

Data Brief: Vermont Drug-Related Fatalities 2010-2015

Background and Analysis

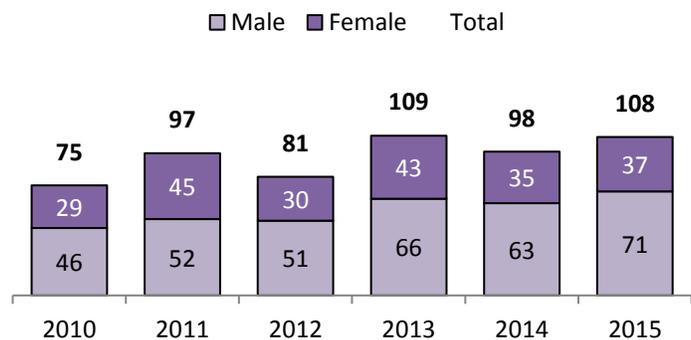
Vermont drug-related fatalities data (including alcohol) come from the Vermont Department of Health Vital Statistics System and are based on deaths that occur in Vermont. This data brief presents data from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2015, and preliminary data for the first and second quarters of 2016. The drug-related fatalities reported here include accidents, suicides, homicides and undetermined drug-related fatalities. This report does *not* include deaths due to the consequences of chronic substance use such as HIV, liver disease, or infection; or deaths due to errors by medical professionals. This report also does not include deaths due to injury such as car crashes related to substance use or abuse. Starting in 2013, **heroin- and fentanyl-related fatalities have risen sharply while prescription opioid fatalities (excluding fentanyl) have begun to decrease.**

This analysis is focused on fatalities related to controlled prescription drugs, illegal substances or acute alcohol intoxication, therefore, anticoagulant- and antibiotic-related deaths were not included in any of these analyses. It is important to note that most drug-related fatalities are due to combinations of substances (e.g., a prescription opioid and cocaine), not a single drug. It is also important to note that the circumstances under which each of these fatalities occurred are unique, and cannot all be attributed to addiction and/or dependence.

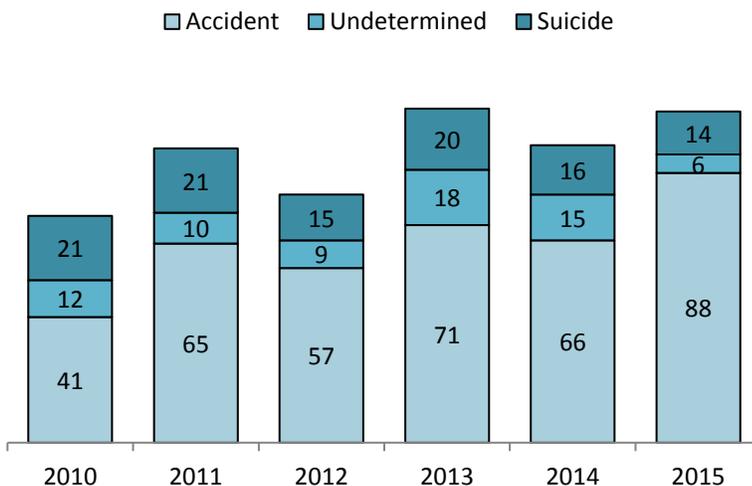
Totals by Gender

Drug-related fatalities have not changed statistically significantly over the past six years. Men make up the majority of drug related fatalities.

Total number of drug-related fatalities by year and gender



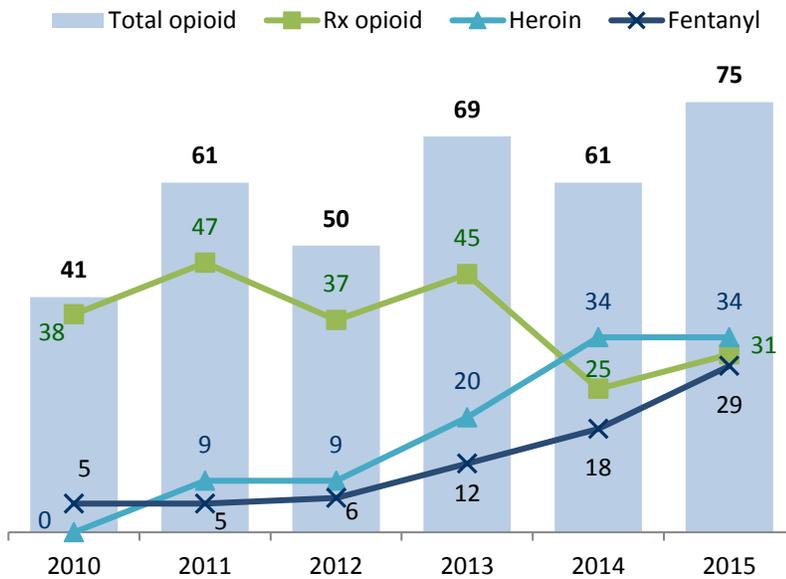
Number of drug-related fatalities by year and manner



Manner of Death

The graph to the left shows the manner of death for all of the drug-related fatalities in any given year between 2010 and 2015. Note that there have been three homicides, one each in 2010, 2011 and 2014 (not shown in accompanying figure).

Total number of accidental and undetermined manner drug-related fatalities involving an opioid (categories not mutually exclusive)



Accidental and Undetermined manner Opioid-Related Fatalities

Public attention has been primarily focused on prescription opioid misuse and abuse. The graph to the left shows all accidental fatalities and fatalities where the manner of death could not be determined, that involved an opioid – note that the majority of fatalities involve multiple substances (e.g. oxycodone, alcohol and cocaine). Deaths due to suicide were removed from the graph to the left in order to show deaths more likely associated with abuse and dependence of opioids.

The categories in the graph are defined: *Rx opioids* includes prescription opioids (excluding fentanyl); *Heroin* includes heroin; *Fentanyl* includes any fentanyl both prescription and illegally

manufactured; and *Total Opioid* includes prescription opioids, opioids not otherwise defined, heroin and fentanyl. Prescription opioid, fentanyl and heroin deaths do not add to total opioid deaths (they are not mutually exclusive – many deaths are due to a combination of opioids, such as fentanyl and heroin). For example, both heroin and fentanyl were present in 7 deaths in 2014 and 10 deaths in 2015. Starting in 2013, **heroin- and fentanyl-related fatalities have risen sharply while prescription opioid fatalities (excluding fentanyl) have begun to decrease.**

Quarterly Update for 2016 – PRELIMINARY DATA

This data brief is updated quarterly. Death data are mostly complete within ten weeks of death. Therefore, expect updates ten to twelve weeks after the end of each quarter.

2016 Drug-Related Fatalities Update - PRELIMINARY										
Date of Death	Total number of drug-related fatalities by gender		Total number of drug-related fatalities by manner			Total number of accidental and undetermined manner drug-related fatalities involving an opioid				
	Male	Female	Accident	Suicide	Undetermined	Total*	<i>Rx opioid no fentanyl</i>	Heroin	Fentanyl	
I: Jan-Mar	20	16	27	3	6	24	13	9	9	
II: Apr-Jun	27	6	27	5	1	23	10	11	7	
III: Jul-Sept										

*NOTE: Prescription opioid, fentanyl and heroin deaths are not mutually exclusive.

Conclusion

According to data from the Vermont Department of Health Vital Statistics System, overall drug-related fatalities in Vermont have not changed greatly over the past five years. Starting in 2013, **heroin- and fentanyl-related fatalities have risen sharply.**

Drug-related Deaths by County of Death

The following tables list the number of drug-related fatalities by the county of death. Please note that these numbers are very small, and statistical interpretation renders minimal practical applications. In addition, the county of death is not necessarily where the person lives or where the incident occurred. Individuals may be transferred to a hospital during an overdose either by EMS or a layperson.

Number of drug-related fatalities by year and county of death

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Addison County	4	3	2	7	2	1
Bennington County	5	8	4	6	6	3
Caledonia County	3	2	3	3	7	3
Chittenden County	20	29	27	27	25	31
Essex County	0	1	2	1	0	1
Franklin County	5	5	5	11	11	10
Grand Isle County	1	0	0	0	0	1
Lamoille County	4	4	2	6	4	2
Orange County	6	6	2	4	4	3
Orleans County	1	1	4	5	4	8
Rutland County	8	11	5	15	10	16
Washington County	5	7	9	10	4	8
Windham County	6	11	8	5	10	6
Windsor County	7	9	8	9	11	15

Number of accidental/undetermined drug-related fatalities involving an opioid by year and county of death

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Addison County	3	1	0	4	2	0
Bennington County	2	4	3	4	4	1
Caledonia County	1	0	0	1	5	2
Chittenden County	13	17	17	18	19	20
Essex County	0	1	2	1	0	1
Franklin County	3	4	4	7	5	7
Grand Isle County	0	0	0	0	0	1
Lamoille County	1	3	2	3	2	1
Orange County	1	5	1	3	1	3
Orleans County	0	1	4	4	2	6
Rutland County	6	9	2	11	7	14
Washington County	3	5	6	7	1	4
Windham County	3	6	4	3	7	3
Windsor County	5	5	5	3	6	12

**Number of accidental/undetermined drug-related fatalities involving a prescription opioid
(excluding fentanyl) by year and county of death**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Addison County	2	0	0	2	0	0
Bennington County	2	4	3	1	2	0
Caledonia County	1	0	0	1	4	1
Chittenden County	12	13	11	14	7	5
Essex County	0	1	1	1	0	0
Franklin County	3	4	4	5	2	4
Grand Isle County	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lamoille County	1	2	2	3	1	0
Orange County	1	4	0	2	1	2
Orleans County	0	1	4	4	0	3
Rutland County	6	4	0	4	4	4
Washington County	3	5	6	4	1	3
Windham County	3	5	3	2	1	1
Windsor County	4	4	3	2	2	8

**Number of accidental/undetermined drug-related fatalities involving heroin or fentanyl
by year and county of death**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Addison County	1	1	0	3	2	0
Bennington County	0	0	0	3	2	1
Caledonia County	0	0	0	0	2	1
Chittenden County	1	4	7	6	17	16
Essex County	0	0	1	0	0	1
Franklin County	0	0	0	4	4	5
Grand Isle County	0	0	0	0	0	1
Lamoille County	0	1	0	1	1	1
Orange County	1	1	1	1	1	2
Orleans County	0	0	1	0	1	3
Rutland County	1	5	2	8	5	11
Washington County	0	0	0	4	0	2
Windham County	0	1	1	1	5	2
Windsor County	1	1	2	1	5	7

Sources

All data is from the Vermont Vital Statistics System and only includes deaths that occurred in Vermont. Data from 2015 are preliminary. This brief is a product of the Vermont Department of Health, Division of Health Surveillance Analysts Lela Kretzer and Jessie Hammond.