

Sunrise Health & Wellness of Toledo Reports 6 Types of Opioids Most Often Involved Overdoses

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Fentanyl has surpassed heroin as the top drug involved in U.S. overdose deaths, according to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Driven largely by the synthetic opioid that?s 50 times more potent than heroin, the number of fatal drug overdoses in America climbed from 41,340 in 2011 to 63,632 in 2016 ? a 54 percent increase ? the CDC data show. A November report from the agency showed the death toll has risen even higher since then, reaching 70,237 last year, and that drug deaths are a leading cause of falling life expectancy in the U.S. in recent years.

Some drug categories in the report include related substances, with the fentanyl category including chemicals used to make it as well as analogues. Carfentanil, for example, is a fentanyl analogue 100 times more potent than fentanyl itself. Researchers also cautioned against comparing numbers across years, as reporting of specific drugs involved in a death improved over the period studied.

Diazepam ? a prescription drug that can be used to treat anxiety, seizures, alcohol withdrawal and other

conditions ? was involved in 3.2 percent of drug overdose deaths in 2016. Researchers did not cite specific variations, but common brands include Valium and Diastat.

Prescription painkiller hydrocodone was involved in 5 percent of drug overdose deaths. Brand names containing the drug include Norco, Vicodin and Lorcet.

Methadone, a prescription drug used to treat pain, was involved in 5.5 percent of overdose deaths in 2016. It also is one of three drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration to treat opioid dependence, easing withdrawal and helping to reduce drug cravings.

Morphine was part of 7.9 percent of overdose deaths in 2016. Alprazolam, commonly sold as Xanax, is used to treat anxiety and panic disorders and was involved in 9.8 percent of overdose deaths. Almost all of these deaths also involved another drug, such as fentanyl, heroin or oxycodone.

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For more information about Sunrise Health & Wellness Toledo, OH 43613, contact the company here:Sunrise Health & Wellness Toledo, OH 43613567-803-2677Toledo, OH 43613

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Website: https://sunrisehealthwellness.business.site/

Phone: 567-803-2677

