

Meth and Cocaine Deaths Surge as Opioid Crisis Peaks

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While most of the country is preoccupied with the threat that is the opioid crisis, the supply of cocaine and meth are soaring?and so are the deaths. It is worth noting that opioids are also involved in most cocaine overdoses. This goes to show that while most states are working hard to undo the opioid epidemic and save millions of lives, they may also need to start focusing on a much larger drug crisis.

According to a new analysis of death certificate data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Fentanyl is involved in nearly three-fourths of all cocaine overdose deaths, as well as an increasing number of methamphetamine deaths.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is a hundred times more potent than morphine. This same lethal drug that has been driving the nation?s opioid epidemic has also been causing a historic surge in overdose deaths related to cocaine.

The CDC?s new analysis indicates that public health and law enforcement officials must be as vigilant when it comes to cocaine, meth, and other stimulant drugs.

?Broader awareness of emerging drug threats and how they intersect with the opioid overdose crisis will help

public health officials and the health care community better tailor their prevention and response efforts for all the substances and combinations of substances people are using in their community,? said Christopher Jones, strategy director at the CDC?s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

A new model drug surveillance system is being developed in order to monitor these patterns so that overdose deaths can be prevented and treatment can be administered.

John Eadie, a coordinator with the National Emerging Threats Initiative administered by the Office of National Drug Control Policy, is working with communities in Ohio, Vermont, and Virginia to make this happen. At least seven other states have signed up to do the same.

?One of the reasons we?re pushing this type of data on stimulants and other drugs is so that communities can do the work they need to do and get ahead of the next drug crisis fast, rather than waiting a decade as we did with opioids,? Eadie said.

The drug overdose epidemic has killed more than 700,000 Americans since 1999. Opioids were also involved in nearly 70 percent of overdose deaths in 2017. Meanwhile, roughly 14,000 cocaine users and 10,000 meth users died in the US in that same year. This is an increase of more than a third compared with 2016. This is also triple the number of deaths in 2012.

This puts both stimulants on par with the opioid depressant heroin, which was involved in 15,000 overdose deaths in 2017. Click the link to see Seattle's top rehab placement programs.

The US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration said that the misuse of cocaine and meth has surpassed the non-medical use of opioids in recent years. In 2016, 2.4 million Americans said that they recently started using cocaine, meth, or prescription stimulants such as Adderall and Ritalin. That year, the number of users of illicit and prescription stimulants was 13.6 million.

However, Jack Killorin of the Overdose Response Strategy, says that the increased use of stimulants is not enough to explain the recent surge in deaths. Killorin is the public safety director for the Overdose Response Strategy, a public health and safety collaboration of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program.

Since overdose death reports are primarily based on autopsies, it is usually unclear whether the deceased was using contaminated drugs, or taking two drugs at once. Whether or not drug dealers are intentionally lacing the drug supply with Fentanyl is still unknown.

Killorin is among those who speculate that more and more drug users are injecting a mixture of heroin and cocaine?a deadly combination known as speedball. While the high is even stronger, the risk of overdose is

even bigger.

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid or alcohol addiction, it is important to seek help. A combination of medical detox and behavioral therapy can go a long way in the fight against drug abuse. But because every individual is affected by addiction differently, a comprehensive program tailored to their specific needs is necessary. Look for a nearby addiction treatment facility today and find out how drug treatment programs work.

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