



# Connecticut Department of Public Health

## Drug Overdose Monthly Report

### Fatal Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Report

#### Key Findings of Drug Overdose Decedents, 2019 – June 2023\*

- The current monthly report is based on confirmed fatal drug overdose cases from 2020 to the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June 2023. Data from 2023 are preliminary and may change due to pending cases. The period of analysis includes January 2019 through May 2023.
- **2023\* data overview:** As of the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June there were 600 deaths for 2023, with 111 in January, 128 in February, 107 in March, 114 in April and 122 in May. Approximately 83.3% of these deaths involved fentanyl. Data are subject to change because of pending cases.
- **2022 data overview:** From January to December 2022, there were 1,464 confirmed unintentional and undetermined intent fatal drug overdoses.
- **Comparison between 2020-2022:** There were 1,531 confirmed deaths for 2021 with an increase of 11.4% compared to the previous year, 2020 (N=1,374). Final data from 2022 suggest a decrease in drug overdose deaths by 4.3%, compared to 2021.
- **Demographic data for 2022:** Males had a higher mortality rate than females in 2022 (60.0 vs. 21.1 per 100,000 population, respectively). In 2022, the mortality rate was highest for the non-Hispanic Black population and for 35–44-year-olds.
- **Place of death in 2021 and 2022:** Most of the decedents died at a residence (either their own or someone else's) in 2021 (60%) and 2022 (63%).
- **Fentanyl-involved drug overdose deaths:** The average percentage of fentanyl- or fentanyl analog-involved deaths was 85% for 2020, 2021 and 2022.
- **Xylazine, an animal tranquilizer, in drug overdose deaths:** For the first time in 2019, xylazine/fentanyl combinations were found to be involved in drug overdoses and this lethal combination continued to be a problem in 2020 (N=141), 2021 (N=298), and in 2022 (N=354). In preliminary data of 2023, there were 132 deaths (21.9%) involving a xylazine/fentanyl combination.
- **New and emerging substances:** Para-fluorofentanyl, a fentanyl analog, emerged in 2020 and was present in 13 overdose deaths that year, 94 in 2021, 32 in 2022, and 16 in 2023. The Injury and Violence Surveillance Unit (IVSU) from the Department of Public Health (DPH) continues to monitor for other new emerging substances which include but are not limited to Flualprazolam (benzodiazepine family) and the Nitazene family of substances (novel synthetic opioids).

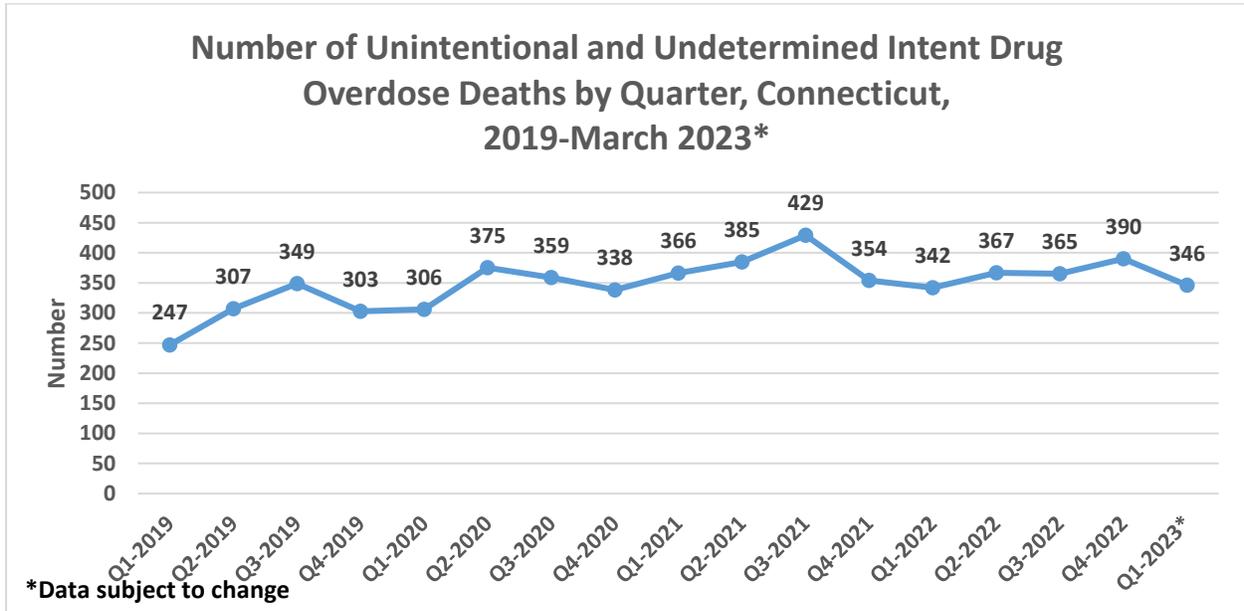
\*Data subject to change due to pending cases.

Updated on 7-19-2023; Data Source: Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), per CDC-SUDORS grant guidelines.

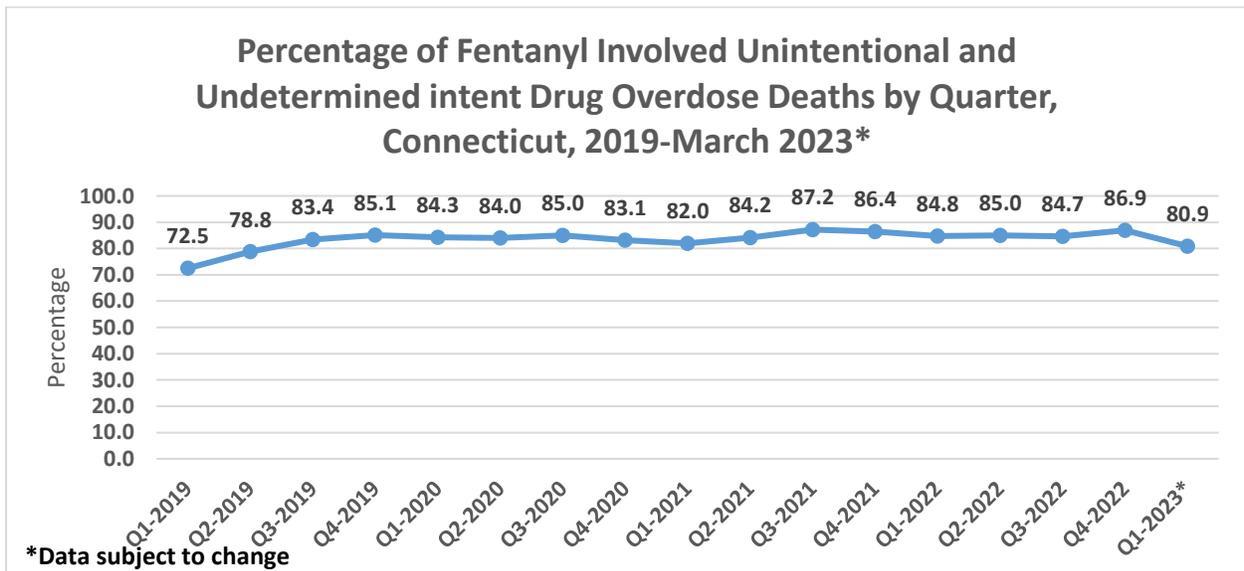
For substance use disorder information visit: <https://www.drugfreect.org>.

For information on the CT DPH Opioids and Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention Program in the Office of Injury and Violence Prevention, visit: <https://www.ct.gov/dph/injuryprevention>.

**Number of Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths by Quarter, Connecticut, 2019-March 2023\***. For the years 2019, 2020 and 2022, Quarter 1 had the lowest number of unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose deaths, whereas for year 2021, Quarter 4 had the lowest number of deaths. Overall, Quarters 2 and 3 were generally highest with the exception of Q4 2022 between 2019-2022. The below chart shows the number of deaths by quarter for 2019-March 2023\*.

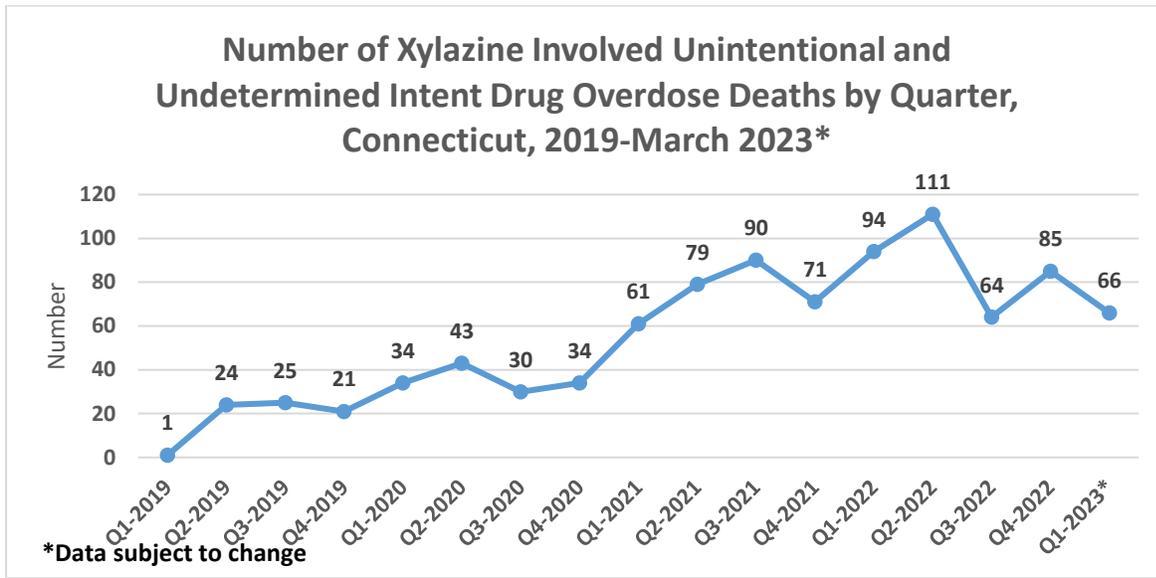


**Percentage of Fentanyl-Involved Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths by Quarter, Connecticut, 2019-March 2023\***. The average percentage of fentanyl-involved deaths remained high between 2019-March 2023\*. The below chart shows the percentage of fentanyl-involved deaths by quarter for 2019-March 2023\*.



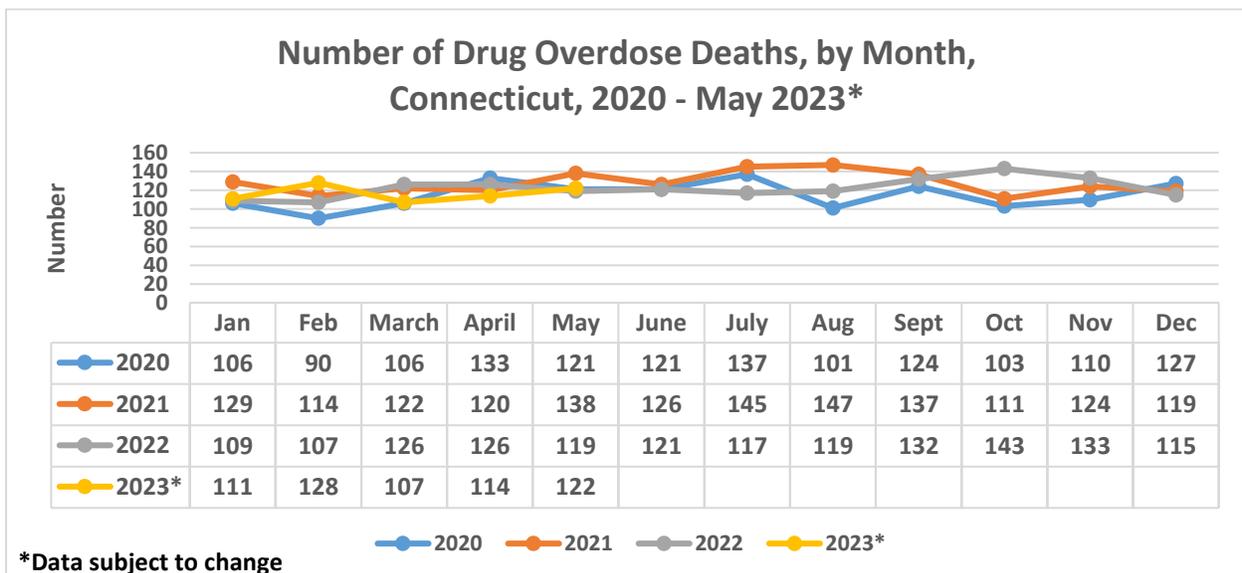
### Number of Xylazine-Involved Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths by Quarter, Connecticut, 2019-March 2023\*

In Connecticut, xylazine was first identified as a novel and emerging adulterant in fatal drug overdoses in March 2019 and the numbers of xylazine-involved deaths increased each year between 2019-March 2023\*. The below chart shows the number of xylazine-involved deaths by quarter for 2019-March 2023\*.

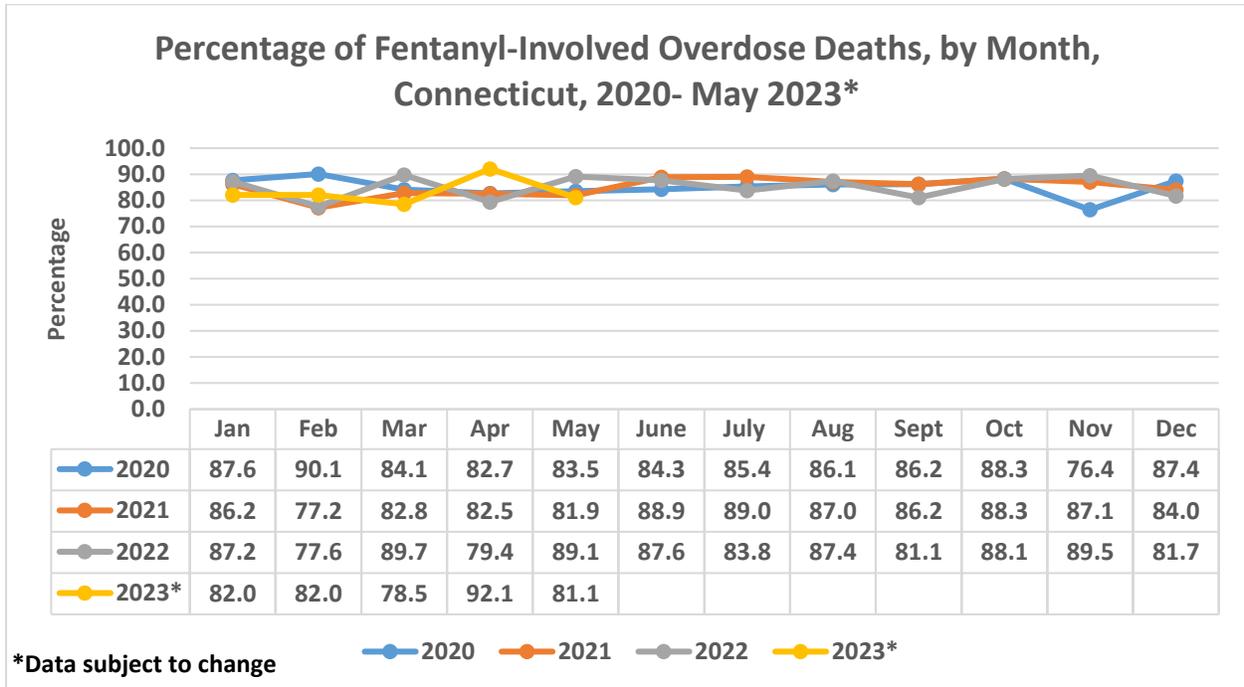


### Unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose deaths, by month, Connecticut, 2020-May 2023\*

Based on final 2022 data there was a decrease of 4.3% in drug overdose deaths, compared to the previous year of 2021. The chart below represents the monthly count of confirmed drug overdose deaths from January 2020-May 2023\*. Data for year 2023 may change due to the processing of pending cases.



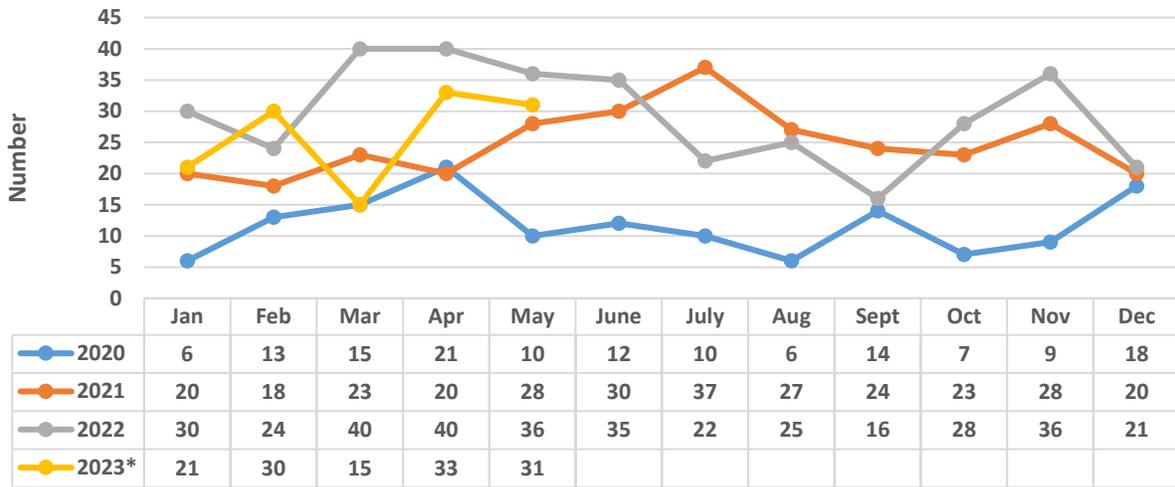
**The percentage of fentanyl-involved overdose deaths continues to be a problem in 2023\*.** For 2020, 2021 and 2022, the average percentage of fentanyl-involved deaths was around 85%. In the year 2023, January and February had 82.0%, March had 78.5%, April had 92.2% and May had 81.1% of deaths involving fentanyl. These percentages may change because of pending cases. The chart below represents the percentage of fentanyl-involved deaths by month during January 2020-May 2023\*.



**Xylazine-involved drug intoxication deaths in Connecticut, 2020 – May 2023\*.**

To enhance drug effects, recreational drugs are often adulterated with other pharmacological agents such as xylazine, a veterinary sedative not intended for human use. In Connecticut, in March 2019, xylazine was identified as a novel and emerging adulterant in fatal drug intoxications when combined with fentanyl. In 2019, xylazine was involved in 6% of drug overdose deaths, and this percentage increased to 24% in 2022. The combination of fentanyl and xylazine continues to be a problem in 2023. Numbers from 2023 may change due to the processing of pending cases. The below chart represents the number of xylazine-involved deaths from January 2020-May 2023\*.

**Number of Xylazine Involved Overdose Deaths, By Month, Connecticut, 2020 - May 2023\***

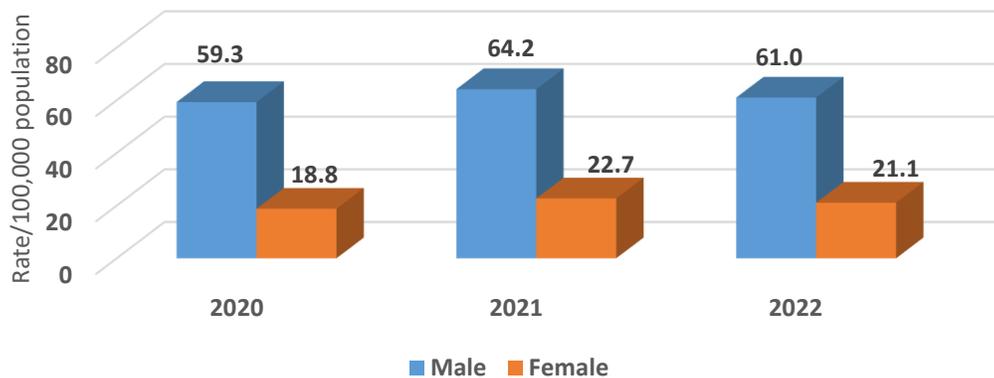


\*Data subject to change

**Drug overdose death rates were higher in males compared to females during 2020 through 2022.**

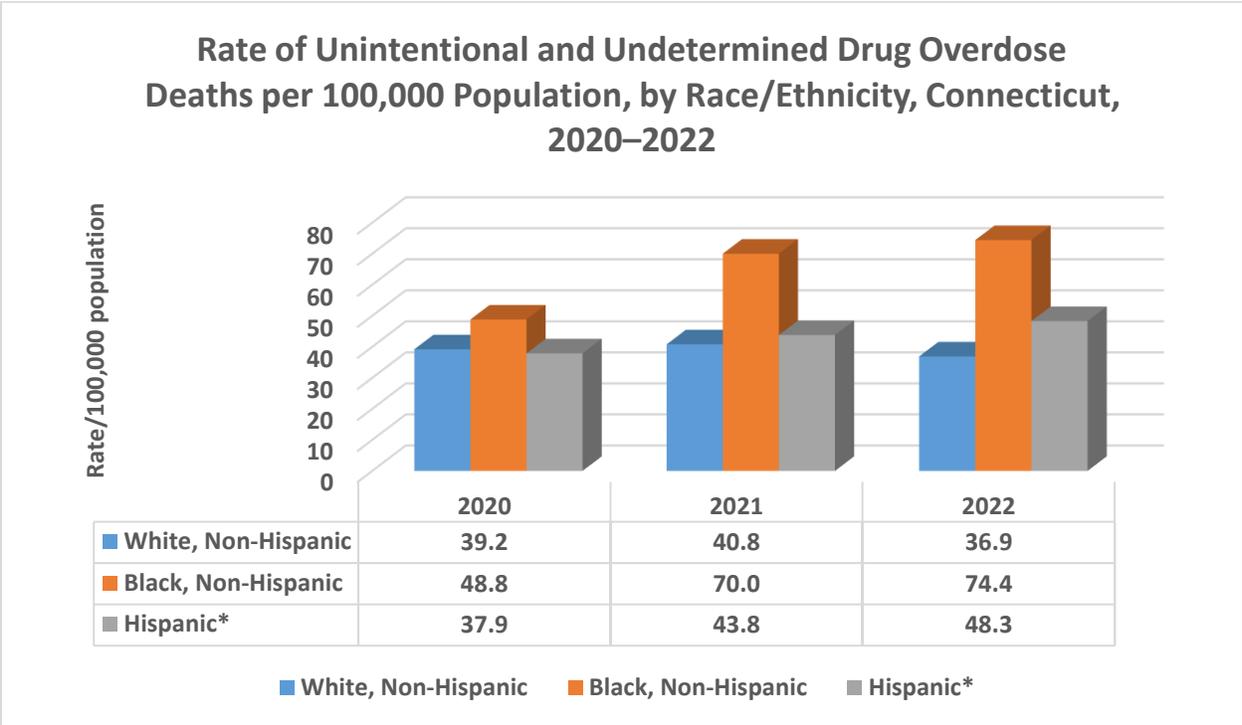
Rates of unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose-related deaths were consistently higher among males when compared to females. The bar graph below represents rates of unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose death by sex (rate per 100,000 sex-specific population) during 2020 through 2022.

**Rate of Unintentional and Undetermined Drug Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Population, by Sex, Connecticut, 2020–2022**



**Drug overdose death rates were higher among the non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic populations compared to the non-Hispanic White population.**

Between 2021 to 2022, the drug overdose mortality rate substantially increased in the non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic populations compared to 2020. The graph below represents the unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose mortality rate in Connecticut, by race/ethnicity for years 2020-2022.

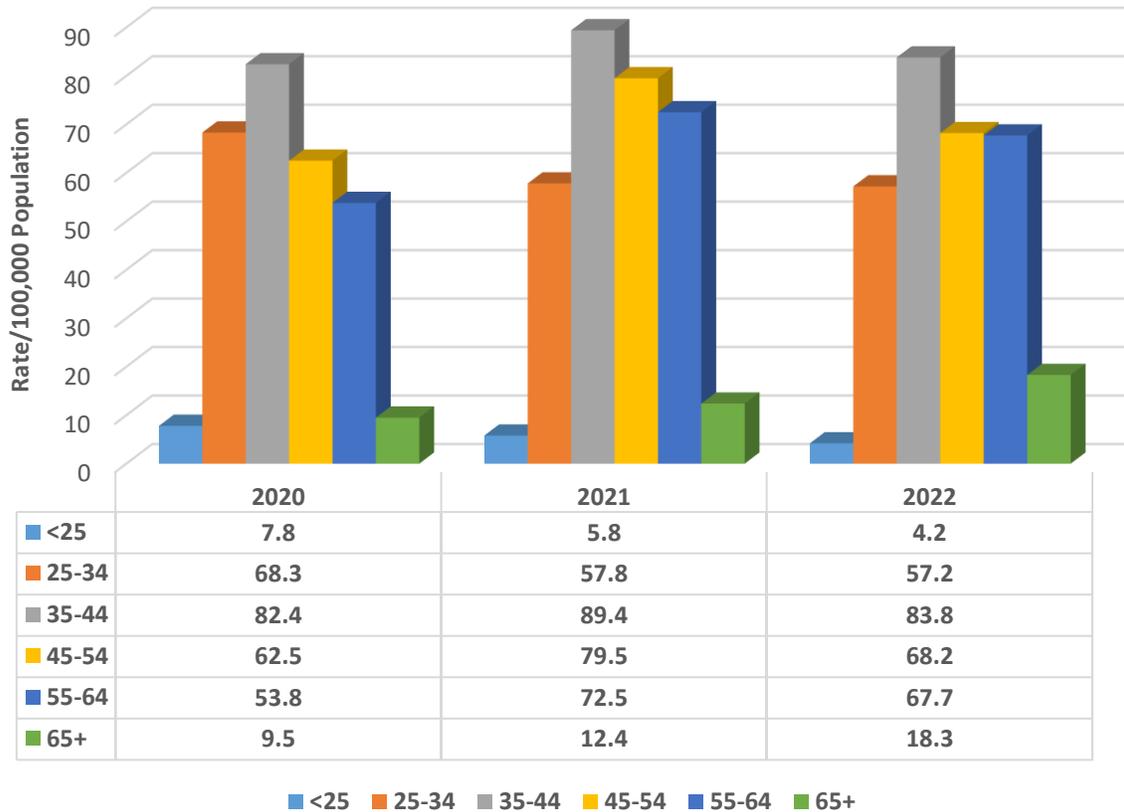


\*All races of Hispanic ethnicity  
 Note: Count for 'Other Non-Hispanic' population which includes American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian or Pacific Islander were lower than 20 and the rates were not calculated.

**Drug overdose death rates were highest in the 35–44-year-old age group in Connecticut, 2020 – 2022.**

Drug overdose death rates were calculated per 100,000 age-specific population and were highest among the 35–44-year-old age group, followed by the 45-54- and 55–64-year-old age groups in 2021 and 2022. The graph below represents the unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose mortality rate in Connecticut, by age group, by year for 2020-2022. There is an increasing trend in drug overdose death rate for 2021 and 2022 for the 65+ year-old age group compared to 2020, as depicted in the graph below.

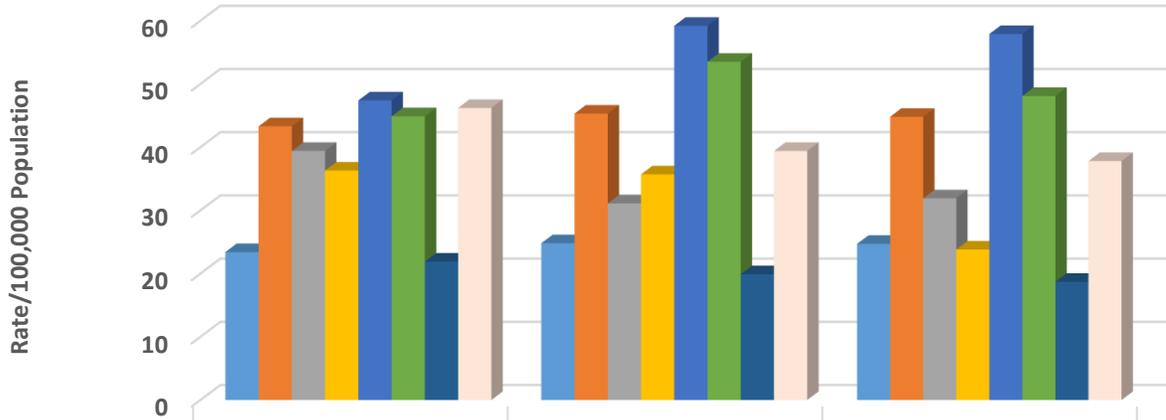
### Rate of Unintentional and Undetermined Drug Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Population, by Age Group, Connecticut, 2020–2022



### Drug overdose death rates in Connecticut, by County of Injury, 2020 – 2022

The graph below represents the unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose mortality rate in Connecticut, by injury county, for 2020-2022. The data suggests that drug overdose death rates have decreased across all other counties except for Litchfield County, for year 2022 compared to 2021.

### Rate of Unintentional and Undetermined Drug Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Population, by Injury County, Connecticut, 2020–2022



	2020	2021	2022
Fairfield	23.4	24.8	24.7
Hartford	43.3	45.3	44.8
Litchfield	39.4	31.1	31.9
Middlesex	36.3	35.7	23.8
New London	47.4	59.2	57.9
New Haven	44.9	53.5	48.1
Tolland	21.9	19.9	18.7
Windham	46.2	39.4	37.8

■ Fairfield 
 ■ Hartford 
 ■ Litchfield 
 ■ Middlesex 
 ■ New London 
 ■ New Haven 
 ■ Tolland 
 ■ Windham