

an owie, a treat, and ooh so good:  
An Opioid Epidemic story

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# **AMA: Pain The Fifth Vital Sign 2000**

- National Pharmaceutical Council and The Joint Commission

**Pain: Current Understanding  
of Assessment, Management,  
and Treatments**

**Published Saturday,  
December 1, 2001**

## AMA Drops Pain as Vital Sign

The AMA's main "solution" to the opioid problem is to stop asking patients about their pain.

June, 2016

## Case

26 yo female currently a postal worker, presents with lower back and leg pain, said back and legs will “lock up” and she is unable to move or walk

PMHx: non contributory

Labs: wnl, Utox cocaine+,  
heroin+

## Case

said had injuries in high school and college while playing basketball and soccer

was given Norco's, which escalated to ms contin, lost her health insurance, turned to the streets buying morphine, heroin, and cocaine?

because "she a party girl"

# What Do You Do?

- 1) suboxone treatment
- 2) referral to a methadone clinic
- 3) prescribe ms contin
- 4) prescribe a fentanyl patch
- 5) can't help, send her away

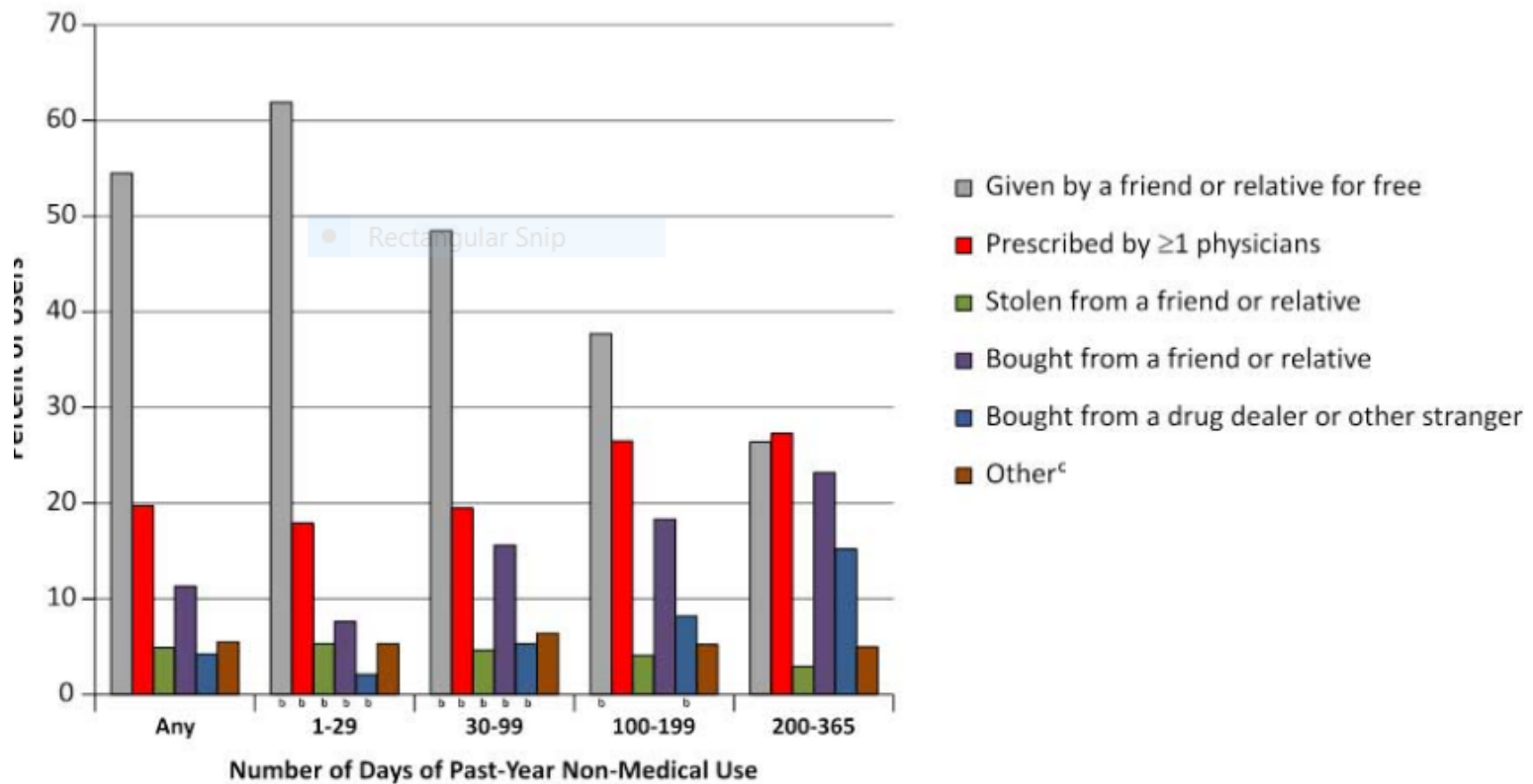
# Who's To Blame?

- 1) Purdue Pharma: 1996, Oxycontin is “non addicting”
- 2) DEA: ignored signs of runaway addiction, Indiana, West Virginia; approval of new forms of opioids; “war on drugs” 1971
- 3) HCAHPS: better scores better reimbursement, “it’s all good”
- 4) barrier to health care: lost, cost
- 5) everyone in health care



# Prescribing data

Sources of Prescription Opioids Among Past-Year Non-Medical Users<sup>a</sup>

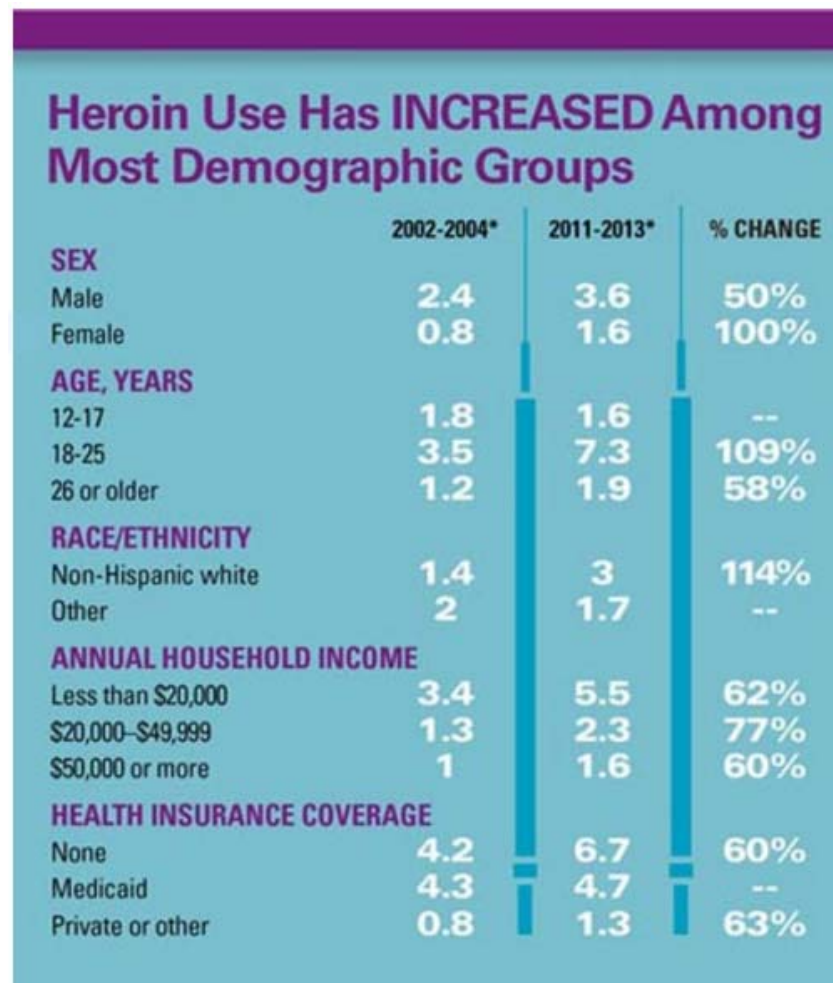


<sup>a</sup> Obtained from the US National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2008 through 2011.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>b</sup> Estimate is statistically significantly different from that for highest-frequency users (200-365 days) ( $P < .05$ ).

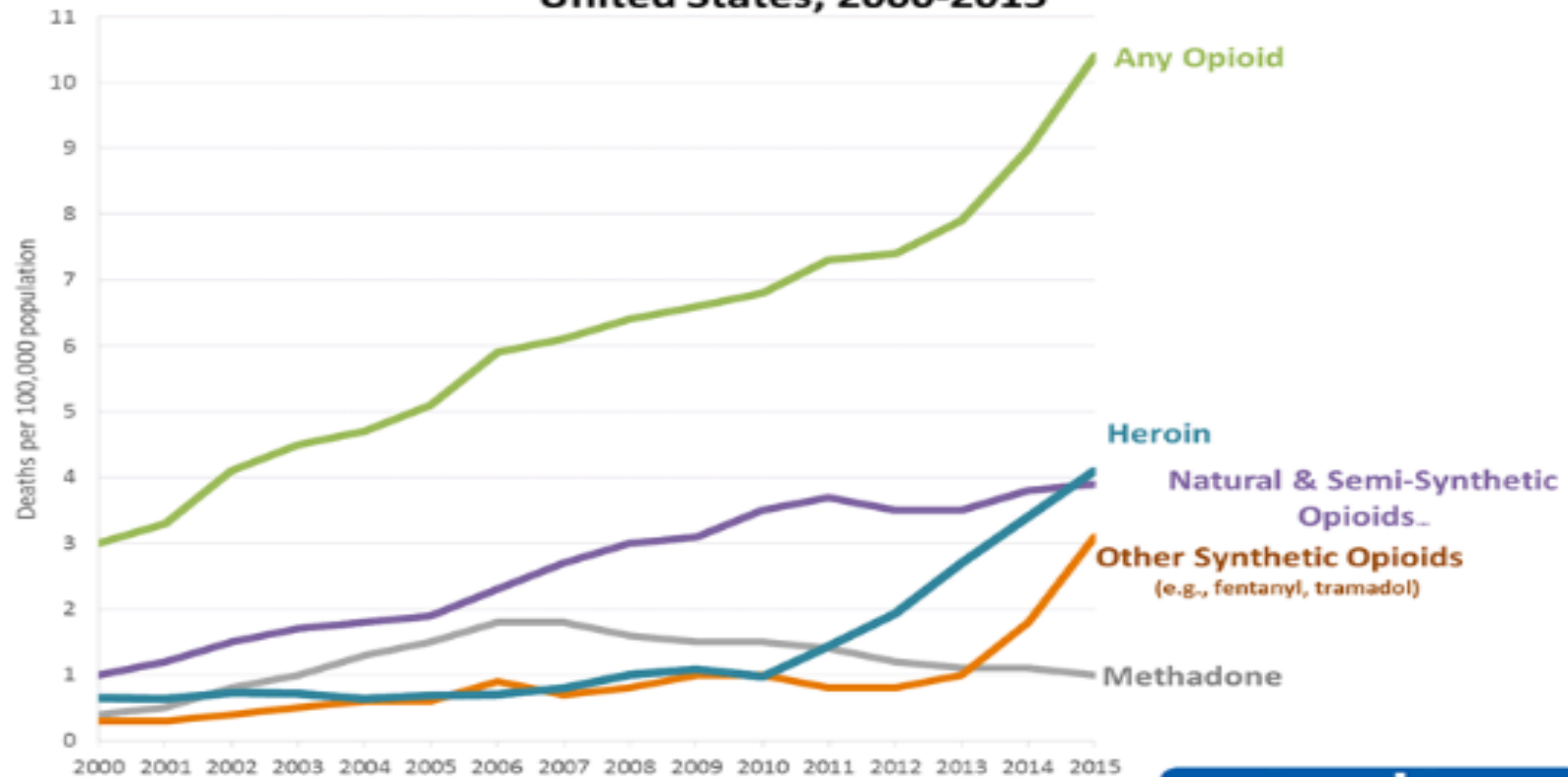
<sup>c</sup> Includes written fake prescriptions and those opioids stolen from a physician's office, clinic, hospital, or pharmacy; purchases on the Internet; and obtained some other way.

# Heroin and oxycodone most involved in overdose



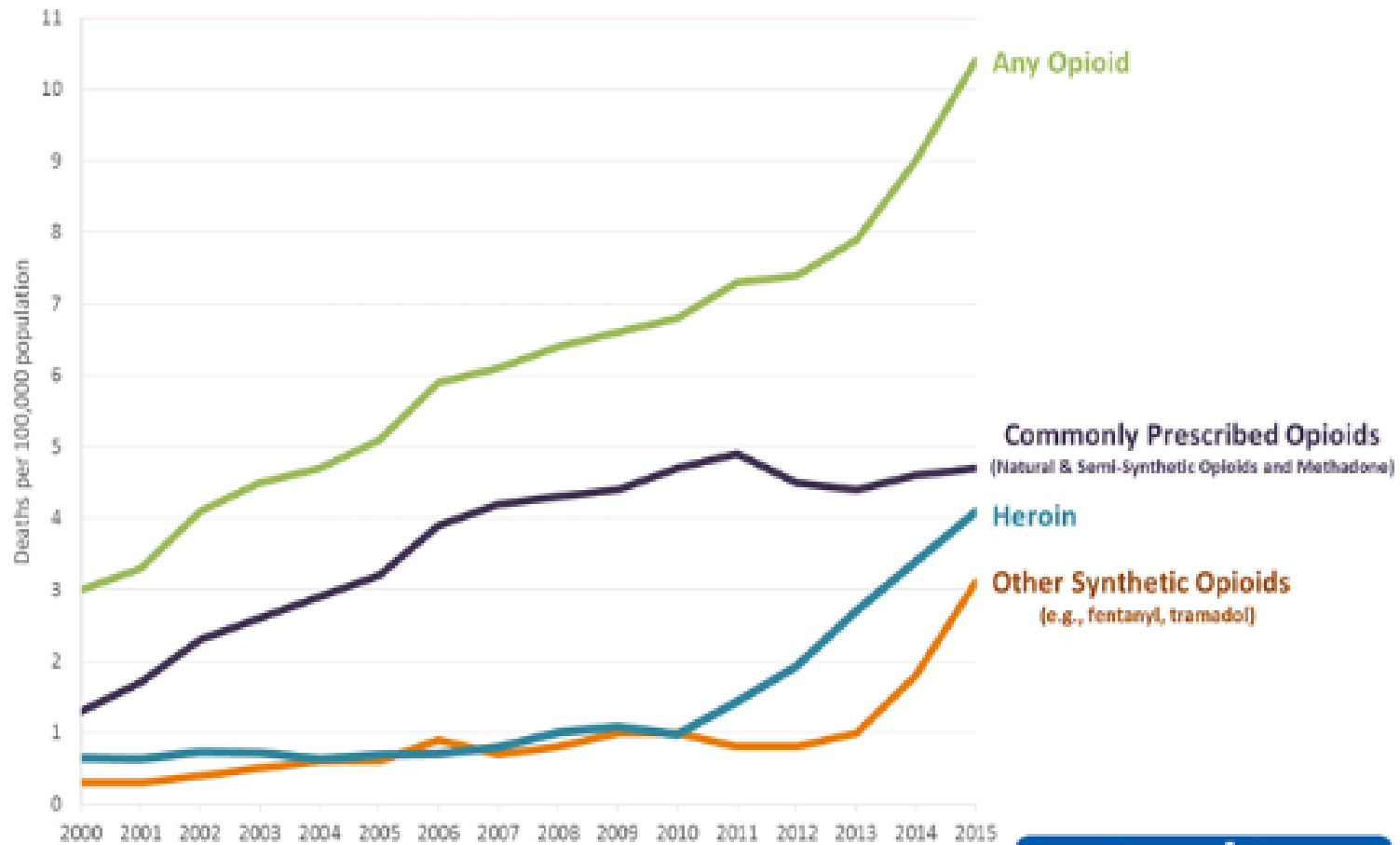
# Overall Opioid Deaths

**Overdose Deaths Involving Opioids, by Type of Opioid, United States, 2000-2015**



SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality. CDC WONDER, Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2016. <https://wonder.cdc.gov/>.

## Overdose Deaths Involving Opioids, United States, 2000-2015



SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality. CDC WONDER, Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2016. <https://wonder.cdc.gov/>.

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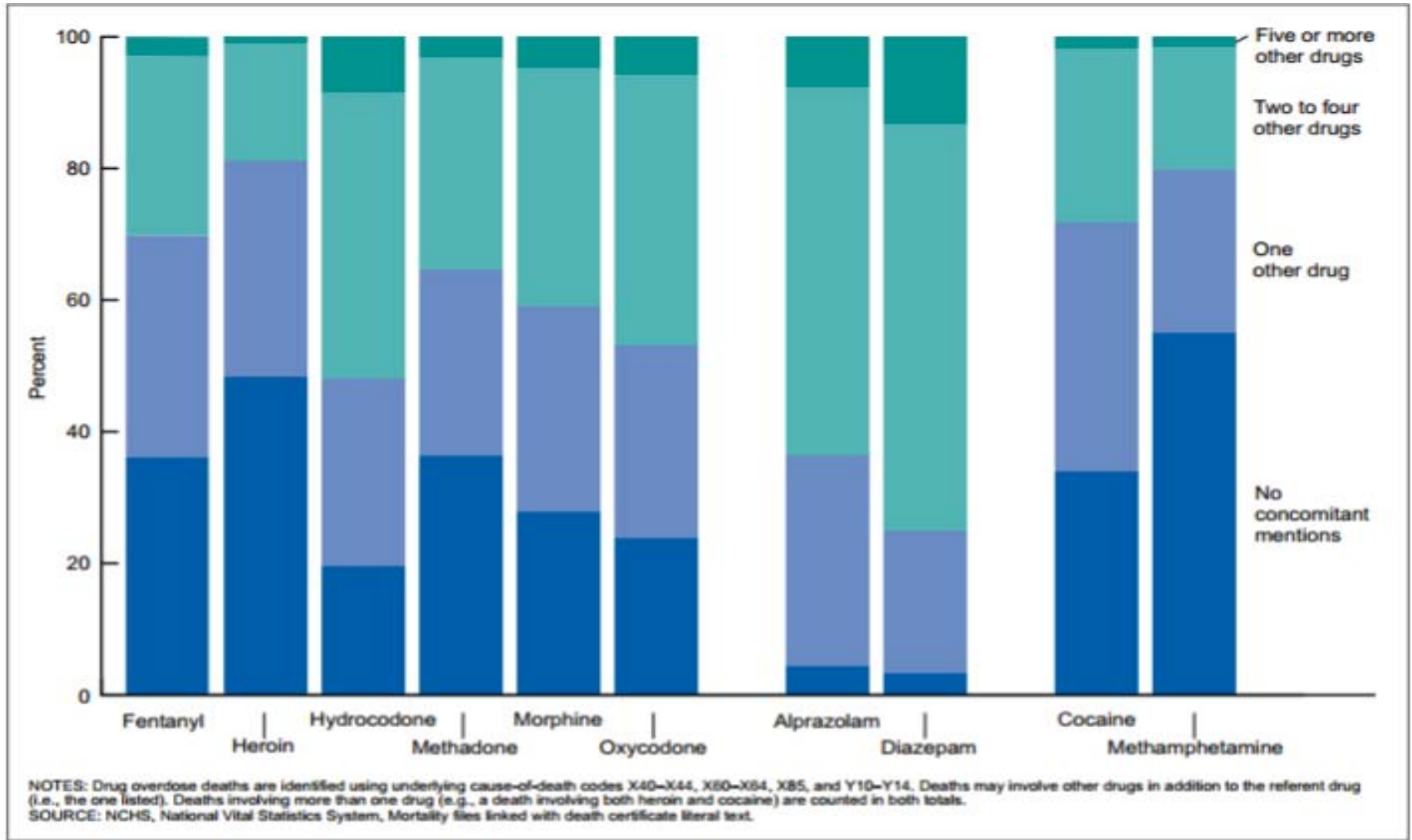
**Table B. Top 10 drugs involved in drug overdose deaths: United States, 2010–2014**

Rank <sup>1</sup>	2010			2011			2012			2013			2014		
	Referent drug	Number of deaths	Percent	Referent drug	Number of deaths	Percent	Referent drug	Number of deaths	Percent	Referent drug	Number of deaths	Percent	Referent drug	Number of deaths	Percent
	(n = 38,329)			(n = 41,340)			(n = 41,502)			(n = 43,982)			(n = 47,055)		
1	Oxycodone	5,256	13.7	Oxycodone	5,574	13.5	Heroin	6,151	14.8	Heroin	8,412	19.1	Heroin	10,863	23.1
2	Methadone	4,408	11.5	Cocaine	5,035	12.2	Oxycodone	5,169	12.5	Cocaine	5,289	12.0	Cocaine	5,856	12.4
3	Cocaine	4,312	11.2	Heroin	4,563	11.0	Cocaine	4,759	11.5	Oxycodone	4,954	11.3	Oxycodone	5,417	11.5
4	Alprazolam	3,677	9.6	Methadone	4,540	11.0	Methadone	4,081	9.8	Morphine	3,771	8.6	Alprazolam	4,217	9.0
5	Heroin	3,020	7.9	Alprazolam	4,043	9.8	Alprazolam	3,785	9.1	Alprazolam	3,696	8.4	Fentanyl	4,200	8.9
6	Morphine	2,941	7.7	Morphine	3,290	8.0	Morphine	3,508	8.5	Methadone	3,693	8.4	Morphine	4,022	8.5
7	Hydrocodone	2,844	7.4	Hydrocodone	3,196	7.7	Hydrocodone	3,023	7.3	Methamphetamine	3,185	7.2	Methamphetamine	3,728	7.9
8	Fentanyl	1,645	4.3	Methamphetamine	1,884	4.6	Methamphetamine	2,262	5.5	Hydrocodone	3,105	7.1	Methadone	3,495	7.4
9	Diazepam	1,448	3.8	Diazepam	1,695	4.1	Fentanyl	1,605	3.9	Fentanyl	1,905	4.3	Hydrocodone	3,274	7.0
10	Methamphetamine	1,388	3.6	Fentanyl	1,656	4.0	Diazepam	1,567	3.8	Diazepam	1,601	3.6	Diazepam	1,729	3.7

<sup>1</sup>Ranks were not tested for statistical significance.

NOTES: Drug overdose deaths are identified using underlying cause-of-death codes X40–X44, X60–X64, X85, and Y10–Y14. Deaths may involve other drugs in addition to the referent drug (i.e., the one listed). Deaths involving more than one drug (e.g., a death involving both heroin and cocaine) are counted in both totals. Caution should be used when comparing numbers across years. The reporting of at least one specific drug in the literal text improved, from 67% of drug overdose deaths in 2010 to 78% of drug overdose deaths in 2014.

SOURCE: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality files linked with death certificate literal text.



**Figure 5. Percent distribution of deaths involving concomitant drugs for the top 10 drugs involved in drug overdose deaths: United States, 2014**

Referent drug	Number of deaths involving referent drug	Most frequent concomitant drug			Second most frequent concomitant drug				
		Concomitant drug	Deaths involving both drugs		Concomitant drug	Deaths involving both drugs			
			Number	Percentage <sup>1</sup>		Number	Percentage <sup>1</sup>		
<b>Opioids</b>									
Fentanyl .....	4,200	Heroin	954	22.7	Cocaine	614	14.6		
Heroin .....	10,863	Cocaine	2,181	20.0	Fentanyl	954	8.7		
Hydrocodone .....	3,274	Alprazolam	836	25.5	Oxycodone	520	15.8		
Methadone .....	3,495	Alprazolam	634	18.1	Oxycodone	352	10.0		
Morphine .....	4,022	Oxycodone	572	14.2	Heroin	518	12.8		
Oxycodone .....	5,417	Alprazolam	1,252	23.1	Morphine	572	10.5		
<b>Benzodiazepines</b>									
Alprazolam .....	4,217	Oxycodone	1,252	29.6	Heroin	839	19.8		
Diazepam .....	1,729	Oxycodone	566	32.7	Hydrocodone	324	18.7		
<b>Stimulants</b>									
Cocaine .....	5,856	Heroin	2,181	37.2	Fentanyl	614	10.4		
Methamphetamine .....	3,728	Heroin	734	19.6	Morphine	300	8.0		
Referent drug	Third most frequent concomitant drug			Fourth most frequent concomitant drug			Fifth most frequent concomitant drug		
	Concomitant drug	Deaths involving both drugs		Concomitant drug	Deaths involving both drugs		Concomitant drug	Deaths involving both drugs	
		Number	Percentage <sup>1</sup>		Number	Percentage <sup>1</sup>		Number	Percentage <sup>1</sup>
<b>Opioids</b>									
Fentanyl .....	Oxycodone	423	10.0	Alprazolam	402	9.5	Morphine	358	8.5
Heroin .....	Alprazolam	839	7.7	Methamphetamine	734	6.7	Morphine	518	4.7
Hydrocodone .....	Diazepam	324	9.8	Morphine	309	9.4	Heroin	257	7.8
Methadone .....	Cocaine	337	9.6	Heroin	314	8.9	Diazepam	232	6.6
Morphine .....	Alprazolam	487	12.1	Cocaine	470	11.6	Fentanyl	358	8.9
Oxycodone .....	Diazepam	566	10.4	Hydrocodone	520	9.5	Heroin	427	7.8
<b>Benzodiazepines</b>									
Alprazolam .....	Hydrocodone	836	19.8	Methadone	634	15.0	Morphine	487	11.5
Diazepam .....	Alprazolam	314	18.1	Heroin	302	17.4	Morphine	283	16.3
<b>Stimulants</b>									
Cocaine .....	Morphine	470	8.0	Alprazolam	440	7.5	Oxycodone	418	7.1
Methamphetamine .....	Cocaine	241	6.4	Amphetamine	181	4.8	Alprazolam	151	4.0

<sup>1</sup>Percentage of deaths involving concomitant drug among deaths involving referent drugs. Deaths may involve more than one concomitant drug in addition to referent drug. Deaths involving more than one drug (e.g., a death involving both heroin and cocaine) are included in both totals (i.e., as a referent drug and concomitant drug).

NOTE: Deaths are identified using underlying cause-of-death codes X40–X44, X60–X64, X85, and Y10–Y14.

**Table E. Percentage of deaths with concomitant alcohol involvement for drug overdose deaths involving the top 10 drugs: United States, 2014**

Referent drug	Number of drug overdose deaths involving referent drug	Drug overdose deaths with concomitant alcohol involvement	
		Number	Percentage
<b>Opioids</b>			
Fentanyl .....	4,200	513	12.2
Heroin .....	10,863	2,252	20.7
Hydrocodone .....	3,274	562	17.2
Methadone .....	3,495	342	9.8
Morphine .....	4,022	522	13.0
Oxycodone .....	5,417	905	16.7
<b>Benzodiazepines</b>			
Alprazolam .....	4,217	652	15.5
Diazepam .....	1,729	374	21.6
<b>Stimulants</b>			
Cocaine .....	5,856	1,210	20.7
Methamphetamine .....	3,728	257	6.9

NOTES: Drug overdose deaths are identified using underlying cause-of-death codes X40–X44, X60–X64, X85, and Y10–Y14. Deaths may involve other drugs in addition to the referent drug (i.e., the one listed). Alcohol involvement included mentions of ethanol, isopropyl alcohol, and a nonspecific reference to alcohol.

SOURCE: NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality files linked with death certificate literal text.



# What are we doing?

- 1) Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Safety Net Act of 2014, from affordable care act
- 2) access to naloxone
- 3) the surgeon general's report on alcohol, drugs and health "Facing Addiction in America, 2016"

# What are we doing?

- 4) CURES: control substance utilization review and evaluation system
- California prescription monitoring program
- 5) CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain — United States
- *Recommendations and Reports* / March 18, 2016 / 65(1);1–49

# What are we doing?

- 6) more education: “breakdown the pain”
- team approach
- once pain is accessed and evaluated

what is prescribed is a totally different question

# “breaking down the pain”

- 1) somatic pain
- 2) neuropathic pain
- 3) visceral pain
- 4) spasms
- 5) psychiatric evaluation: depression, anxiety, ptsd
- 6) substance abuse history

## case

- She said pain starts in lower back, sharp and shooting down both legs to her ankles, several times a day, increased with activities, spasms mainly at night, doesn't sleep well, "stressed out", "mind won't shut off", nightmares of bad things in the past, "don't want to talk about it, wakes up in cold sweat and startled

# What do we do?

Prescribed venlafaxine and baclofen

- 1) No spasms
- 2) shooting or neuropathic pain decreased in frequency and intensity upon titration of venlafaxine
- 3) Sleeping better, occasional nightmares, considering prazosin