

# Study identifies risk factors for non-fatal overdoses

8 January 2014

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Researchers from Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) and Boston Medical Center (BMC) have identified that injection frequency and taking anti-retroviral therapy for HIV are risk factors for nonfatal drug overdoses among Russians who are HIV positive and inject drugs. Alexander Walley, MD, MSc, an attending physician in general internal medicine at BMC and an assistant professor of medicine at BUSM, is the study's lead author.

Published in the journal *AIDS Care*, the study was done in collaboration with the Pavlov State Medical University in Russia.

"Non-fatal overdose among HIV-infected Russians who inject drugs is common, however our study is the first to identify [risk factors](#) associated with those cases," said Walley.

The researchers analyzed baseline data of 294 [participants](#) with 30-day injection drug use who were taking part in an HIV secondary prevention trial for individuals who self-reported "heavy" alcohol use and [risky sexual behavior](#) in the past six months.

More than three quarters of the participants, 76 percent, reported a lifetime history of a non-fatal overdose while 16 percent reported a non-fatal overdose in the previous three months. The data showed that the previous month's injection history and anti-retroviral therapy at the time the participants were interviewed were associated with a non-fatal overdose within the previous three months.

"Our study data demonstrates that these individuals could benefit from overdose prevention efforts," added Walley.

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

APA citation: Study identifies risk factors for non-fatal overdoses (2014, January 8) retrieved 20 June

2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-01-factors-non-fatal-overdoses.html>

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