

OPIOID USE, RELATED HARMS, AND ACCESS TO TREATMENT AMONG FIRST NATIONS IN ONTARIO ANNUAL UPDATE 2019-2021



This study reports trends in opioid use, related harms, and access to treatment among First Nations people in Ontario. Comparisons are also made with non-First Nations people.

First Nations hospital visits for opioid-related toxicity in 2021

1377

people visited a hospital for opioid-related toxicity



Almost **2X**

increase from 2019
(764 people)

9X higher rate than non-First Nations people

Men visited a hospital for opioid-related toxicity **7X** more than women

People aged **25-44** visited a hospital for opioid-related toxicity **8X** more than non-First Nations people

First Nations who died from opioid-related toxicity in 2021

190

people died from opioid-related toxicity



Almost **3X**

increase from 2019
(61 people)

7X higher rate than non-First Nations people

Opioid-related deaths were **higher** among First Nations men (**13.5 per 10,000**) than women (**9.2 per 10,000**)

Opioid-related deaths were **highest** among First Nations people (**19.6 per 10,000**) aged **25-44** compared to non-First Nations people the same age (**2.9 per 10,000**)

Percent of First Nations opioid-related deaths involving fentanyl and non-opioid substances

2019

73%

49%

23%

49%

FENTANYL

STIMULANTS

BENZODIAZEPINES

ALCOHOL

2021

90%

82%

63%

23%

Prescription opioid use for the treatment of pain in 2021

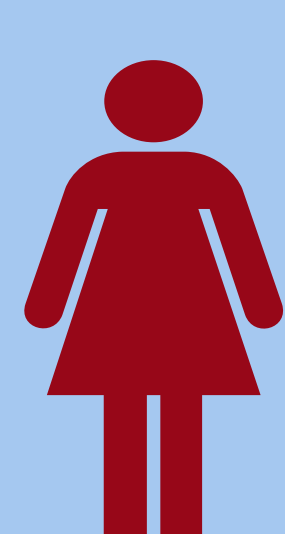
10.9%

of First Nations were prescribed opioids for the treatment of pain



14.1%*

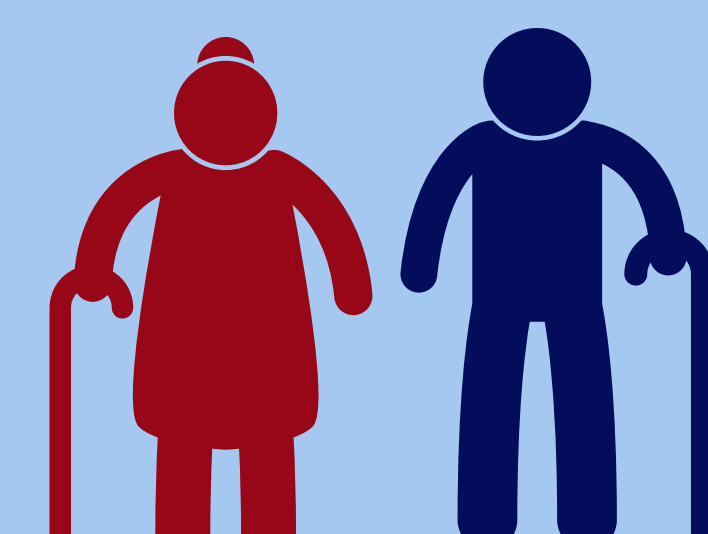
of First Nations were prescribed benzodiazepines while being treated with opioids



Prescription opioid use for pain was **higher** among First Nations **women** compared to men



Prescription opioid use for pain was **higher** among First Nations living **outside of community** compared to those living in community



Prescription opioid use for pain **increased** with age and was highest among First Nations **65+**

*However, Canadian guidelines recommend against prescribing of benzodiazepines (sedatives) along with opioids due to the risk of depressed breathing and possibly death.

Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) in 2021

OAT is the recommended treatment for people with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)

5.5%

First Nations were prescribed OAT for the treatment of OUD which is similar to 2019 (**5.3%**)



0.5%

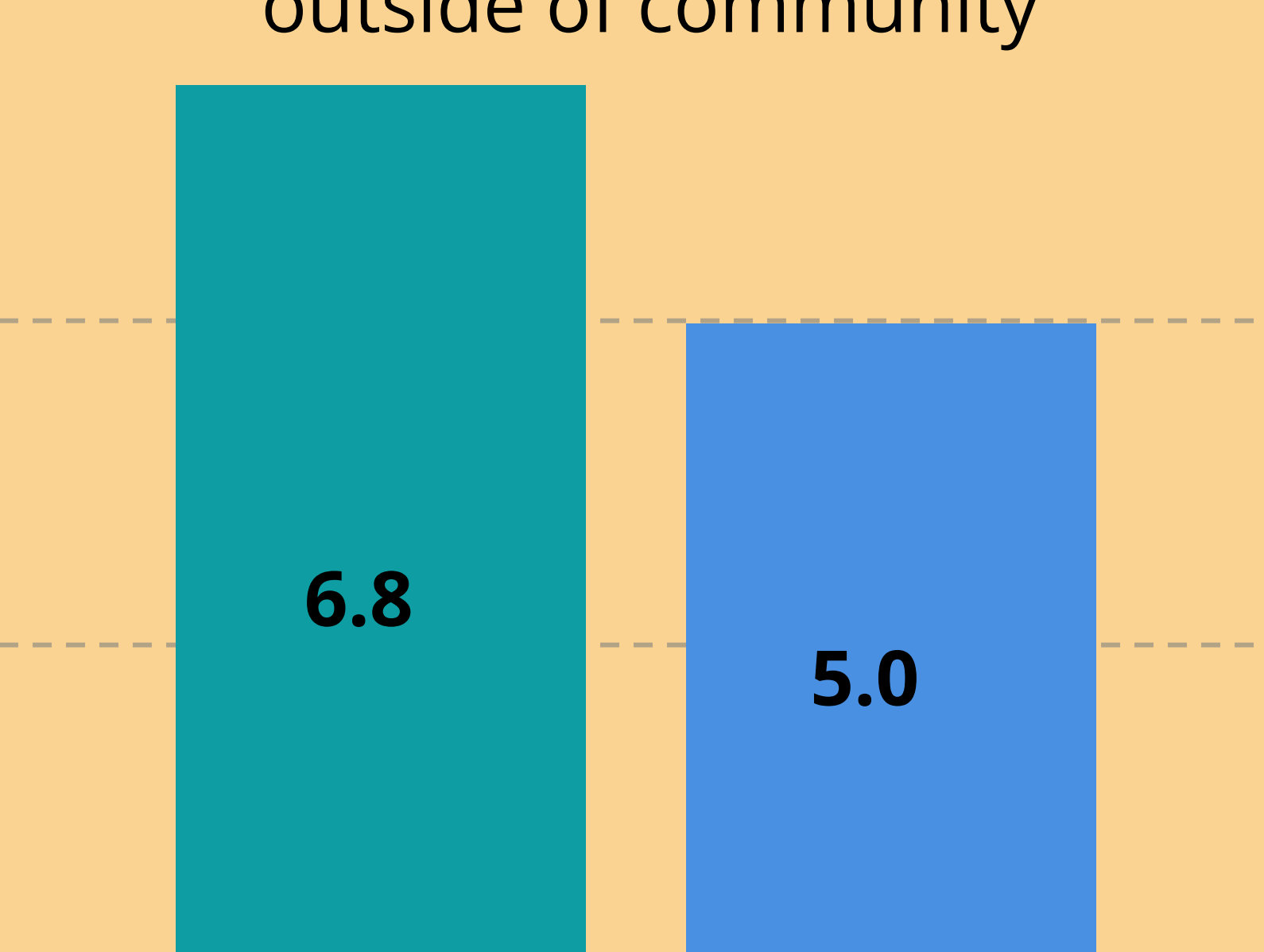
non-First Nations were prescribed OAT for the treatment of OUD

10X higher rate than non-First Nations people

OAT prescribing was slightly **higher** among First Nations **women** (**5.7%**) than men (**5.4%**)

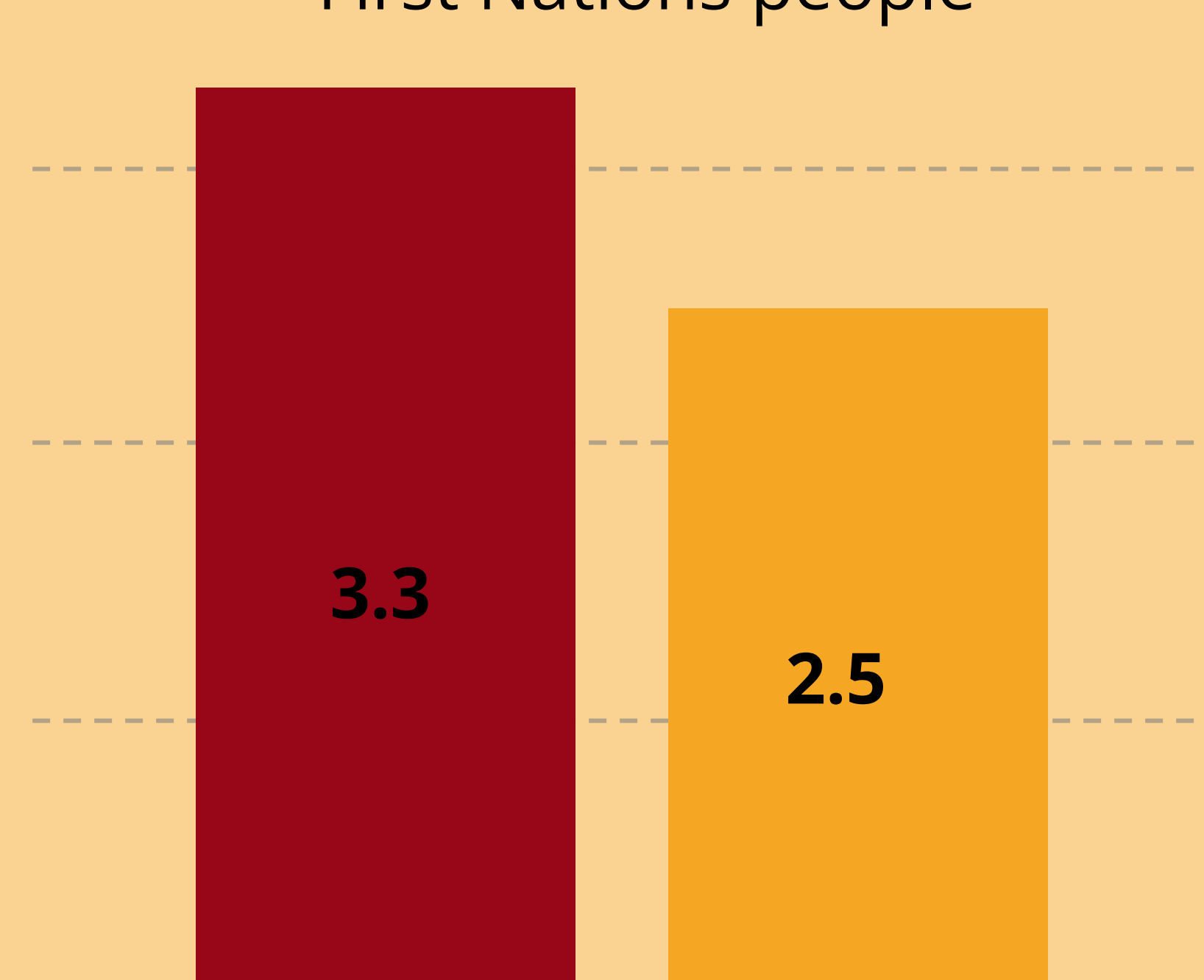
OAT prescribing was **highest** among First Nations people between the ages of **25-44** years old

OAT was prescribed more to First Nations **living in community** than outside of community



■ First Nations: in community
■ First Nations: outside of community

Suboxone is more commonly used than methadone among First Nations people



■ Suboxone ■ Methadone

This infographic provides a high-level overview of the findings of the following report:

Chiefs of Ontario and Ontario Drug Policy Research Network. Opioid Use, Related Harms, and Access to Treatment, Among First Nations in Ontario Annual Update, 2013-2021. Toronto, ON: Chiefs of Ontario; 2023



Please scan code for full report