

Deaths from the use of heroin have hit a grim milestone

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Researchers have found that deaths from heroin and morphine use now make up more than half of all reported drug-related deaths.

Analysis of data from inquests in England by researchers at St George's, University of London, reveal that heroin is implicated in more deaths than any other [drug](#).

The proportion of deaths involving heroin/morphine in 2014 (52.5 percent) was the highest for at least the last ten years.

The data which covers deaths reported to the National Programme on Substance Abuse Deaths by Coroners which occurred in 2014 also shows the highest proportion of drugs related deaths relate to heroin/morphine deaths for both genders for the last ten years - men: 57.7 percent, women: 39.7 percent.

The figures are available in the latest report from the National Programme on Substance Abuse Deaths (NPSAD): Drug-Related Deaths in 2014.

An NPSAD case is defined as a [death](#) where any of the following criteria are met at a completed inquest, fatal accident inquiry or similar investigation: one or more psychoactive substance directly implicated in death; history of dependence or abuse of [psychoactive drugs](#); presence of controlled drugs at post mortem; and/or cases with deaths directly due to drugs but with no inquest.

In 2014 there were 681 deaths where heroin/morphine was implicated as a cause, constituting 52.5 percent of all reported drug-related deaths. This is the highest proportion recorded in the data.

Hugh Claridge, Research Officer and Database Manager, International Centre for Drug Policy in the Population Health Research Institute, said: "Deaths in which [heroin](#) or [morphine](#) is implicated have reached a watershed moment in terms of the proportion of all drug-related deaths in our analysis.

"It is a concerning milestone and indicates that such drug abuse is now firmly established as the main cause of drug related deaths far more than from other drugs like so-called party drugs like cocaine, ecstasy and New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), which are often known as 'legal highs' 'illegal legals' or 'illegal highs' which are more often in the public debate of [substance misuse](#).

"Heroin is the main killer of people who abuse illegal drugs in this country."

More information: For more information, see www.sgul.ac.uk/research/population-health-research/substance-abuse-deaths

Provided by St. George's University of London

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