Drug Overdose Mortality in Estonia

Gleb Denissov, Head of Estonian Causes of Death Registry
EMCDDA DRD/DRID expert meeting
Lisbon, 16th October 2014
Unusual toxicology pattern - fentanyles

Absolute numbers of DRD, Estonian Causes of Death Registry
How could it happen?

- First fentanyl was brought from China via Russia under street name “White Chinese” causing mortality outbreaks in Russia and Estonia.
- Then disappeared from Russia, but remained the most popular illicit opiate in Estonia.
- Not a new substance, used for anaesthesia for decades, sometimes diverted.
- Easy to cause dependence, high risk of overdose.
- 3-methyl-fentanyl is not used for medication, must be produced illegally.
- Often mixed with amphetamine and its likes, alcohol, diazepam, ibuprofen.
Most recent developments

- Studies show IDU population is shrinking and ageing
- Naloxone programme launched in end-2013
- Underreporting remains stable (less than 10%)
- Hopes for decline in DRD numbers...?
References

• NIHD Health Statistics and Health Research database / Mortality Table SD41: Direct drug-related deaths by sex and age
  G.Denissov et al “The impact of changing classifications on official fatal poisoning figures.” Rom J Leg Med, 2012 (open access)
• The last IDU population study