

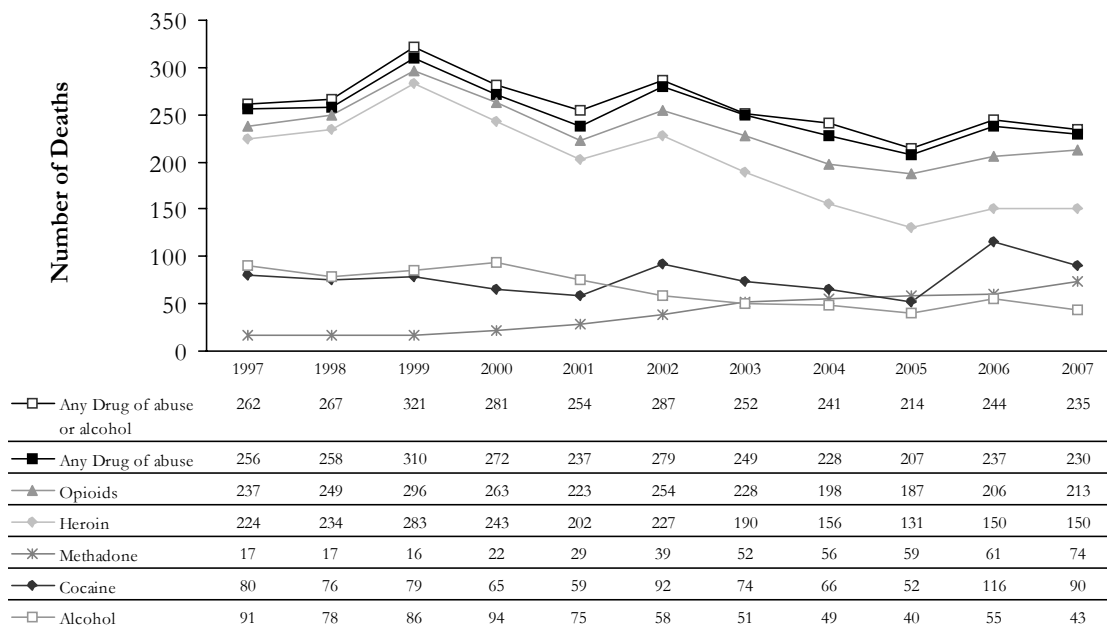
Substance Abuse

Importance: Substance abuse can lead to cognitive and physiological damage, chronic disease, infectious disease (through unsafe needle use) and in some cases death from overdose.

National statistic: In 2005, 8.1% of persons age 12 years or older reported using illicit drugs during previous month; in 2006, the drug-induced death rate nationwide was 11.5 per 100,000 Healthy People 2010 goal: 1.0 per 100,000 (drug-induced death)

Intoxication Deaths

Intoxication Deaths Associated with Drugs of Abuse or Alcohol According to Medical Examiner Records, Baltimore City Residents, 1995-2007



Source: Data from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME); analyzed and reported by the Office of Epidemiology and Planning, Baltimore City Health Department in: *Intoxication Deaths Associated with Drugs of Abuse or Alcohol*. Baltimore City, Maryland: Baltimore City Health Department. January 2008. http://www.baltimorehealth.org/info/2008_01_24.IntoxicationDeaths.pdf

A 'drug of abuse' is any drug classified as a controlled substance by the federal Controlled Substance Act or any drug classified as a commonly abused drug by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. See source (above) for a list of drugs considered to be drugs of abuse.

- Intoxication deaths among Baltimore City residents increased in the late 1990's but have been decreasing since—intoxication deaths have declined by over 25% since 1999.
- Heroin is the most common drug associated with intoxication deaths. More than three-quarters (78%) of drug and alcohol intoxication deaths among city residents were associated with heroin from 1997-2007. In 2007, 64% of deaths were associated with heroin. This marks a dramatic decrease since the late 1990's, when heroin was implicated in almost 90% of intoxication deaths. Nonetheless, heroin remains the substance most commonly implicated in fatal intoxication deaths, and it is the most common cause of single-drug intoxication deaths.
- Cocaine was implicated in 30% of the deaths from 1997-2007; cocaine-associated intoxication deaths doubled between 2005 and 2006. Almost all the additional cocaine associated deaths also involved opioids, in particular heroin or methadone. One third of the increase in cocaine-associated deaths could be due improvements in detection of recent cocaine use in toxicological samples. This increase did not persist in 2007.
- Alcohol was involved in a quarter of intoxication deaths. Alcohol-associated deaths peaked between 1997 and 2000, and decreased by more than 50% between 2000 and 2005. As with drug of abuse-associated deaths, alcohol-associated deaths increased in 2006. In 2007, alcohol deaths returned to 2005 levels.