TRACKING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DRUG USE AND AVAILABILITY: A SNAPSHOT

OCTOBER 22, 2020
COR A MEETING

Presented by Erin Artigiani, MA
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(Eric D. Wish, PhD, CESAR Director)
Center for Substance Abuse Research
University of Maryland, College Park
www.cesar.umd.edu
CESAR ...

- Founded in 1990 as an interdisciplinary research center at the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSOS) at the University of Maryland, College Park
- Conducts policy-relevant research in all areas related to substance use and misuse
- 2014-2020 Set up and Managed the NDEWS Coordinating Center (NIH NIDA)
- 2017 Opioid Use Disorders Project (University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: MPowering the State Initiative)
- 2018 Launched the Emergency Department Drug Surveillance (EDDS) system (MPower)
- 2019 Support MarylandROTA (SAMHSA)
- 2020 Expanding EDDS beyond Maryland (ONDCP)

SOURCE: CESAR, OCT 2020, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK, WWW.CESAR.UMD.EDU
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS...

MARYLANDROTA

- Jinhee Kim, PhD, PD
- Ghaffar Ali Hurtado, PhD, Co-D
- Min Qi Wang, PhD, Co-D
- Barbara Kerr, BA, Co-D
- Deanna Dunn, PharmD, ROTA Educator
- Stephanie Hutter-Thomas, PhD, ROTA Educator
- Wanda Hauser, BA
- And many more University and community partners

EDDS

- Eric Wish, PhD, PI
- Amy Billing, MSSA, Co-I
- Ebonie Massey, MA
- Margaret Hsu, MHS
- David McCandlish, MLS

SOURCE: CESAR, OCT 2020, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK, WWW.CESAR.UMD.EDU
CESARESEARCH NETWORK

• The CESAResearch Network is a virtual community of more than 1,600 experts in medicine, toxicology, ethnography, epidemiology, law enforcement who communicate real time

• Use the CESAResearch Network to:
  • Get rapid access to information on emerging drugs and drug trends
  • Join cross-disciplinary discussions
  • Learn about new resources and successful local solutions
  • Ask others about drugs/emerging trends in your area

• https://network.cesaresearch.org

SOURCE: CESAR, OCT 2020, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK, WWW.CESAR.UMD.EDU
HEADLINES ABOUT THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

‘Cries for help’: Drug overdoses are soaring during the coronavirus pandemic
Suspected overdoses nationally jumped 18 percent in March, 29 percent in April and 42 percent in May, data from ambulance teams, hospitals and police shows.  Washington Post July 2020

The coronavirus has gutted the price of coca. It could reshape the cocaine trade.

The Guatemalan rainforest: Lush jungle, Mayan ruins and narco jets full of cocaine  Washington Post July 2020

Coronavirus Is Leading to Shortages of Fentanyl And Meth
Deborah Gorrell  In Search  MARCH 23 2020  Vice March 2020

Opioid-related deaths make a disappointing uptick in early 2020, possibly related to coronavirus

Why we should all be more careful in drawing conclusions about how COVID-19 is changing drug markets

UNODC World Drug Report 2020: Global drug use rising; while COVID-19 has far reaching impact on global drug markets

COVID-19 may be worsening opioid crisis, but states can take action
MAY 28, 2020

Andis Robeznieks
Senior News Writer
American Medical Association

I'm Selling Party Drugs on Lockdown Because People Are Yearning For Them
"When I count a bunch of drugs, I run right to the store and pour rubbing alcohol or rubbing oil on my hands and arm. But I've been doing that for 10 years."

TJ, 21

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

One Country Has Been Taking More Benzos Than Any Other During Lockdown
And more findings from the preliminary results of the Global Drug Survey’s Covid-19 study:

Vice June 2020

SOURCE: CESAR, JULY 2020, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK, WWW.CESAR.UMD.EDU
IMPACT OF COVID-19

• Treatment and Recovery Services
  • Access to MAT
  • Fewer inpatient beds available
  • Expansion of Telemedicine
  • Access to recovery networks/services

• Trafficking
  • Manufacturing
  • Packaging
  • Shipping
  • Cost

SOURCE: CESAR, OCTOBER 2020, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK, WWW.CESAR.UMD.EDU
CHANGING U.S. TRENDS

• Early reports from local law enforcement in New Jersey indicated a depleted supply of binding agents to hold pressed pills together, wax folds/glassine bags all of which came from China (3/9/20)

• Reduced border traffic created a challenge for DTOs trying to import both illicit substances and precursors

• In certain regions of South America, prices of the coca leaf have dropped as much as 73% because traffickers can't move it (Faiola and Chauvin, Washington Post, 6/9/20)

• DEA reports that a scarcity of cocaine has caused local retail prices to go up, doubling in some cities

SOURCE: CESAR, JULY 2020, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK, WWW.CESAR.UMD.EDU
12 MONTH-ENDING PROVISIONAL COUNTS AND PERCENT CHANGE OF DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS

INCREASES PREDICTED IN 38 STATES AND DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

NOTE: numbers are likely underreported due to incomplete data.
Figure 2. 12-Month Ending Provisional Number of Drug Overdose Deaths by Drug or Drug Class: United States

**Cocaine & Psychostimulants with Abuse Potential**

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<thead>
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<th>Month</th>
<th>Opioids</th>
<th>Cocaine</th>
<th>Psychostimulants</th>
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**OPIOIDS**

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<th>Fentanyl</th>
<th>Methadone</th>
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**Legends**

- **OPIOIDS**
- **Cocaine**
- **Psychostimulants**

NOTES: Reported provisional counts for 12-month ending periods are the number of deaths received and processed for the 12 month period ending in the month indicated. Provisional counts may not include all deaths that occurred during a given time period. Therefore, they should not be considered comparable with final data and are subject to change. Provisional provisional counts represent estimates of the number of deaths adjusted for incomplete reporting (see Technical Notes). Deaths in this report are classified by the reporting jurisdiction in which the death occurred and include foreign residents. Number of deaths in this report may not match final reported data, which are reported by the jurisdiction of residence and are limited to US residents. Jurisdictions are selected for inclusion in this database if they have met the original three measures of data quality (i.e., overall percent completeness of reporting is 90%, (b) the percentage of records pending investigation is 1%, and (c) the percentage of overdose deaths with drug specified is 95%) for the six most recent 12-month ending periods as opposed to for the entire period starting with January 2015. For jurisdictions not meeting quality measures for all periods starting with January 2015, predicted values are shown for all data points that meet percent completeness and drug specificity thresholds with reported values only shown for 6 months where all three data quality measures were met. As a result, estimates are shown for selected reporting periods before the most recent 6 month and there may be gaps in the trends. Drug overdose deaths are identified using ICD-10 underlying cause-of-death codes: X40–X44, X60–X64, X80–X84, and Y10–Y14. Drug overdose deaths involving selected drug categories are identified using ICD-10 multiple cause-of-death (MCOD) codes: heroin, T40.1; natural and semi-synthetic opioids, including drugs such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, and morphine, T40.2; methadone, T40.3; synthetic opioids, including drugs such as fentanyl and tramadol and excluding methadone, T40.4; cocaine, T40.5; and psychostimulants with abuse potential, including drugs such as methamphetamine, T40.6. Opioid overdose deaths are identified by the presence of any of the following MCOD codes: opium, T40.0; heroin, T40.1; natural and semi-synthetic opioids T40.2; methadone, T40.3; synthetic opioids, T40.4; and other and unspecified narcotics, T40.8. Two other categories are included: natural, semi-synthetic, and synthetic opioids, including methadone (T40.2–T40.4), and natural and semi-synthetic opioids, including methadone (T40.2–T40.3). These categories can be selected in the "Select specific drugs or drug classes" drop-down menu above the chart. Categories are not mutually exclusive because deaths may involve more than one drug. Among deaths with an underlying cause of drug overdose, the percentage with at least one drug or drug class specified was determined using MCOD codes in the range of T36–T50.

DRUG OVERDOSES: ODMAP TRENDS

• HIDTA ODMap: overdose detection mapping
  • 33 HIDTAS including more than 600 counties in all 50 states and Washington, DC
  • 62% of participating counties show an increase in overdose submissions after March 19
  • 18 percent in March 2020 compared with March 2019, 29 percent in April, and 42 percent in May
  • For every 10 suspected overdoses in May 2019, there were 14 reported in May 2020

SOURCE: THE CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19 ON THE OVERDOSE EPIDEMIC: OVERDOSES ARE INCREASING ALIESE ALTER, SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER AND CHRISTOPHER YEAGER, ODMAP ANALYST, MAY 2020
COVID-19 IMPACT ON US NATIONAL OVERDOSE CRISIS, ALIESE ALTER, ODMAP SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER AND CHRISTOPHER YEAGER, ODMAP ANALYST, JUNE 2020

Nationwide ODMap Suspected Overdose Submissions, January-April, 2019 vs. 2020

Source: Reproduced by CESAR from Alter and Yeager, May 2020, W/B HIDTA
MARYLAND DRUG INTOXICATION DEATHS, 2007-2019

• Decrease in all drugs displayed in 2019 except fentanyl
• Fentanyl increased more than 5 fold from 2015 to 2019
• What’s happening in 2020?

HTTPS://HEALTH.MARYLAND.GOV/VSA/PAGES/OVERDOSE.ASPX
MARYLAND DRUG INTOXICATION DEATHS, JAN-JUNE EACH YEAR, 2007-2020

• Number of all drug intoxication deaths Jan-June 2019 vs Jan-June 2020 increased 9%

• Number of fentanyl intoxication deaths Jan-June 2019 vs Jan-June 2020 increased 12%

• Increases in 17 of 24 jurisdictions in each category

NOTE: 2020 COUNTS ARE PRELIMINARY
SOURCE: MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, OCTOBER 2020. UNINTENTIONAL DRUG- AND ALCOHOL-RELATED INTOXICATION DEATHS IN MARYLAND PRELIMINARY DATA UPDATE THROUGH 2ND QUARTER 2020
HTTPS://HEALTH.MARYLAND.GOV/VSA/DOCUMENTS/OVERDOSE/QUARTERLY%20DRUG_ALCOHOL_INTOXICATION_REPORT_2020_Q2.PDF
MARYLAND DRUG TRAFFICKING TRENDS

• Decrease in law enforcement investigative activities in some counties

• Some dealers selling smaller amounts at higher prices and not selling wholesale amounts out of concern they could lose supply
  • Kg of cocaine in Anne Arundel increased from typical $27,000-36,000 to $40,000

• Some dealers may be altering travel to suppliers which can lead to changes in local markets – gel caps common in Baltimore City appearing on Eastern Shore where more typically see wax folds

SOURCE: W/B HIDTA JUNE 2020
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT DRUG SURVEILLANCE (EDDS) SYSTEM

- De-identified electronic health records containing urinalysis results for emergency department patients
- Expanded testing of urine specimens for 490 drugs
- 7 Maryland hospitals in Baltimore Metro area and Prince George's County submit data quarterly
- Expanding to sites beyond Maryland

https://cesar.umd.edu/landing/EDDS

https://cesar.umd.edu/feature/fentanyl-tops-list-drugs-found-baltimore-overdose-patients

- Staff Includes: Eric Wish, Amy Billing, Ebonie Massey

SOURCE: CESAR, OCTOBER 2020, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK, WWW.CESAR.UMD.EDU
FOR MORE INFORMATION...

- CDC: https://www.coronavirus.gov/
- ACMT: https://www.acmt.net/COVID19.html for telehealth resources, webinar series
- EMCDDA: https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/topics/covid-19
- MDH: https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Pages/overdose.aspx

SOURCE: CESAR, JULY 2020, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK, WWW.CESAR.UMD.EDU
TAKE CARE DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

• This is the first pandemic in the U.S. in approximately 100 years; something we have not encountered before

• Lots of information to sort through and new data and information are continuing to be released

• Many variables can impact local drug trends and overdose trends
  • Duration, intensity, and timing of the lockdown
  • Timing of assessments
  • Geographic locations of COVID-19 hotspots and drug markets
  • Variations in local rules and regulations
  • Social characteristics

SOURCE: CESAR, JULY 2020, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK, WWW.CESAR.UMD.EDU
Saturday, Oct 24, 10:00am-2:00pm
Collection Site Locator:
https://takebackday.dea.gov/