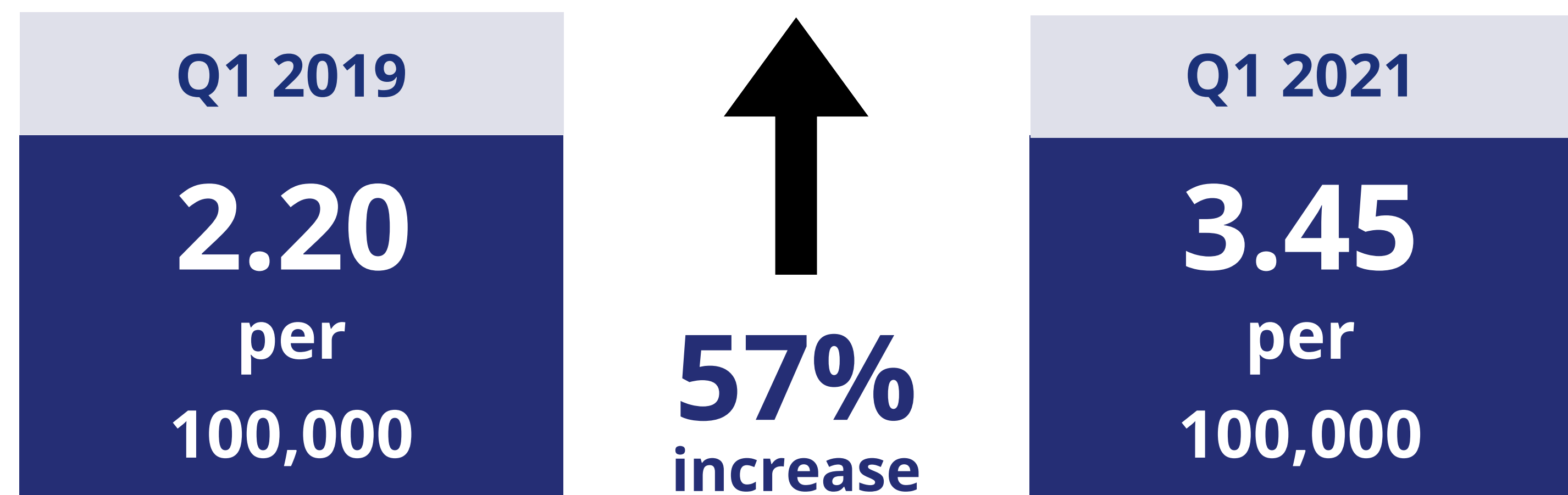


Opioid Toxicity Deaths Among Youth in Ontario Prior to and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Adolescents (aged 15 to 17 years) and young adults (aged 18 to 24 years) were included in this study.

Trends in Opioid Toxicity Deaths Among Youth

Quarterly Rate of Opioid Toxicity Deaths



Pre-Pandemic

March 17, 2019 - March 16, 2020

115 deaths

During Pandemic

March 17, 2020 - March 16, 2021

169 deaths

Opioids Involved in Opioid Toxicity Deaths Among Youth

Pharmaceutical



Non-Pharmaceutical



Fentanyl



Non-Opioid Substances Involved in Opioid Toxicity Deaths Among Youth

Non-opioid substances **directly contributed to 57%** of deaths **during the pandemic**

Methamphetamines

36%

Cocaine

21%

Benzodiazepines

11%

Alcohol

7%

Benzodiazepines were **detected** in:



37% of deaths
Pre-Pandemic



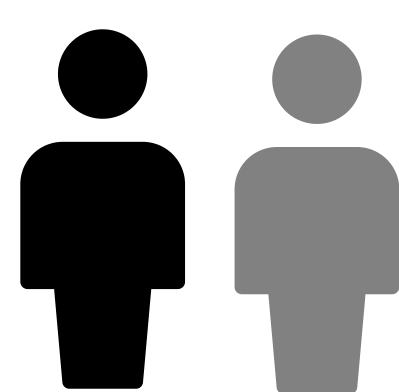
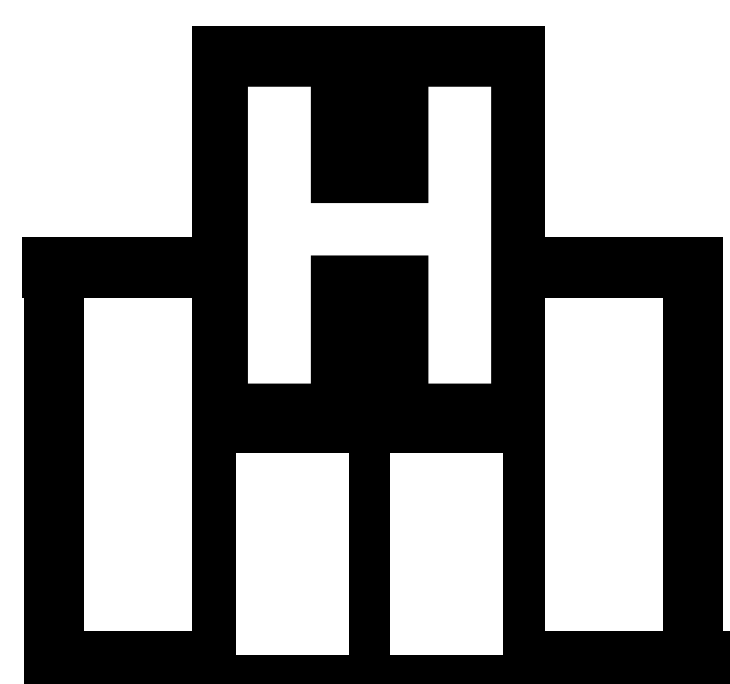
66% of deaths
During Pandemic

Recent Healthcare Interactions Prior to Death During the Pandemic

Interactions were similar in the pre-pandemic period

25%

had a healthcare encounter in the **7 days prior to death**



53%

had evidence of **opioid use disorder (OUD)**

Receipt of **opioid agonist treatment** among those with OUD:

14%

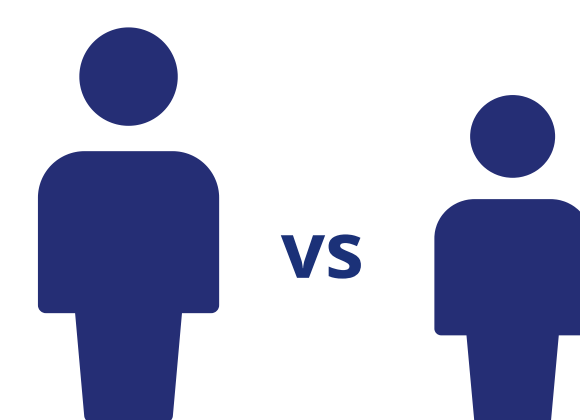
in the **month** prior to death

compared to **22%** for older adults

37%

in the **year** prior to death

compared to **49%** for older adults



25 to 44 years

15 to 24 years

For More Information:

Akbar, S., Iacono, A., Yang, J., Antoniou, T., Juurlink, D., Sheikh, H., Kurdyak, P., Wu, F., Cheng, C., Leece, P., Kolla, G., Emblem, J., Shearer, D., Gomes, T. (2024) Characteristics of Opioid Toxicity Deaths Among Adolescents and Young Adults in Ontario Prior to and During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2024.02.024>