



Florida Department of Law Enforcement

Report Summary

2011 Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons by Florida Medical Examiners

The report

- The Florida medical examiners report on drug-related deaths distinguishes between whether the drug caused death or whether the drug was merely present at the time of death.
- The majority of cases have more than one drug occurrence. Each identified drug is a drug occurrence.
- Data is collected on the following drugs: benzodiazepines, cannabinoids, carisoprodol/meprobamate, cocaine, ethyl alcohol, gamma-hydroxybutyric acid (GHB), inhalants, ketamine, methylated amphetamines, opioids, phencyclidine and zolpidem.
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The numbers

- Drug-related deaths
 - 2011: 9,135
 - 2010 : 9,001
 - 2009 : 8,653
 - 2008 : 8,556
 - 2007: 8,620
- Drug death decreases in 2011
 - oxycodone: 17.7 percent drop
 - prescription drugs: 6.37 percent drop
 - methadone: 0.4 percent drop
 - hydrocodone: 2.5 percent drop
- Drug death increases in 2011
 - benzodiazepines: 13 percent increase
 - cocaine: 7.7 percent
 - ethyl alcohol : 3.1 percent increase
- Drugs causing the most deaths in 2011
 - benzodiazepines: 1,950
 - oxycodone : 1,247
 - methadone : 691
 - cocaine: 604
 - ethyl alcohol: 590
 - morphine: 345
 - hydrocodone: 307
 - diazepam: 306

- Most harmful drugs in 2011
 - heroin
 - methadone
 - oxycodone
 - fentanyl
 - alprazolam (Xanax)

Additional Facts

Prescription Drug Abuse

- Prescription drugs continue to be found more often than illicit drugs as the cause of death in Floridians.
- Excluding alcohol-related deaths, prescription drugs account for 86.5 percent of all drug occurrences.
- Compared to the same time period in 2010, 6.37 percent fewer individuals died with a fatal amount of prescription drugs in their bodies.

Most Common Drugs

- Alcohol killed more Floridians than morphine, hydrocodone and diazepam.
- The four most common drugs found in decedents (but were not necessarily the cause of death)
 - ethyl alcohol
 - benzodiazepine drugs (minor tranquilizer drugs including Xanax and Valium)
 - oxycodone
 - cocaine

Suicide or Accident

- oxycodone deaths: 16 percent were suicides, 67 percent were accidental, 12 percent were natural, 3 percent were homicide and 2 percent were undetermined
- hydrocodone deaths: 25 percent were suicides, 55 percent were accidental, 16 percent were natural, 2 percent were homicide and 2 percent were undetermined
- methadone deaths: 9 percent were suicides, 77 percent were accidental, 9 percent were natural, 2 percent were homicide and 3 percent were undetermined
- cocaine deaths: 14 percent were suicide, 64 percent were accidental, 7 percent were natural, 13 percent were homicide and 2 percent were undetermined

Drug Strike Force Teams

- From May 2011 to present, the seven Regional Drug Enforcement Strike Forces have made 3,390 arrests (including 61 doctors) and seized 785,295 pharmaceutical pills, 106 vehicles, 530 weapons, and \$9,899,668. They have closed 254 clinics.
- At the end of 2011, the seven Regional Drug Enforcement Strike Forces had made 1,794 arrests (including 31 doctors) and seized 433,466 pharmaceutical pills, 49 vehicles, 379 weapons, and \$4,537,310. Twenty-seven clinics had been closed.

For the complete report, visit <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us>. The report can be found under publications, Medical Examiners Commission.