Drug-induced deaths: overview of the situation in 30 European countries

Isabelle Giraudon, Eleni Kalamara, João Matias, Julián Vicente

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Drug-induced deaths reported in Europe

EU28 +Norway +Turkey

- Most recent provisional data: a slight increase?
- Most deaths are associated with opioids

Source EMCDDA Fonte reports October 2014 – provisional data, still under validation and subject to revision before publication
In this presentation

• Sources of data and definition of drug-induced deaths
• European overview
• Levels and trends
• Gender and age
• Substances in cause
Methods: sources and definition

- 30 countries
- 5 Epidemiological key indicators
- Drug-related deaths and mortality among drug users
- 2 components

Mortality among drug users (all causes)
- Mortality rates overall and by cause?
- Excess risk? Main causes of deaths?

Drug-induced deaths
- Numbers, trends, characteristics of the victims, post-mortem toxicology?
Case definition

Deaths happening shortly after consumption of one or more illicit psychoactive drugs, and directly related to this consumption, although they often may happen in combination with other substances such as alcohol or psychoactive medicines

DRD EMCDDA protocol - Version 3.2
(http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index107404EN.html)
ICD codes

• Case definition translated into a selection of WHO ICD codes to be extracted from mortality registers
  • Disorders F11-F12, F14-F16, and F19
  • Accidental poisoning X42*, X41**
  • Intentional poisoning X62*, X61**
  • Poisoning of undetermined intent Y12*, Y11***

• In combination with the T-codes: T40.0-9, **In combination with the T-code: T43.6.
Drug-induced deaths reported in Europe: Age and gender

**Drug-induced deaths - profile**

- **Mean age at death**: 36 years
- **DRD with opioids**: 80%
- **Gender distribution**:
  - Female: 23%
  - Male: 77%

**Age distribution**

- <25: 4%
- 25-39: 39%
- 40-64: 47%
- >64: 10%

Source: EMCDDA Fonte reports 2013 – (provisional 2014 data were presented but are still under validation)

emcdda.europa.eu
Age pyramid of drug-induced deaths reported in 2014

EU 28 + Norway and Turkey

Source EMCDDA Fonte reports October 2014 – provisional data still under validation and subject to revision before publication

emcdda.europa.eu
Proportion of drug-induced deaths among females

Source: Fonte 2013 reports

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Six countries represent 2/3 of all DRD reported in Europe

2013: +4% increase in DRD overall compared to 2012 data. Driven mainly by large countries
Drug-induced deaths: changes in 2013 compared to 2012 reports

Source: Fonte 2013 reports - more recent provisional data were presented. They are still under validation and subject to revision before publication.

Countries not included: CZ and FI are not mentioned as the data according to national definition is not yet available. Both countries report though in 2013 an increase in the number according to their alternative source (Selection B): from 132 to 165 cases in FI and from 22 to 32 cases in the CZ.

HL is not mentioned due to reporting delays which do not allow comparing 2013 reports with previous reports.

FR and PT were not available at the time of presenting these data. BE most recent data are from 2009.

emcdda.europa.eu
Mortality rates due to drug-induced deaths among adults in the EU. DRD accounts for 4% of the overall mortality among young adults.

EU average: 18 per million.

Source: Fonte 2013 reports - more recent provisional data were presented. They are still under validation and subject to revision before publication.
1.3 million high risk opioid users

National estimates of last year prevalence of problem opioid use

Cases per 1,000 population aged 15–64

- United Kingdom (2010/11)
- Latvia (2010)
- Malta (2012)
- Luxembourg (2007)
- Austria (2011)
- Italy (2012)
- Slovenia (2011)
- Croatia (2010)
- Germany (2011)
- Norway (2008)
- Greece (2012)
- Lithuania (2007)
- Czech Republic (2012)
- Slovakia (2009)
- Cyprus (2012)
- Spain (2011)
- Netherlands (2012)
- Poland (2009)
- Hungary (2010/11)
- Turkey (2011)

NB: Data displayed as point estimates and uncertainty intervals.

NB: Data for Finland are from 2005 and for Ireland from 2006.
Proportion of reported drug-induced deaths where opioids are involved

Toxicological post-mortem information, where available, shows that most reported cases in Europe are related to opioids. Limited data sometimes for monitoring (with unknown or unspecified toxicology and or coding) Specificities in some countries (like Hungary, Czech Republic with stimulants-related deaths)

Source: Fonte 2013 reports - more recent provisional data were presented. They are still under validation and subject to revision before publication

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Drug-induced deaths where opioids are involved

- Heroin mainly – by far
- Other opioids as well including methadone and buprenorphine...
- In some countries fentanyls or ‘new synthetic opioids’
- Polydrug use the norm rather than the exception
Conclusions

Premature and avoidable deaths

Mostly related to heroin and or other opioids

In principle most cases might have benefited from naloxone

- Comparison between countries needs to be cautious: Prevalence and patterns of drug use (polydrug, injecting drug use, medicines and alcohol use...) vary between countries, as well as completeness of the data collection and reporting
- Provisional data presented here (reporting for 2014 not yet closed) – data still under validation with National Focal Points and national experts
Some references

Five key epidemiological indicators
http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/themes/key-indicators

The DRD and mortality indicator
http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/themes/key-indicators/drd

European drug report and Statistical Bulletin

Isabelle.giraudon@emcdda.europa.eu