



European Monitoring Centre  
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

# Drug-related deaths and mortality among drug users

Expert meeting, 3-4/11 2022

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# The Drug-related deaths (DRD) network

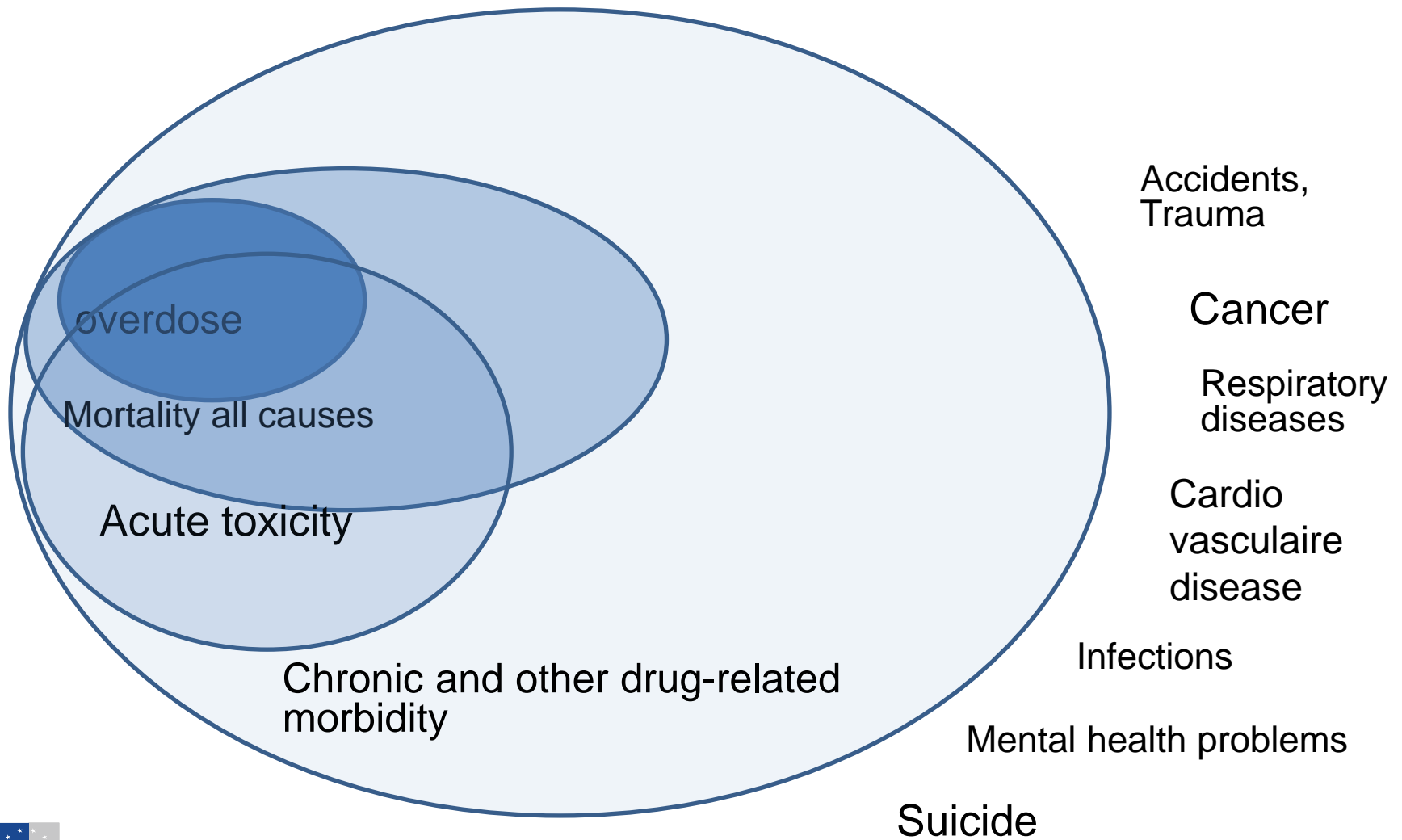
- Large group and multifaceted expertise
  - EU Members States, Norway, Türkiye
  - IPA countries
  - European Neighbourhood Policy partners (EU4MD) countries
  - CADAP countries
- Expertise in forensic toxicology, forensic sciences, national statistics, public health and monitoring the drug phenomenon



- Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, IPA : Albania Bosnia and Herzegovina \* Kosovo \*\* North Macedonia Serbia
- European Neighbourhood Policy partners: Algeria Azerbaijan Georgia Lebanon Moldova Palestine Tunisia Ukraine – all active partners of the EU4MD projects
- CADAP Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan
- Invited speakers : USA, UK, Australia, Switzerland



# Drug-related harms: what matters?



# Drug-related deaths monitoring: 3 pillars



# Objectives and sources

- Monitoring overdose ('drug-induced deaths')

Pillar 1 General mortality registers (national statistics)

Pillar 2 Special registers (forensic toxicology, police, providing more information on the drugs involved)

- Monitoring all causes of deaths among people who use drugs

Pillar 3 Linkage or longitudinal cohorts studies



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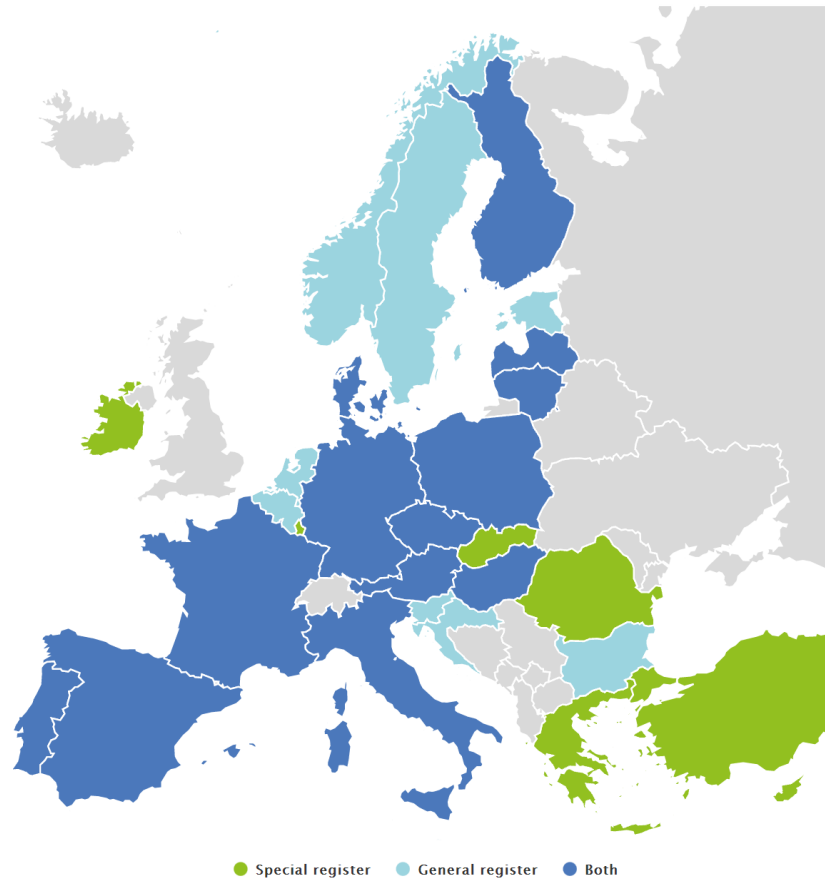


Toxicology

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# Sources used by the countries to monitor overdose deaths



- Most countries report data from both sources (general and special registers) → triangulation and validation
- Countries report data every year
- Many countries have set up a national working group
- Work is on-going on several general and special registers across Europe

Source EMCDDA (2022) Frequently asked questions (FAQ). Drug overdose deaths in Europe, [https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/topic-overviews/content/faq-drug-overdose-deaths-in-europe\\_en#question16](https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/topic-overviews/content/faq-drug-overdose-deaths-in-europe_en#question16)

# Objectives and corresponding activities

1) Quantify (how many deaths occur, where, when?)

- Statistical Bulletin
- FAQ DRD

2) Characterise (what substances are involved? including polydrug)

- Revised Standard Table 6 (ST6)
- →more information on drugs and medicines (fentanyl, BZD, pregabalin, alcohol)



# Objectives and corresponding activities

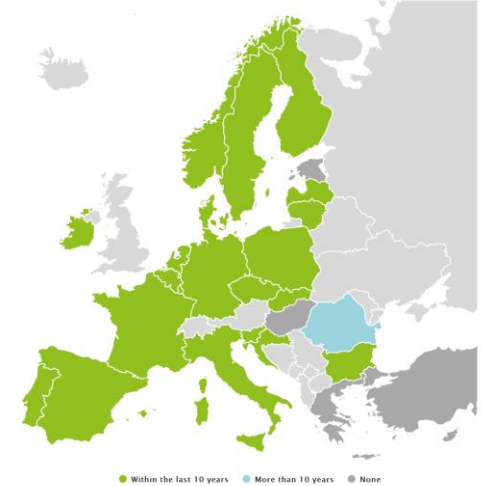
## 3) Validate (compare national statistics and cohort findings)

- Cohort studies mapping
- Preliminary results

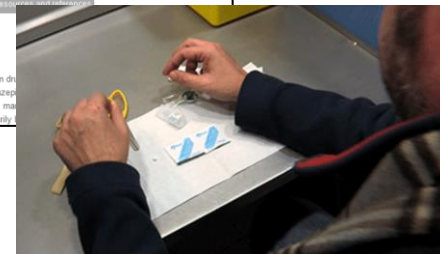
## 4) Link with responses

- Updates from the network
- Miniguides - prevention of opioid-related deaths

Mortality cohort studies among people using drugs in Europe: countries with studies conducted within the last 10 years or earlier. July 2021 – provisional findings



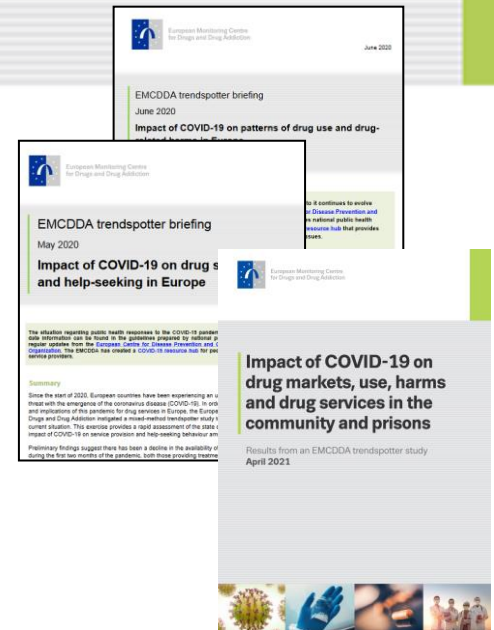
The screenshot shows a website page for 'Take-home naloxone'. The page has a navigation menu with options like 'Data', 'Countries', 'Topics (A-Z)', 'Our activities', 'Best practice', 'Publications', 'Events', 'News', and 'About'. Below the navigation is a large blue header with the title 'Take-home naloxone'. Underneath, there are several colored tabs: 'Introduction' (red), 'Overview' (blue), 'Evidence' (green), 'Role of play' (orange), 'Country profiles' (purple), and 'Recovery and relapse' (grey). The 'Introduction' tab is selected, and the text below reads: 'Introduction What is naloxone and why is it important? Drug overdose continues to be the main cause of death among problem drug users alongside other central nervous system depressants such as benzodiazepines. Overdoses are common among opioid users, and most have witnessed one. Death from opioid overdose is caused primarily by respiratory depression. Naloxone is a medication that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. It is a short-acting opioid antagonist that binds to the same receptors as opioids, preventing them from exerting their effects. Naloxone is available as a nasal spray, which is easy to use and can be administered by anyone. It is a life-saving medication that should be readily available to anyone who may witness an overdose. Naloxone is a key component of a comprehensive strategy to reduce the harm caused by drug overdose. It is a simple, effective, and low-cost intervention that can save lives. Naloxone is a medication that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. It is a short-acting opioid antagonist that binds to the same receptors as opioids, preventing them from exerting their effects. Naloxone is available as a nasal spray, which is easy to use and can be administered by anyone. It is a life-saving medication that should be readily available to anyone who may witness an overdose. Naloxone is a key component of a comprehensive strategy to reduce the harm caused by drug overdose. It is a simple, effective, and low-cost intervention that can save lives.





# Activities → Updates

- 5) Assess the health threats
- Trendspotter study on COVID-19, drug use and mental health in 2022
- Cannabis-related harm review
- Hospital sentinel network Euro-DEN: new centres recruited in 2022, data collection continued
- → Lisbon Addictions conference 2022



# LISBON ADDICTIONS

European Conference on Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies

Lisbon Congress Centre  
23-25 November 2022

## Oral presentation

### 1. Overdose prevention and treatment implications of fentanyl use in the United States

13:20 to 14:50 | Central square 4 (C4) | Alexander Walley

## Oral presentation

### 2. Fentanyl related deaths and fentanyl acute toxicity presentations at emergency Departments in Europe, 2010-2020

13:20 to 14:50 | Central square 4 (C4) | Peter Heudtlass

## Oral presentation

### 3. High drug-related death mortality in Finland – special focus on young adults and teenagers

13:20 to 14:50 | Central square 4 (C4) | Priikko Kriikku

## Oral presentation

### 4. Intentional overdoses and associated mental health challenges, an overlooked sub-population of overdoses

13:20 to 14:50 | Central square 4 (C4) | Thomas Clausen

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## Special at-risk populations and need for diversified interventions to prevent overdoses: insights from the US and Europe, on fentanyl, suicidal overdoses and deaths among teenagers

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Oral presentation

## 4. Deaths among acute drug toxicity presentations to the Euro-DEN Plus Network, 2014-2020

Thursday, 24 November, 2022 - 15:00 to 16:30

CENTRAL SQUARE 2 (C2)

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Oral presentation

## 3. Cannabis-related effects and harms: a scientific overview

Wednesday, 23 November, 2022 - 10:50 to 12:20

KNOWLEDGE MARKET 4 (K4)

# Agenda of the expert meeting 2022

1. Introduction and international perspective
2. Overall mortality – beyond overdoses, large excess risk of all deaths. Focus on suicide
3. Signals of possible concern : diversification and increase in opioid deaths
4. Outbreak and threats: stimulants and other drugs causing deaths and harms
5. Acute drug-toxicity and morbidity – Poison centres and emergencies
6. General mortality registers – coding issues





# Format

- Very large group + the hybrid format
- → Opportunity to give the floor to more experts with
  - detailed presentations
  - but also ‘Tour de table’ brief communications
- Presentations and supporting documents will be available on the expert meeting web page or the restricted area (provided speakers’ agreement)



# Thank you

More information will be available on the expert meeting from

[https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/meetings/2022/drug-related-deaths-drd\\_en](https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/meetings/2022/drug-related-deaths-drd_en)

Contact : Isabelle.Giraudon @ emcdda.europa.eu

