



Overdose Trends Among Latino/a/e Individuals in Oregon

This document highlights overdose trends for Latino/a/e Oregonians. The Oregon Health Authority presents this information with the acknowledgement that this data represents individuals whose loss of life has had an enormous impact on their families and communities.

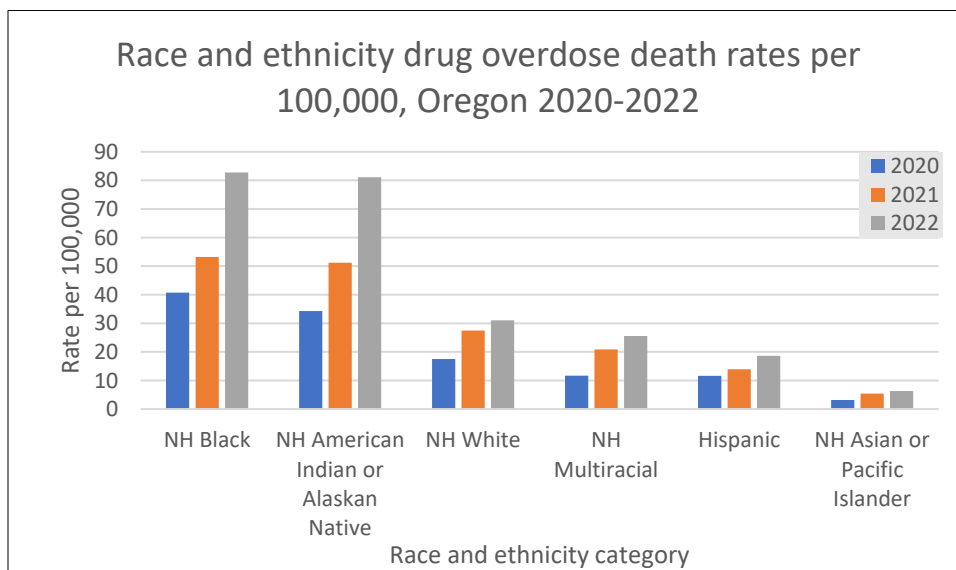
Overdose Deaths in Oregon

In 2020, 701 Oregonians died from an unintentional or undetermined drug overdose. This number increased to 1,083 in 2021 and 1,289 in 2022.¹ These increases are largely due to the availability and potency of fentanyl, which began to flood Oregon’s illicit drug market in 2020.

While the Latino/a/e overdose death rate is one of the lowest in the state at 18.6 overdose deaths per 100,000 people (compared to 31.1 per 100,000 for non-Hispanic white Oregonians), the number of Latino/a/e people who died from a drug overdose increased 63% from 2020 to 2022. In 2020, 68 Latino/a/e Oregonians died from an unintentional or undetermined drug overdose, rising to 83 in 2021 and 111 in 2022.² Latino/a/e individuals account for 8% of Oregon’s overdose deaths and represent 14% of the Oregon population.

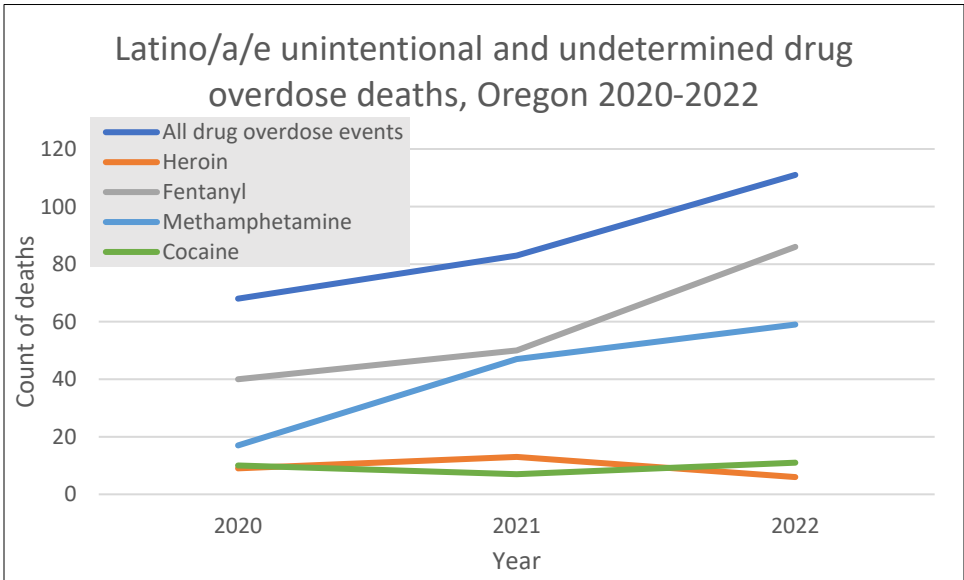
Key Takeaways

- In 2022, 111 Latino/a/e Oregonians died from a drug overdose.
- 77% of Latino/a/e overdose deaths involved fentanyl and 53% of Latino/a/e overdose deaths involved methamphetamine.
- Although the Latino/a/e overdose death rate is the second lowest in Oregon, the number of overdoses among this population are increasing.
- Latino/a/e communities face unique substance use challenges that require culturally relevant, community-driven solutions.



Source: Oregon State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (OR-SUDORS), 2020-2022.

The main substances involved in unintentional or undetermined Latino/a/e overdose deaths were fentanyl (77%) and methamphetamine (53%). **Fentanyl is more frequently involved in Latino/a/e overdose deaths compared to other populations.** Seventy-seven percent (77%) of Latino/a/e overdose deaths involved fentanyl, compared to 65% of Oregon overdose deaths involving fentanyl. Polysubstance use is also a concern, with 60% of all Latino/a/e unintentional or undetermined overdose deaths involving multiple substances (e.g., fentanyl and methamphetamine).



Source: Oregon State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (OR-SUDORS), 2020-2022. Note: County is the county of injury, where the overdose event occurred. This may differ from the county of death and the resident county of the decedent.

Individuals involved in the criminal justice system are at higher risk of overdose. People recently released from jail or prison are 10 times more likely to overdose on opioids compared to the general population.³ Although Latino/a/e individuals represent 10% of Oregon’s justice-involved population, they account for 15% of Oregon’s overdose deaths among people recently released from jail or prison.⁴ **This means that Latino/a/e individuals are at higher risk of overdose upon release from jail or prison compared to other populations.**

Overdose Deaths in the Tri-County Area

In the Tri-county area (Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties), 328 individuals died from an unintentional or undetermined drug overdose in 2020. The number of overdose deaths increased to 490 in 2021 and 594 in 2022. Almost half (46.1%) of Oregon’s overdose deaths occurred in the Tri-county area, and 41% of all Latino/a/e overdose deaths occurred within this region. In 2020, 29 Latino/a/e individuals died from an unintentional drug overdose in the Tri-counties, rising to 36 in 2021 and 46 in 2022.

Tri-county overdose deaths among Latino/a/e individuals match state trends. The main substances involved in these deaths include fentanyl and methamphetamine, and 61% of these deaths are attributed to polysubstance use.

Nonfatal Overdoses

Emergency department (ED) visits and hospitalizations can also provide substance use and overdose trends.⁵ Latino/a/e Oregonians have one of the lowest rates of drug overdose ED visits and hospitalizations compared to other populations. Latino/a/e Oregonians are hospitalized more frequently for opioid overdoses than for stimulant overdoses. Similar trends are seen in the Tri-county area. Thirty-four percent (34%) of all Latino/a/e overdose hospitalizations occurred within the Tri-county area, and 37% of all Latino/a/e ED visits occurred within this region.

Overdose Related Emergency Department Visits and Hospitalizations, Oregon, 2022				
	Oregon: Opioids*	Oregon: Stimulants**	Latino/a/e/: Opioids	Latino/a/e: Stimulants
Emergency department visits***	3,480	471	245	41
Hospitalizations****	1,010	831	48	36

*Opioids may include prescription painkillers, illicitly manufactured fentanyl and/or heroin

**Stimulants may include methamphetamine and/or cocaine

***Emergency department visits include people who were seen in the ED and not admitted into the hospital for continued care

****Hospitalizations include people admitted to a medical facility for more than 24 hours of care

Conclusions

Latino/a/e communities face unique challenges related to the overdose crisis. Some of these challenges may include language barriers, stigma and misperceptions about substance use disorder, fear of seeking care due to immigration status, and limited access to culturally relevant information, resources, and treatment. As the Latino/a/e population continues to grow in Oregon, is it becoming increasingly important to better understand the distinct factors that influence this community's drug use trends and access to prevention, treatment, and recovery services. The Oregon Health Authority is committed to implementing community-driven solutions centered in equity to address Oregon's overdose crisis.

For more information, please contact the Oregon Health Authority Injury & Violence Prevention Program at IVPP.General@odhsoha.oregon.gov.

¹The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) draws upon information from multiple sources to collect information on overdoses in Oregon. Some datasets have up to a one-year lag between data collection and reporting as the data are processed and analyzed. This report provides data through 2022, which is the most recent data available to compare annual trends.

²On death certificates, people can be identified with multiple race/ethnicity categories such as Hispanic, Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Pacific Islander, White, Other, or Unknown. When someone has Hispanic ethnicity recorded on the death certificate, this individual is included in the Hispanic category. All other race categories reflect non-Hispanic individuals.

³Fatal and nonfatal opioid overdose risk following release from prison: A retrospective cohort study using linked administrative data": <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2949875923000218>

⁴Oregon Department of Corrections – Population Demographics (March 1, 2024) <https://www.oregon.gov/doc/Documents/offender-population-all.pdf>

⁵Emergency department visits and hospitalizations account for a portion of nonfatal overdose events and are not an accurate representation of all nonfatal overdoses in Oregon. Many overdoses are reversed in community setting without interaction with the healthcare system.