

Fact sheet: Xylazine Involvement in Fatal Drug Overdoses Data from the Illinois Statewide Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS)

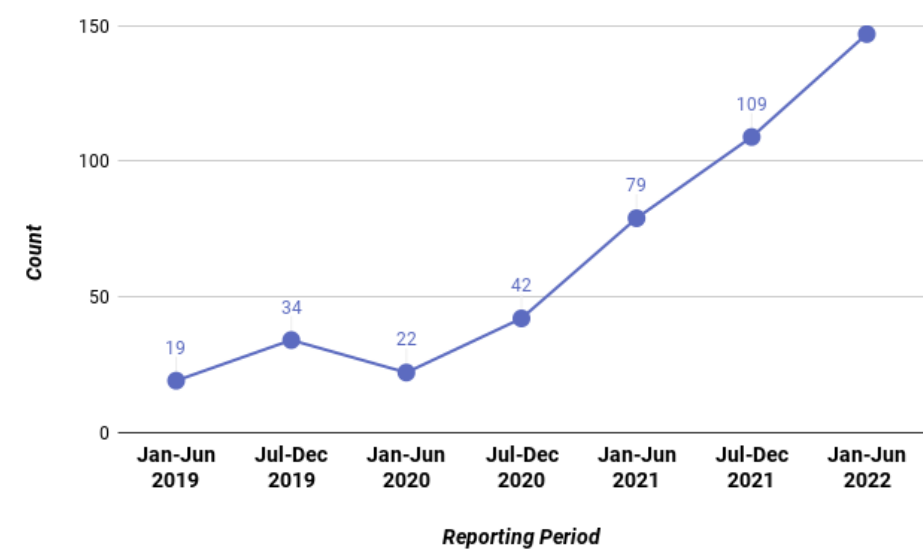


Participation in SUDORS is voluntary and as of this writing, SUDORS records data on 88% of all drug overdose deaths in Illinois.

Xylazine involved drug overdose deaths in Illinois by SUDORS participating counties Jan 2019 - Jun 2022

County	%	n
All other counties reporting data to SUDORS*	8	37
Cook	68.4	309
DuPage	2.2	10
Kane	1.3	6
La Salle	2.4	11
Lake	1.5	7
Madison	3.1	14
Sangamon	1.8	8
St. Clair	2.7	12
Tazewell	1.3	6
Will	4.6	21
Winnebago	2.4	11

The number of Xylazine involved deaths in Illinois has increased steadily since 2019.



What is Xylazine? Xylazine is a X drug used in veterinary medicine. It is an animal sedative used for muscle relaxant and analgesic properties. It is not approved for use in humans by the Food and Drug Administration.¹

Illicit use of Xylazine. Xylazine is frequently used as an adulterant in mixtures of heroin, fentanyl and cocaine. It is often used to “bulk” up quantities of these drugs. It can also be used independently and ingested by smoking, snorting, injecting or swallowing.²

Xylazine and overdose reversal. Unfortunately, because Xylazine is not an opioid, it does not respond to naloxone, an opioid reversal agent. That means administration of naloxone to reverse opioid drug involved drug overdoses may be less effective.

FACTS: Xylazine involvement in Illinois Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths

- From January 1, 2019 to Jun 30, 2022, there have been 452 unintentional drug overdose deaths involving Xylazine in Illinois. Of these 452 Xylazine involved overdose deaths, 82.3% (372) identified Xylazine as the cause of death
- The number of Xylazine involved deaths in Illinois has increased steadily since 2019

Demographics of Xylazine involved unintentional drug overdose deaths

- Almost three quarters (73.2%/331) Xylazine involved fatal overdoses were among males.
- The largest proportion of Xylazine involved deaths were among 25-34 and 35-44 year-olds.
- Non-Hispanic Whites had the largest proportion of xylazine involved deaths in Illinois.

Fatal overdose circumstances

- Over one third (37.2%/168) of Xylazine involved unintentional fatal overdoses had reports of naloxone administration. Slightly more (39.4%/178) tested positive for naloxone in postmortem toxicology.

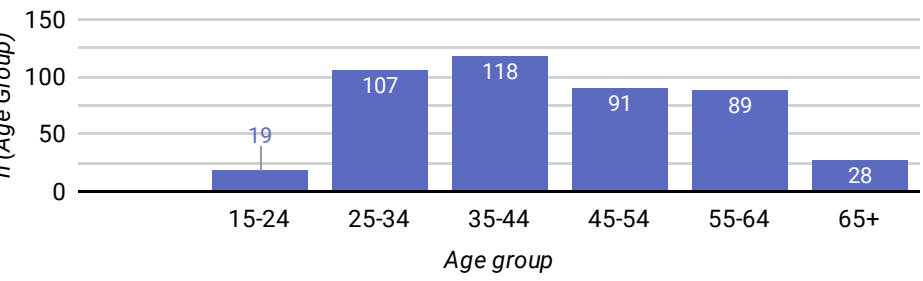
Conclusion

Xylazine involvement in unintentional overdose deaths is increasing substantially in Illinois. Of unintentional drug overdose deaths involving Xylazine, 82.3% listed the cause of death as Xylazine. The vast majority of these deaths also involve fentanyl. While the opioid overdose reversal agent naloxone was reported to be administered in over a third of these fatal incidents, it was likely not effective because Xylazine is not an opioid and does not respond to naloxone. The majority of those who died by unintentional drug overdose involving Xylazine were male, between the ages of 25-44 years, White.

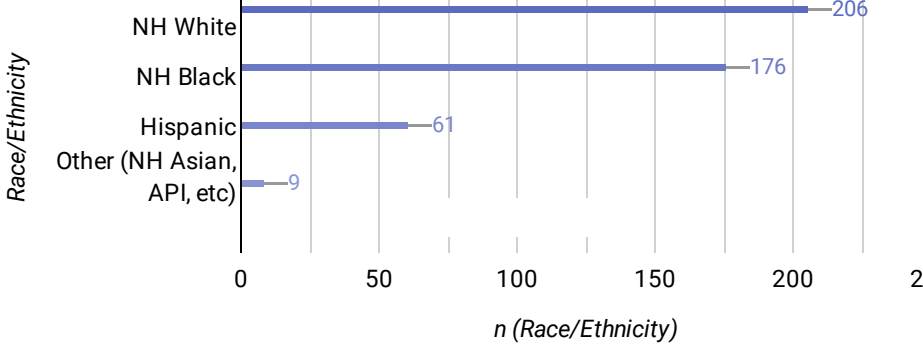
1. Kariisa M PP, Smith H, Bittling J. . Notes from the Field: Xylazine Detection and Involvement in Drug Overdose Deaths — United States, 2019 MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. 2021(70):1300–1302 2. McAward A. Xylazine, an Emerging Adulterant. Tactical Emergency Medicine Newsroom. 2021.

Substance tested positive (in addition to Xylazine)	n (substance involvement)	% (substance involvement)
Methamphetamine	16	8.2
Amphetamine	35	7.7
Benzodiazepine	98	21.7
Alcohol	117	25.9
Cocaine	144	31.9
Heroin	156	34.5
Fentanyl	449	99.3

Xylazine involved drug overdose deaths Jan 2019 - Jun 2022 by age group



Xylazine involved drug overdose deaths by Race/Ethnicity: Jan 2019 - Jun 2022



Administration route (how the fatal overdose drug(s) were taken)	% (route)
Unknown	67
Injection	20.6
Snorting	11.5
Ingestion	9.3

* we are required to suppress data for counties with fewer than 5 cases for privacy protection purposes.

Questions or Comments?
 Please contact: Maryann Mason, PhD,
 Principal Investigator
 Statewide Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System
 312.503.5142
 maryann-mason@northwestern.edu

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