing to Death

of deaths involved only **non- pharmaceutical** opioids

Opioids

Significant increase compared to 75% prior to the pandemic

of deaths involved only **pharmaceutical** opioids

Significant decrease compared to 14% prior to the pandemic

Fentanyl and its analogues directly contributed to

of opioid toxicity deaths Significant increase compared to

84% prior to the pandemic

Non-Opioid Substances

non-pharmaceutical stimulants

deaths involved



q deaths involved

deaths involved benzodiazepines **Mode of Drug Use**



▲ Significant increase compared

to **48%** prior to the pandemic

deaths involved

inhalation or smoking as the known mode of drug use

Approximately

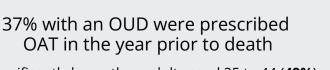
Healthcare Encounters Prior to Death In the **week**



Within the **five years** prior to death

prior to death

Almost 90% had a healthcare encounter for a mental health diagnosis



had a diagnosis or treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD)

For More Information

Significantly lower than adults aged 25 to 44 (49%)

lacono A, Kolla G, Yang J, Leece P, Moumita T, Wu F, Cheng C, Campbell T, Antoniou T, Juurlink D, Sheikh H, Emblem

J, Kurdyak P, Bertrand J, Shearer D, Singh S, Gomes T, on behalf of the Ontario Drug Policy Research Network,

Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario and Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Opioid toxicity and access to treatment among adolescents and young adults in Ontario. Toronto, ON: Ontario Drug Policy Research Network; 2023.







