# **Accidental Substance-Related Toxicity Deaths:** Prior Patterns of Prescribing, Substance Use Diagnoses, and Access to Treatment

**Deaths involving Opioids, Benzodiazepines,** Stimulants, and Alcohol in Ontario from 2018 to 2022



# **Overall Substance-Related Toxicity Deaths**

10,024

accidental substance-related toxicity deaths

84% involved opioids 61% involved stimulants

13%

involved alcohol

7.8% involved benzodiazepines

**72**%

increase in the number of deaths from the first and last 12 months of the study period

Nearly 2 in 3 people who died from a substance-related toxicity had a prior substance use disorder diagnosis

#### **Prior Non-Fatal Substance-Related Toxicities**

were treated in a hospital setting for a substancerelated toxicity incident in the year before death

17%

1.0%

for an opioid-related toxicity

for an alcohol-related toxicity

5.0% for a **stimulant**-related toxicity

2.0%

for a benzodiazepine-related toxicity

# **Substance-Specific Findings**

86%

Non-**Pharmaceutical** 

of opioid-related toxicity deaths (e.g. fentanyl)

**Substances** Involved in Death

of stimulant-related toxicity deaths (e.g. cocaine, methamphetamine)

of benzodiazepine-related toxicity deaths (e.g. etizolam, bromazolam)

#### Polysubstance Use Contributing to Death

66%

opioid-related toxicity deaths

80% stimulant-related toxicity deaths

84%

**alcohol**-related toxicity deaths

98% **benzodiazepine**-related toxicity deaths

#### **Prior Substance Use Disorder Diagnoses**

#### Opioid-Related Toxicity Deaths

Nearly 2 in 3 had a substause disorder

had a substance

2 had an **opioid use disorder** 

Opioid use disorder diagnoses varied significantly across age groups:

41% <25

25 to 44

46%

**36**%

45 to 64 ≥65

**Treatment** (i.e. methadone, buprenorphine,

**Prior Receipt of Opioid Agonist** 

slow release oral morphine) 83% in the past 5 years

**59%** 

in the past year

30% in the past 30 days 11% on the day of death

had a **stimulant** 

use disorder

#### Stimulant-Related Toxicity Deaths

had a substance

Stimulant use disorder diagnoses across age groups: 30%

33% <25

25 to 44

22% 45 to 64

≥65

16%

**Alcohol-Related Toxicity Deaths** 

**Prior Receipt** 

of Naltrexone

in 2 had an alcohol use disorder

1 1 3 in 5 had a substance use disorder

and/or **Acamprosate** 16%



of Topiramate and/or Gabapentin 19%

**Prior Receipt** 

**52%** 48% 55% ≤44

Alcohol use disorder diagnoses were similar

across age groups:

45 to 64

≥65 Benzodiazepine-Related Toxicity Deaths

13% 4.7% in the past 30 days 3.6% 9.4% on the day of death

#### Prior Receipt of Gabapentin and/or **Pregabalin** had a substance



Nearly 2 in 3 had a substa

42% in the past **year** 

27% in the past 30 days 27% on the **day of death** 

in 20 had a benzodiazepine use disorder

For more information: