

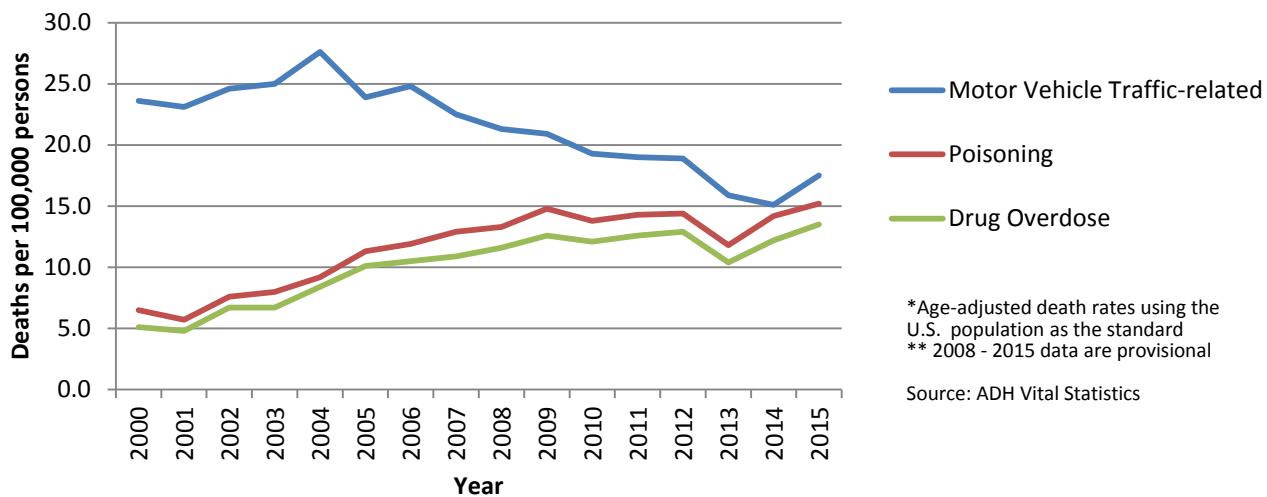


Drug Overdose Deaths in Arkansas 2000 – 2015

Drug Overdose Deaths Continue to Rise

Poisoning is a leading cause of injury death in Arkansas, and drugs cause 87 percent of poisoning deaths. Drug poisoning deaths, also called overdoses, nearly tripled between 2000 and 2015 and are close to surpassing motor vehicle traffic-related deaths (Figure 1). In 2015, the poisoning death rate was 15.2 deaths per 100,000 persons, and the drug overdose death rate was 13.5 deaths per 100,000 persons, compared to a motor vehicle traffic-related death rate of 17.5 deaths per 100,000 persons.

Figure 1. Drug overdose death rates* compared to motor vehicle-related death rates, Arkansas residents, 2000-2015**



*Age-adjusted death rates using the U.S. population as the standard
** 2008 - 2015 data are provisional

Source: ADH Vital Statistics

Drugs Caused 87% of Poisoning Deaths

In 2015, drugs and medications – prescription drugs, illicit drugs, and over-the-counter medications – were the underlying cause of 87% of all poisoning deaths. Of the drug overdose deaths, 70% were unintentional, 18% were suicide or intentional self harm, and 13% had undetermined intent. Males had rates 14% higher than females and persons ages 25-44 had the highest rate of all age categories (Table 1).

Table 1. Drug overdose deaths: Demographic characteristics and intent, Arkansas residents, 2015**

		Number	Percent	Rate per 100,000
Gender	Female	182	47.5%	12.0
	Male	201	52.5%	13.7
Age (in years)*	15-24	27	7.0%	6.7
	25-44	173	45.2%	22.9
	45-64	152	39.7%	20.1
	65+	31	8.1%	6.5
Intent	Unintentional (also known as “accidental”)	266	69.5%	8.9
	Suicide	67	17.5%	2.2
	Undetermined	50	13.0%	1.7

*0-14 age group not included due to small numbers.

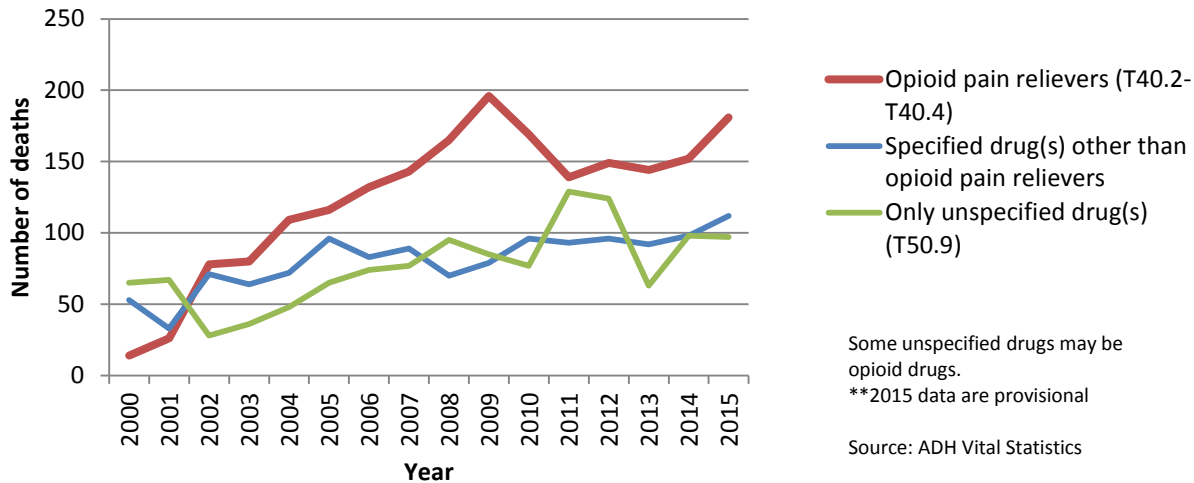
**2015 data are provisional

Source: ADH Vital Statistics

Opioid Pain Relievers Contributed to 47.3% of Drug Overdose Deaths

Opioid pain relievers, such as oxycodone or hydrocodone, contributed to 181 (47.3 percent) of the 383 drug overdose deaths in 2015 (Figure 2). There is also a large portion of overdose deaths for which no specific information about the drug(s) involved is available. The percent of overdose deaths caused by unspecified drugs ranged from 49 percent in 2000 to 25 percent in 2015. Depending on how many of these deaths were really caused by opioids, the true number of opioid-related deaths could be much higher.

Figure 2. Number of drug overdose deaths involving opioid pain relievers and other drugs, Arkansas residents, 2015



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