

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

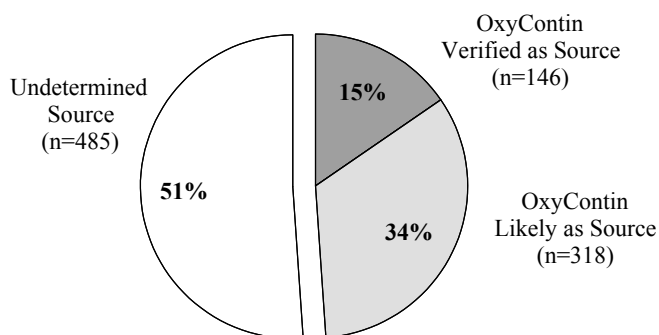
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One-Half of U.S. Oxycodone-Related Deaths Related to OxyContin

Approximately one-half (49%) of oxycodone-related deaths are related to the specific product OxyContin, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The DEA requested reports on all deaths induced by, associated with, or related to oxycodone that occurred in 2000 and 2001 from 775 medical examiners who were members of the National Association of Medical Examiners. Of the 949 oxycodone-related deaths reported to the DEA as of February 14, 2002, OxyContin was either verified as (15%) or likely to be (34%) the source of the oxycodone found in the blood.* Qualitative reports have suggested that injecting and snorting OxyContin, as well as using the drug in combination with alcohol, may lead to an increase in OxyContin-related deaths. However, the majority of the oxycodone-related deaths in which OxyContin was verified as or likely to be the source of oxycodone found in the blood were associated with oral consumption—only nine deaths were associated with the presence of a recent injection site and only one death was associated with snorting the drug. In addition, only 19% of the deaths had quantifiable levels of blood alcohol at the time of death.

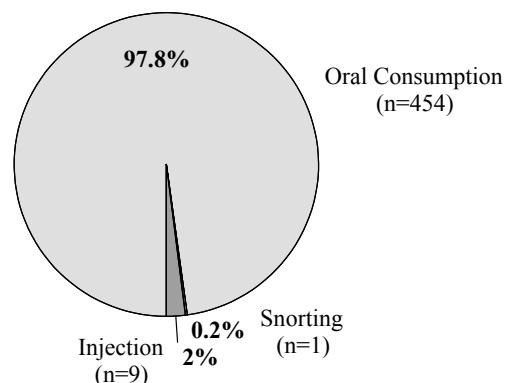
OxyContin Was Verified As or Likely to Be the Source of the Oxycodone Found in the Blood of Approximately One-Half of All Oxycodone-Related Deaths

(N=949 deaths in 32 states)



The Majority of These OxyContin-Related Deaths Were Related to Oral Consumption of the Drug

(N=464)



*OxyContin verified: an autopsy or investigative report specifically identified the presence of OxyContin at the time of death. OxyContin likely: a toxicology test was positive for oxycodone without the presence of acetaminophen or aspirin. (There are currently a limited number of oxycodone products that do not also contain the pain relievers acetaminophen or aspirin. The majority of prescriptions for products containing only oxycodone are for OxyContin).

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). "Drugs and Chemicals of Concern: Summary of Medical Examiner Reports on Oxycodone-Related Deaths," www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drugs_concern/oxycodone/oxycontin7.htm, May 16, 2002.