

Estonia tops EU drug overdose deaths list

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Officials in Estonia raised the alarm Wednesday after a report into drug use in Europe found that the small Baltic nation had the highest incidence of deaths from drug overdoses in the EU.

Last year, 160 people died from overdoses, data from the Europe Monitoring Centre for Drugs and [Drug](#) Addictions (EMCDDA) showed, an increase of 21 percent from last year.

Most of the deaths were caused by taking a highly addictive form of synthetic heroin known as China White, which is often smuggled in from Russia.

"More people per million inhabitants perish in Estonia than in any other EU country due to [drug overdoses](#), and most of these deaths are related to drugs called 'China White'," Ave Talu, head of Estonia's Drug Monitoring Centre, told AFP.

While the average number of deaths from overdoses across the 27-member EU bloc stands at up to 20 people per million, in Estonia the figure is five times higher, at over 100 per million.

In 2011, 132 people died from [overdoses](#) in the former Soviet nation of 1.3 million people.

Most of the people who died in 2012 were ethnic Russian men, the EMCDDA data showed.

Using a new [antidote](#) to synthetic heroin, [naloxone](#), could "cut the death rates from overdose nearly in half," Talu said.

But the drug is not yet available on a community outreach basis, she said.

"In Estonia, naloxone is used only by medical staff and unlike some other countries like the US, we do not yet have community-based naloxone distribution and training programmes, but they are urgently needed."

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