

Mortality Risk

Odds Of Dying From Accidental Injuries

The chart below shows the likelihood, or odds, of dying as a result of a specific type of accident. The odds of dying over a one-year period are based on the U.S. population as a whole, not on participants in any particular activity or on how dangerous that activity may be. For example, more people are killed in auto accidents than in motorcycle accidents or airplane crashes, not because riding a motorcycle or traveling in an airplane is more or less dangerous, but because far more people travel by car. Drug poisoning is the leading cause of injury death in the United States. The lifetime chances of dying from a drug or medication overdose were one in 96 in 2014, compared with about 1 in 645 in a car accident and 1 in 161,856 for fatal injuries caused by lightning.

Odds Of Death In The United States By Selected Cause Of Injury, 2014 (1)

Cause of death	Number of deaths, One 2014 odds
Unintentional poisoning by and exposure to noxious substances	42,032
All motor vehicle accidents	35,398
Car occupants	6,274
Motorcycle riders	4,106
Pedestrian incident	6,258
Assault by firearm	10,945
Exposure to smoke, fire and flames	2,701
Fall on and from stairs and steps	2,285
Drowning and submersion while in or falling into swimming pool	701
Firearms discharge (accidental)	586
Fall on and from ladder or scaffolding	525
Air and space transport accidents	412
Earthquake and other earth movements	86
Cataclysmic storm (2)	61
Bitten or struck by dog	36
Lightning	25
Flood	8

(1) Based on fatalities and life expectancy in 2015. Ranked by deaths in 2014.

(2) Includes hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards, dust storms and other cataclysmic storms.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics; National Safety Council.

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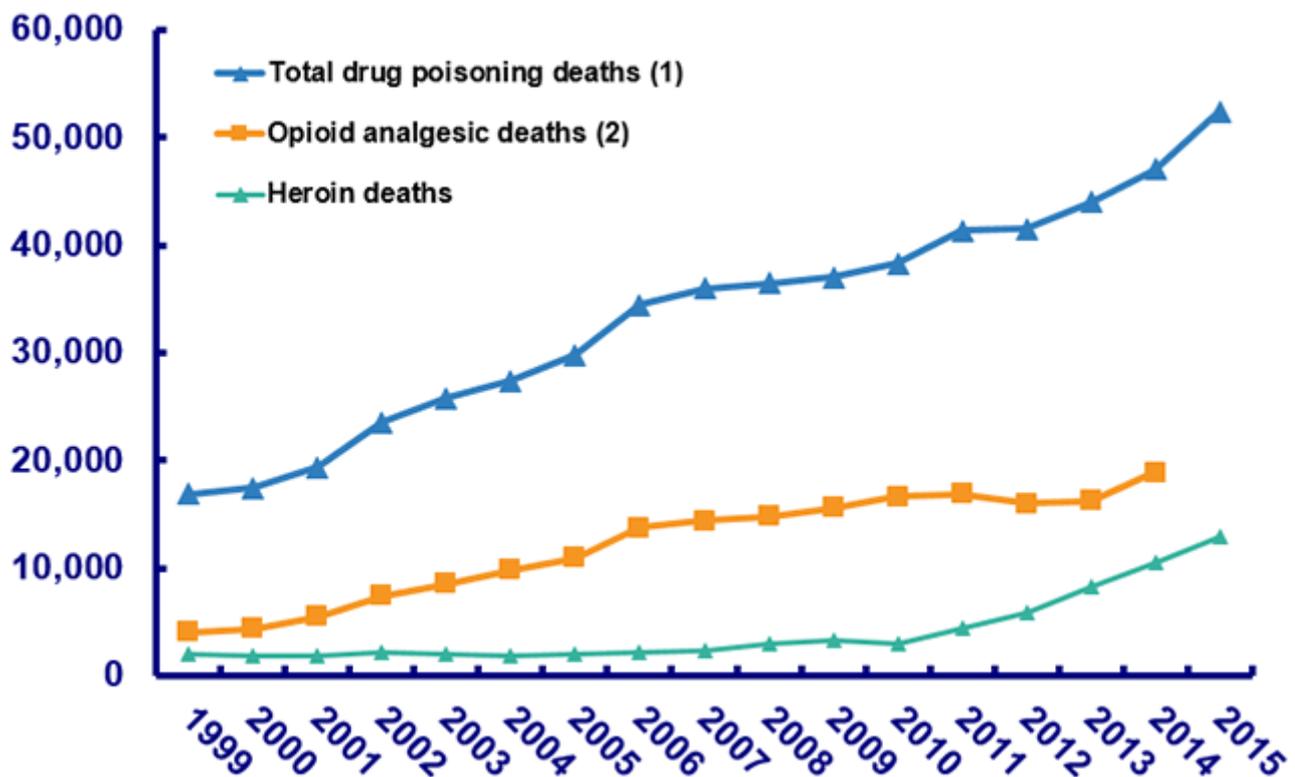
The Opioid Crisis in the United States

Opioid abuse and addiction is now recognized as a significant public health problem in the United States. Drug poisoning, from prescription and illegal drugs combined, is the leading cause of injury death in the United States. Between 1999 and 2015 deaths from drug poisoning more than tripled from 16,849 in 1999 to 52,404 in 2015, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Opioid analgesics, a group of prescription drugs that are used to alleviate chronic and acute pain, have

been increasingly involved in the rise of drug overdose deaths over the same period. In 1999, there were 4,030 deaths attributed to opioid analgesics, accounting for 24 percent of all drug poisoning deaths. By 2014 deaths from opioid analgesics more than quadrupled to 18,893 and accounted for 40 percent of all drug poisoning deaths, according to the CDC.

Number Of Drug Poisoning Deaths, 1999-2015

num_of_drug_poisoning_deaths_99-15.gif ^[2]



(1) Drug poisoning caused by prescription and illegal drugs.

(2) Prescription drugs used to alleviate chronic and acute pain.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics.

A June 2017 [report](#) [3] issued by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association found that diagnoses of opioid-use disorder (addiction to opioids, including prescription painkillers and illegal narcotics such as heroin) increased almost 500 percent between 2010 and 2016. The study examined claims from 30 million people who had commercial insurance provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield insurers. It found that opioid-use disorder was 40 times more likely in patients prescribed high doses for a short duration, compared with low doses for a short duration. Opioid-use disorder was seven times more likely when patients were prescribed a high dose for a long duration, rather than a low dose for a long duration. In addition, 21 percent of Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) commercially-insured members filled at least one opioid prescription in 2015, according to the report.

Health Risks

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, accounting for 614,000 fatalities in 2014, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Influenza and pneumonia ranked eighth in 2014, accounting for some 55,000 fatalities. However, pandemic influenza viruses have the potential to be far more deadly. An estimated 675,000 Americans died during the 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic, the deadliest and most infectious known influenza strain to date.

Top 15 Major Causes of Death, 2014

Rank	Cause of death	Number of deaths	Age-adjusted death rate (1)	
			Rate	Percent change from 2013
1	Heart disease	614,348	167.0	
2	Malignant neoplasms (tumors)	591,700	161.2	
3	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	147,101	40.5	
4	Accidents (unintentional injuries)	135,928	40.5	
5	Cerebrovascular diseases (stroke)	133,103	36.5	
6	Alzheimer's disease	93,541	25.4	
7	Diabetes	76,488	20.9	
8	Influenza and pneumonia	55,227	15.1	
9	Kidney disease	48,146	13.2	
10	Intentional self-harm (suicide)	42,826	13.0	
11	Septicemia	38,940	10.7	
12	Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	38,170	10.4	
13	Hypertension (3)	30,221	8.2	
14	Parkinson's disease	26,150	7.4	
15	Pneumonitis due to solids and liquids	18,792	5.1	
	All other causes	535,737	NA	
	All deaths	2,626,418	724.6	

- (1) Per 100,000 population; factors out differences based on age.
- (2) Less than 0.1 percent.
- (3) Essential (primary) hypertension and hypertensive renal disease.

NA=Not applicable.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics.

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