

Study examines opioid involvement in US drug overdoses

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Fatal overdoses involving stimulants (cocaine and other psychostimulants, primarily methamphetamine) have been increasing over the past few years. A recent analysis published in *Addiction* found

that in 2016, 27% of overdose visits to U.S. emergency departments involving cocaine and 14% involving psychostimulants also involved an opioid. Also, in 2017, almost 75% of overdose deaths involving cocaine and half involving psychostimulants involved at least one opioid.

The study also found that since 2006, rates of overdose emergency departments visits involving cocaine and psychostimulants with an opioid increased in recent years, as did those involving psychostimulants without opioids. Overdose deaths involving cocaine and psychostimulants increased in the past several years with and without opioids.

These increases occurred across a broad range of demographic groups and [geographic areas](#), underscoring the escalating nature of the overdose crisis in the United States.

"Since opioids are driving increases in some stimulant overdoses, expanding opioid overdose prevention and reversal efforts through risk reduction services and access to medication-assisted treatment is critical for people who use stimulants," said lead author Brooke Hoots, Ph.D., MSPH, epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

"Increases in stimulant overdoses without opioids also draws attention to the need for new, evidence-based interventions to address the evolving drug overdose crisis."

More information: Brooke Hoots et al, The rise in non-fatal and fatal overdoses involving stimulants with and without opioids in the United States, *Addiction* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/add.14878](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.14878)

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