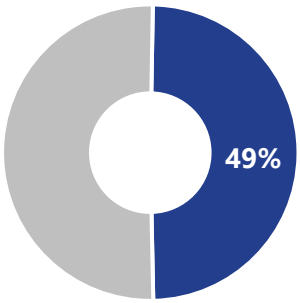
Drug Overdose Death Circumstances, 2020-2024

Background

Understanding the circumstances surrounding drug overdose deaths can inform efforts to prevent fatal overdoses. This fact sheet highlights circumstances surrounding unintentional or undetermined intent overdose deaths that occurred in Indiana from 2020-2024.[1]

Figure 1. 49.4% of overdose deaths had at least one opportunity for intervention.



Opportunities for Intervention

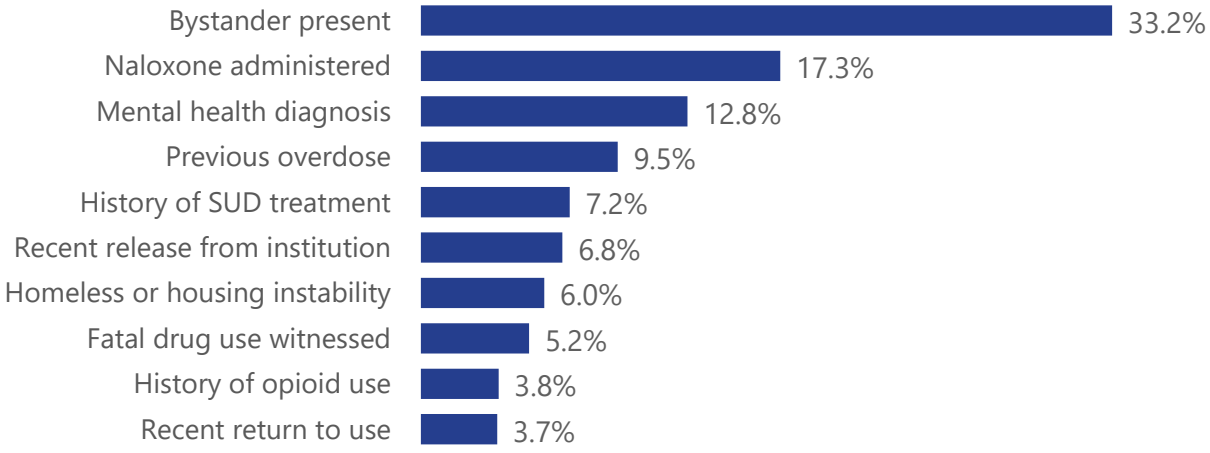
From 2020-2024, 49.4% of overdose decedents had at least one potential opportunity for intervention prior to death. Potential opportunities include at least one of the following:

- Bystander(s) present at time of overdose
- History of a mental health diagnosis
- History of a previous overdose
- Fatal drug use was witnessed
- Decedent was recently released from an institution
- Decedent was in substance use disorder (SUD) treatment at the time of death

Overdose Circumstances

The most common circumstances identified in overdose deaths were having a bystander present (33.2%) and naloxone administration (17.3%), followed by a mental health diagnosis (12.8%) (Figure 2). The proportion of deaths in which naloxone administered was substantially lower than the proportion where a bystander was present, which suggests that there were potential missed opportunities for life-saving interventions.

Figure 2. Additional overdose death circumstances, percentage of total deaths



[1] Circumstance data is pulled from the State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS). SUDORS synthesizes death certificates, coroner or medical examiner reports, and toxicology report information to provide a more comprehensive view of each overdose death. From 2020 to 2024, there were a total of 7,394 unintentional and undetermined intent overdose deaths with sufficient circumstantial information to include in this analysis (i.e., having a coroner/medical examiner report available or having contextual information in the form of a narrative, autopsy, law enforcement or other report).

Substance Information

SUDORS data provides additional information on the substances listed as cause of death (COD) due to the comprehensive postmortem toxicology testing that is performed. Postmortem toxicology testing allows for specific substances to be pinpointed as cause of death or contributing causes of death. Opioids, including fentanyl and fentanyl analogs, remain the leading cause of overdose death in Indiana which highlights the importance of ongoing naloxone training and distribution.

Top 5: Specific Substances listed as COD, 2020-2024[2]

Substance	Percentage
Fentanyl	20.6%
Methamphetamine	12.3%
4-ANPP[3]	11.7%
Amphetamine,	7.8%
Acetylfentanyl	5.5%

Top 5: Substance Classes listed as COD, 2020-2024[2]

Class	Percentage
Opioids	53.9%
Amphetamines	20.2%
Cocaine	6.5%
Benzodiazepines	3.7%
Alcohol	3.5%

Additional Information

- For additional Indiana drug overdose data, visit: https://www.in.gov/health/overdose-prevention/overdose-surveillance/
- For more information on SUDORS, visit: https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/data-research/facts-stats/about-sudors.html
- For more national SUDORS data, visit: https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/data-research/facts-stats/sudors-dashboard-fatal-overdose-data.html

[2] Overdose deaths can be attributed to more than one substance as the cause of death. In this part of the analysis, the first five substances listed as cause of death were included, accounting for 19,330 substances across the 7,394 deaths. The percentage shown reflects the percentage of overall substances. Metabolites were excluded from this portion of the analysis. Substance classes were determined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

[3] 4-ANPP, a precursor to fentanyl and common illicit adulterant, is also known as Despropionylfentanyl, 4-Anilino-N-Phenethylpiperidine, and 4-Aminophenyl-1-Phenethylpiperidine.

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