

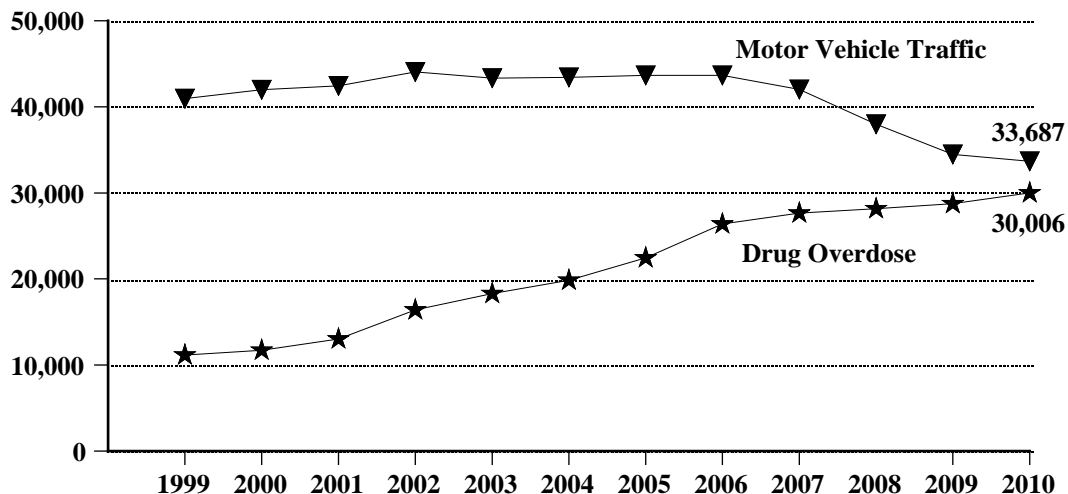
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths in U.S. Continue to Increase; Approaching Motor Vehicle Traffic Accidents as Primary Cause of Unintentional Deaths

Unintentional drug overdose deaths continue to increase in the U.S., according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In 2010 (the most recent year for which data are available), there were 30,006 unintentional drug overdose deaths, nearly three times as many in 1999. At the same time, motor vehicle traffic deaths have decreased, from a high of 44,065 in 2002 to 33,687 in 2010. Unintentional drug overdoses include those resulting from illegal, prescription, and over-the-counter drug misuse, abuse, taking too much for medical reasons, and accidental ingestion (such as by a toddler). The most common drug categories involved in drug overdose deaths are prescription opioids, cocaine, prescription benzodiazepines, and heroin.

**Number of Deaths from Unintentional Injuries in the United States,
by Top Two Causes (Motor Vehicle Traffic and Drug Overdose), 1999-2010**



NOTES: Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2010 file, which is based on death certificates submitted by medical examiners or coroners. Motor-vehicle traffic deaths include pedestrians, pedal cyclists, or occupants, and involve any type of motor vehicle on public roads (ICD-10 codes V02-V04 (.1,.9); V09.2; V12-V14(.3-.9); V19(.4-.6); V20-V28 (.3-.9); V29 (.4-.9); V30-V79 (.4-.9); V80 (.3-.5); V81.1; V82.1; V83-V86(.0-.3); V87(.0-.8); V89.2). Drug overdose deaths include accidental poisoning by and exposure to narcotics, hallucinogens, antiepileptics, sedative-hypnotics, antiparkinsonisms, psychotropics, nonopioid analgesics, antipyretics, antirheumatics, other drugs acting on the autonomic nervous system, and other and unspecified drugs, medicaments, and biological substances (ICD-10 codes X40-X44). Mortality data prior to 1999 cannot be compared with data from 1999 and after due to significant changes in the coding of mortality data in 1999.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, *Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2010* on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 2012. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdcx.gov/mcd-icd10.html> on April 12, 2013.