888* Bodies and Counting

*** overdoses through 12-29-15**

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SE/WI REGIONAL
HEROIN/OPIATES
INITIATIVE

Drug Overdoses in Milwaukee

Like much of the nation, Wisconsin continues to battle a heroin and opiate epidemic that is placing an increased burden on communities to better understand the local challenges associated with addition and its public health implications. Milwaukee County alone has seen a 495% increase in heroin related deaths between 2005-2014[1]. These deaths, together with other opiate-related overdoses, have exceeded injury related deaths such as motor vehicle fatalities and homicides. Yet while our community faces a major outbreak in the use and abuse of opioids, policymakers have much to learn and about the complexities of the problem in order to introduce a targeted public health prevention model that is dynamic, multipronged, multilayered and integrated across different governmental jurisdictions.

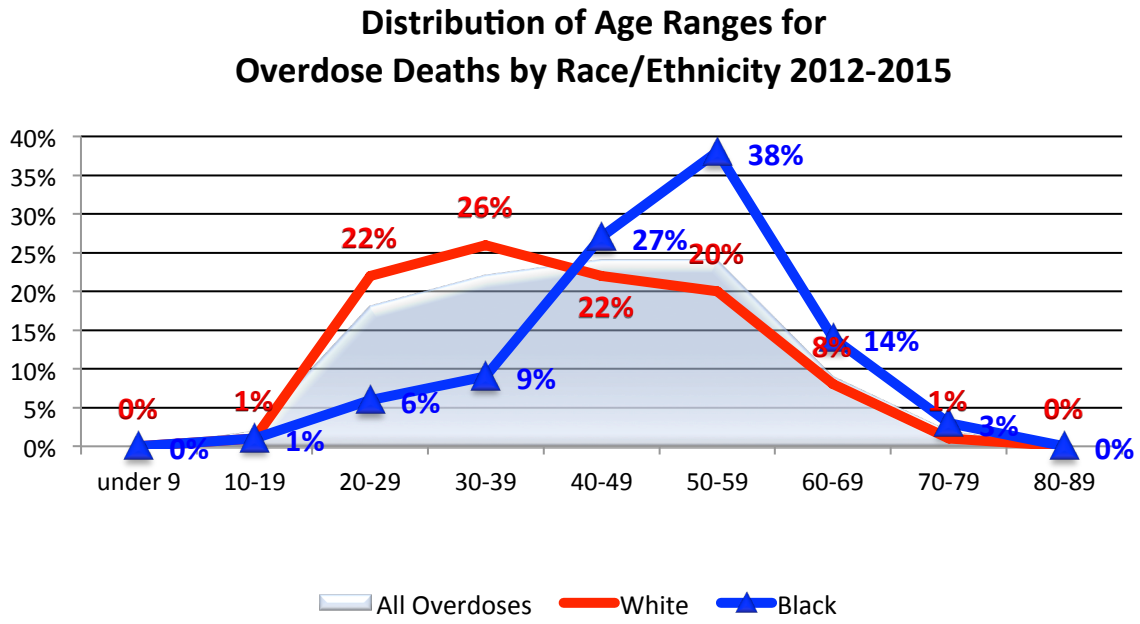
Targeted Policy Initiatives

To move Milwaukee County away from an opiate and heroin abuse outbreak to a county of superior public health, we must narrowly define the problem, identify who is most at risk and deploy a targeted communication strategy. Defining the problem requires the implementation of an effective data strategy. To optimize the use of data, we must not only ensure a consistent approach to data collection and management, but also that the data collected is easily accessible by the general public. With quality data in place and key experts across different sectors engaged in the analysis process, Milwaukee County will be a leader in drug overdose prevention strategies through its use of data as a strategic asset.

photo credit: WI DOJ

[1] http://www.jsonline.com/news/health/heroin-deaths-in-milwaukee-county-jump-by-72-b99447450z1-292396321.html

Understanding the Numbers

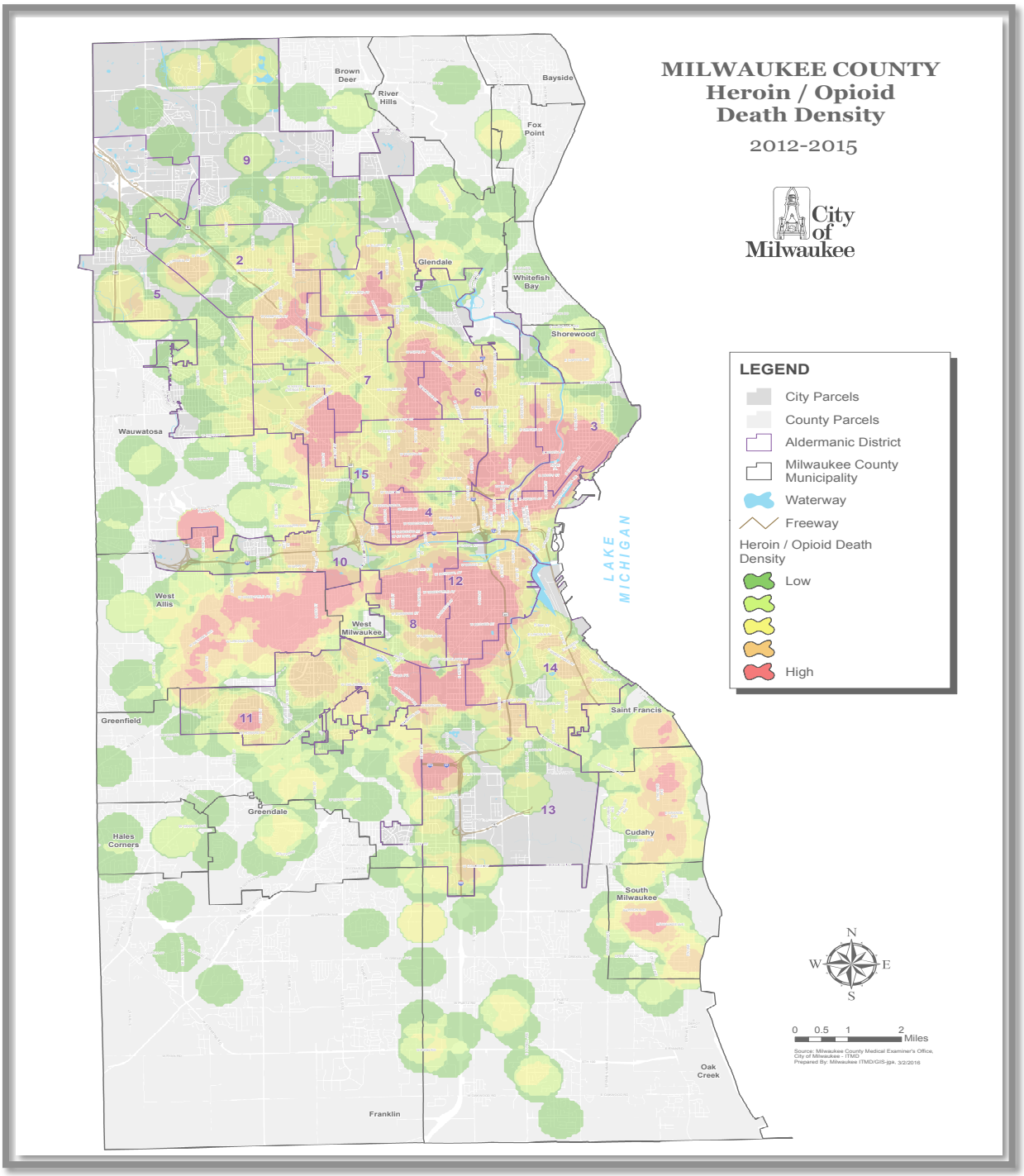


Contrary to popular discourse that young people are primarily overdosing, nearly 50% of overdoses in Milwaukee County are occurring between the ages of 30-59.

While white overdose victims nearly match the distribution of all overdoses, black overdose victims skew older, with 38% of overdoses occurring between the ages of 50-59. The majority of white overdoses (26%) occur between the ages 30-39.

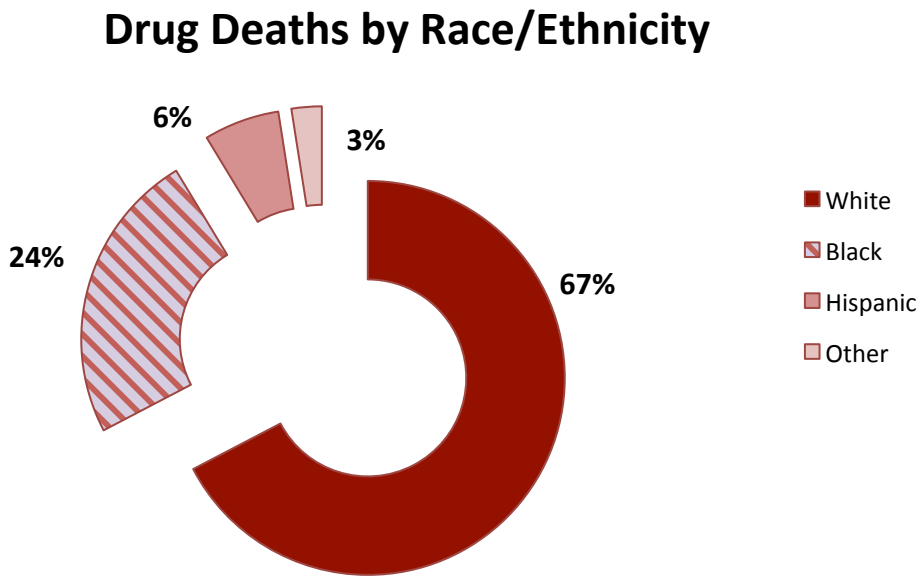
The average age of an overdose victim in Milwaukee County is 43.

Understanding the Numbers: Geographic Location

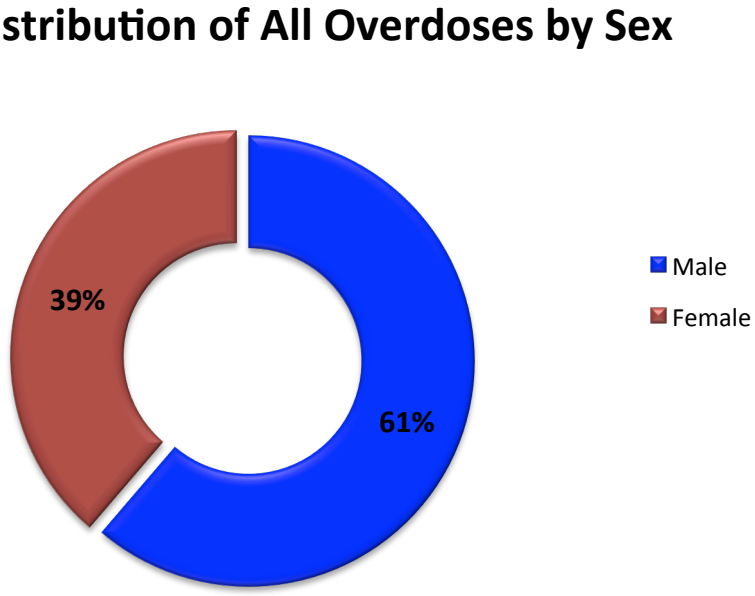


Understanding the Numbers: Demographics

Of the 888 overdoses, 598 (67%) were white individuals, far outpacing all other categories.

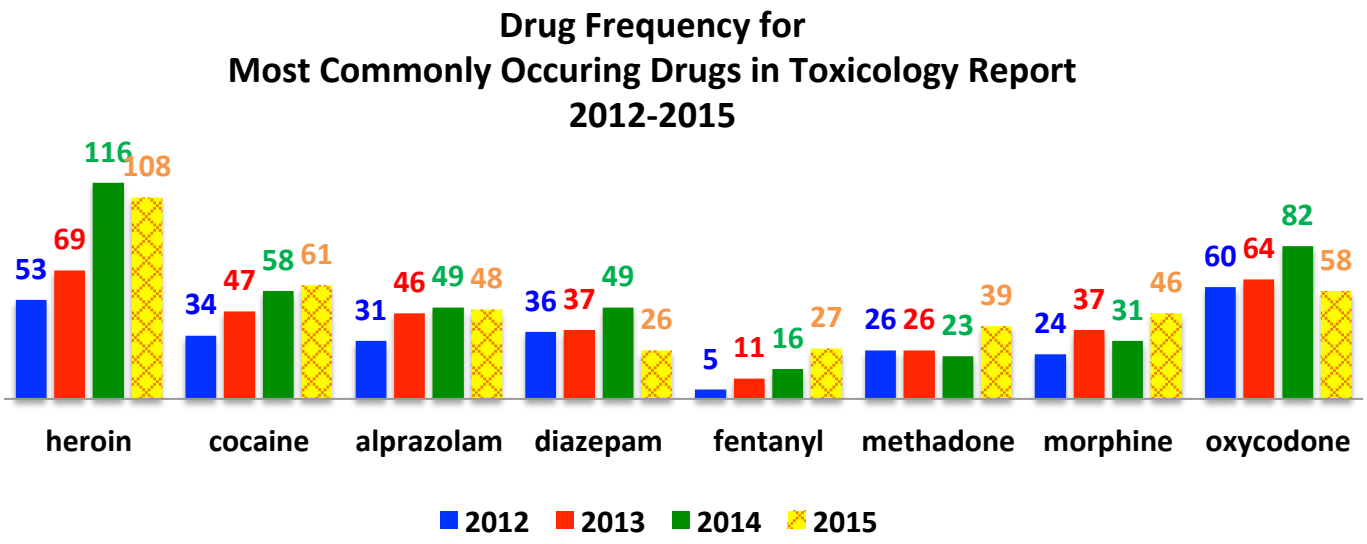


544 (61%) were male and 344 (39%) were female.



	All Overdoses 2012-2015		White 2012-2015		Black 2012-2015	
Sex	**Freq.**	**% of All Deaths**	**Freq.**	**% of White Deaths**	**Freq.**	**% of Black Deaths**
Male	544	61%	376	63%	116	54%
Female	344	39%	222	37%	97	46%
Age Range						
under 9	3	0%	1	0%	1	0%
10-19	14	2%	7	1%	3	1%
20-29	158	18%	129	22%	12	6%
30-39	194	22%	153	26%	20	9%
40-49	210	24%	133	22%	57	27%
50-59	214	24%	121	20%	82	38%
60-69	79	9%	46	8%	30	14%
70-79	15	2%	8	1%	7	3%
80-89	1	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Race/ Ethnicity						
White	598	67%	-	-	-	-
Black	213	24%	-	-	-	-
Hispanic	55	6%	-	-	-	-
Other	22	2%	-	-	-	-

	All Deaths		White		Black	
Most Prevalent Drugs	**Freq.**	**% of All Deaths**	**Freq.**	**% of White Deaths**	**Freq.**	**% of Black Deaths**
Heroin	346	39%	252	42%	64	30%
Oxycodone	264	30%	164	27%	71	33%
Cocaine	200	23%	91	15%	97	46%
Other Opioids & Benzos of Importance						
Alprazolam	174	20%	126	21%	30	14%
Diazepam	148	17%	107	18%	34	16%
Methadone	114	13%	81	14%	22	10%
Morphine	138	16%	91	15%	29	14%
Fentanyl	59	7%	44	7%	13	6%

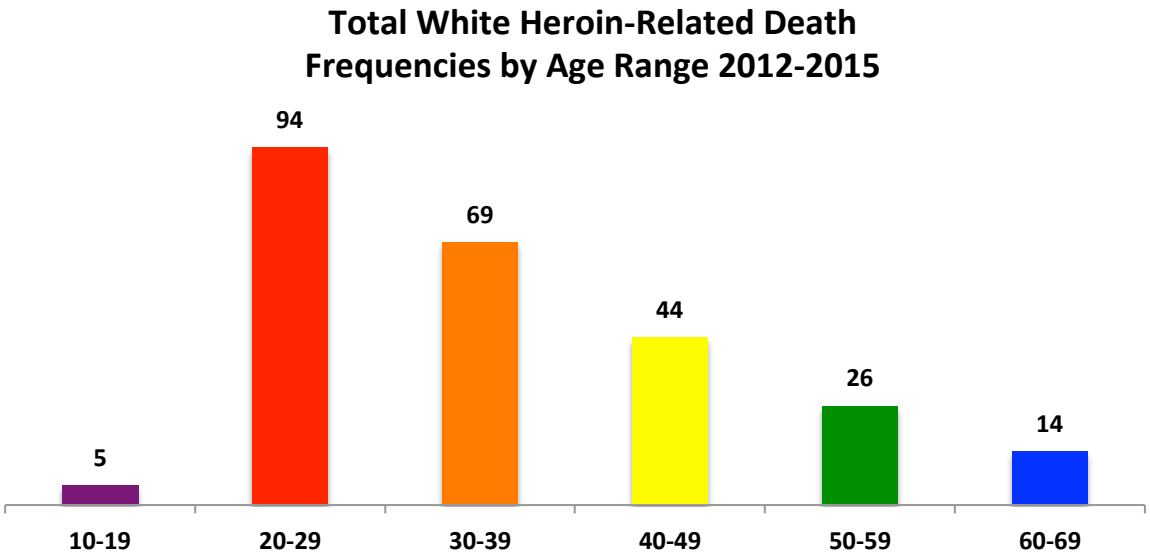


Heroin was the most commonly occurring drug found in toxicology reports, appearing in 39% of toxicology reports between 2012-2015. Oxycodone and cocaine follow. However, while heroin was the most commonly occurring drug found in white toxicology reports (42%), cocaine had the highest frequency for black toxicology reports, appearing in 46% of reports. Also of importance is the continued increase of fentanyl occurrences.

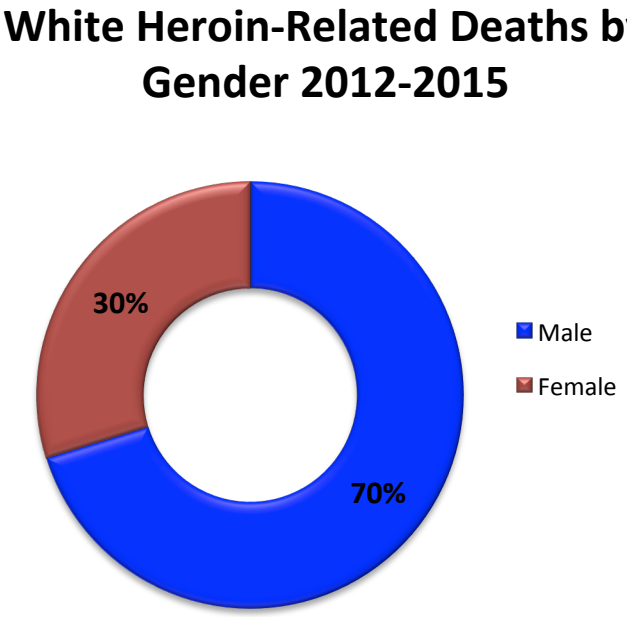
	HEROIN	COCAINE	ALPRAZOLAM	DIAZEPAM	FENTANYL	METHADONE	MORPHINE	OXYCODONE
% change 2012-2015	+104%	+79%	+55%	-28%	+440%	+50%	+92%	-3%
% change 2014-2015	-7%	+5%	-2%	-47%	+69%	+70%	+48%	-29%
% of 2015 overdoses	43%	24%	19%	10%	11%	16%	18%	23%

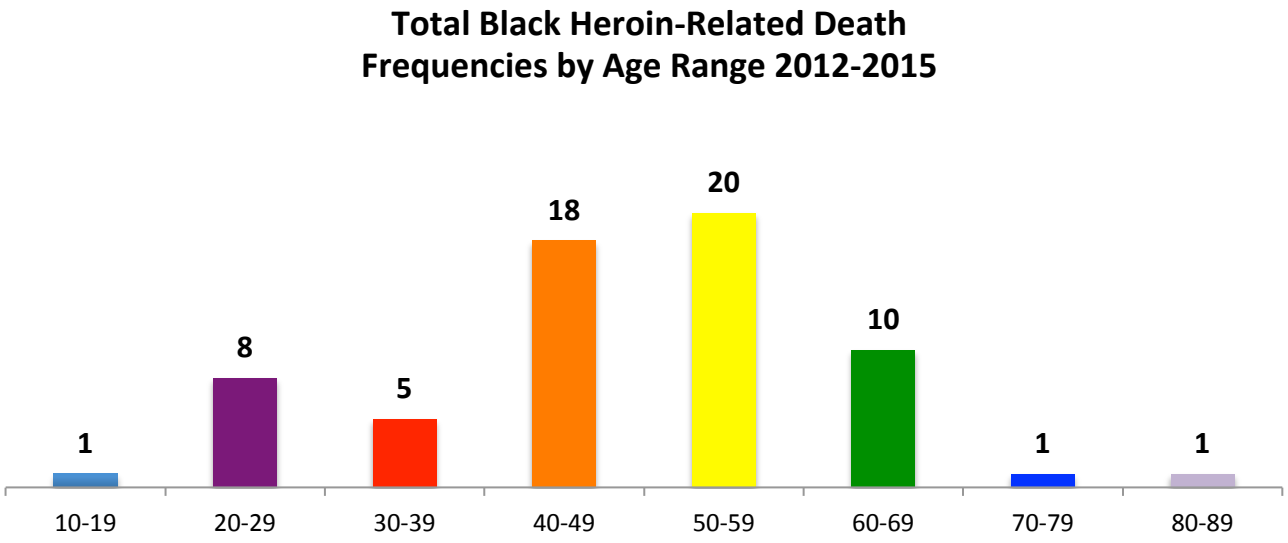
% of 2015 overdoses equates to the percent of toxicology reports where the specific drug appears.

Drug Profiles: Heroin

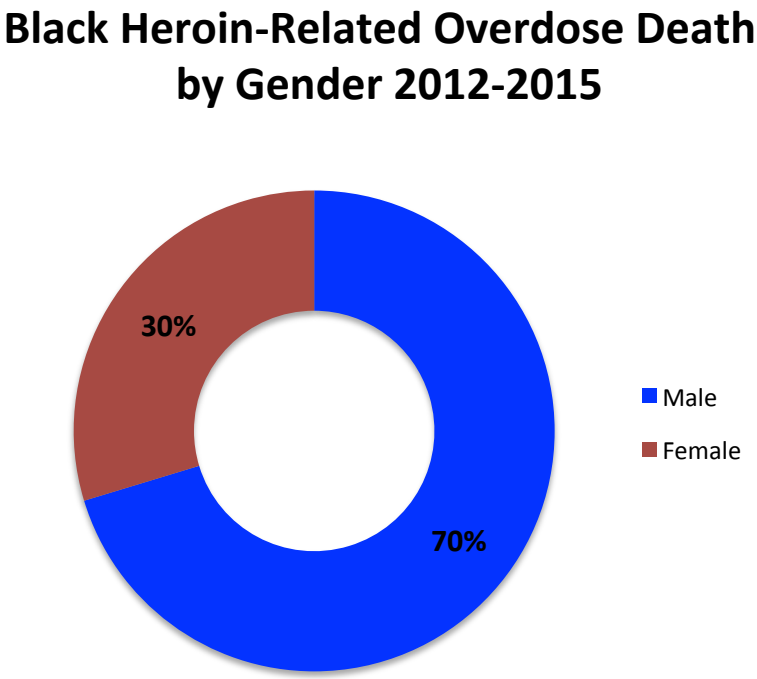


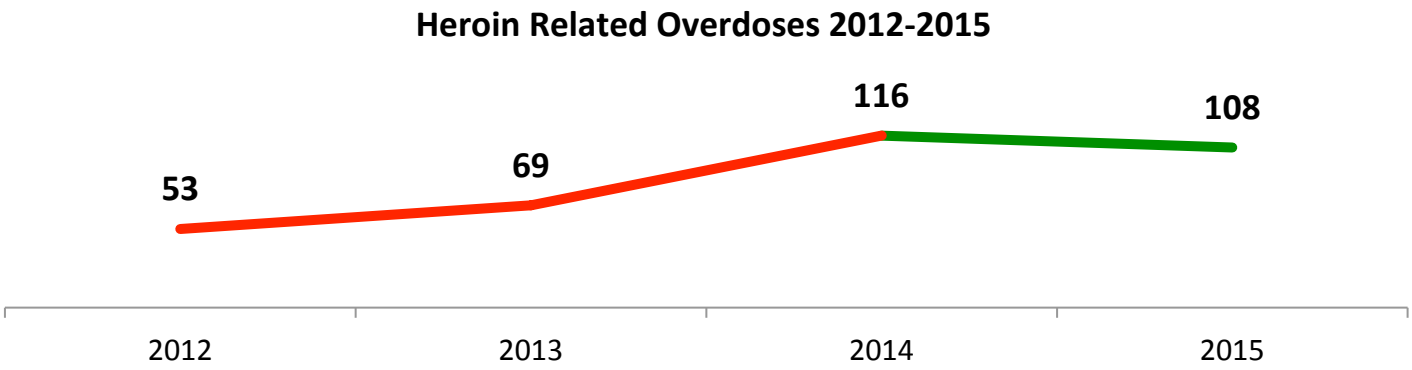
The majority of white heroin-related deaths occur between 20-39 years of age.



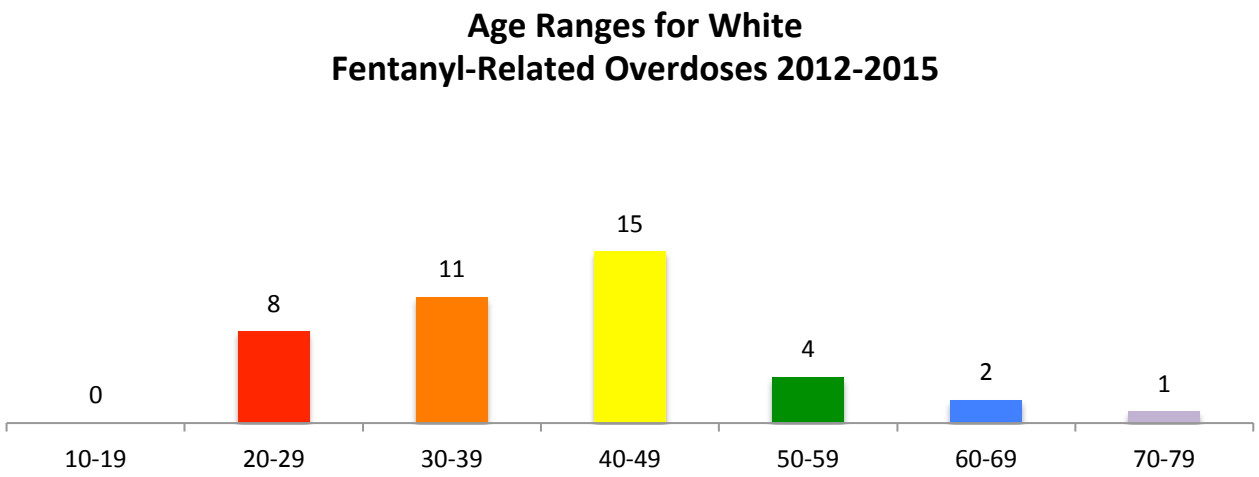


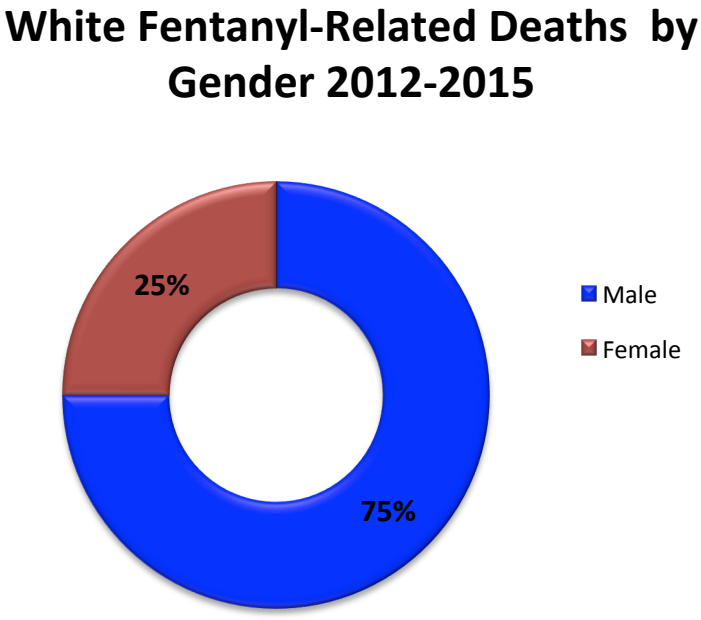
The majority of black heroin-related deaths occur between 40-59 years of age.



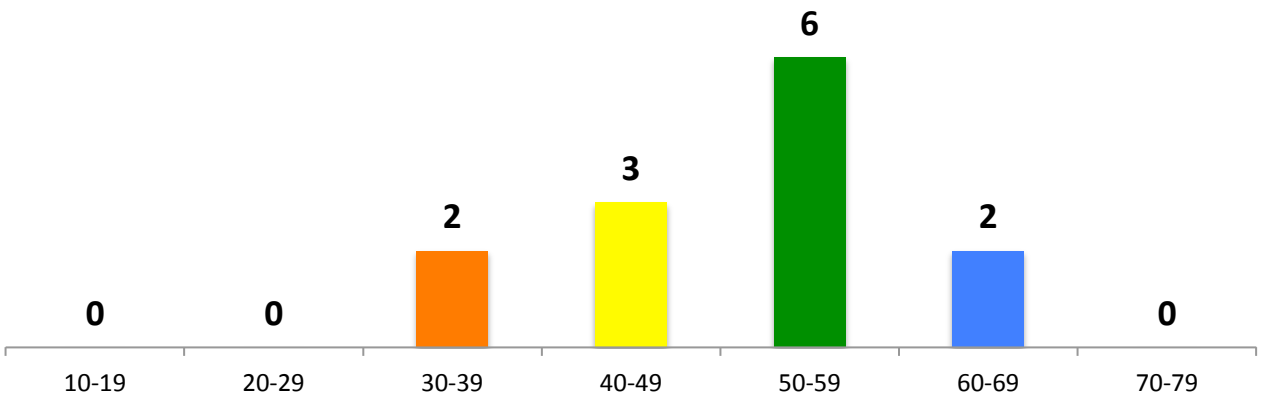

Heroin Related Overdoses 2012-2015
53
69
116
108
2012
2013
2014
2015

Drug Profiles: Fentanyl

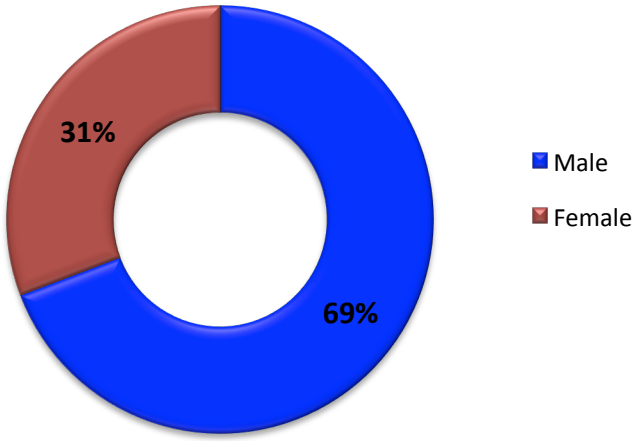


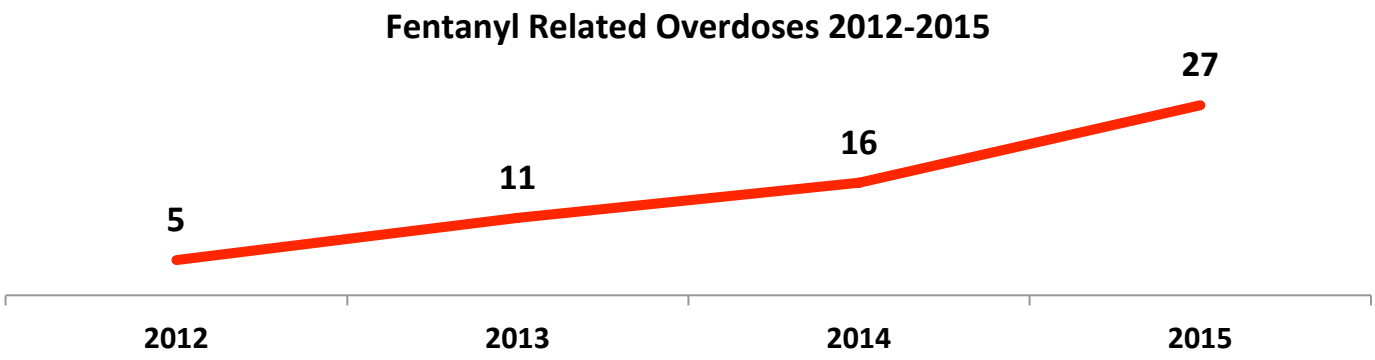


Age Ranges for Black Fentanyl-Related Overdoses 2012-2015



Black Fentanyl-Related Deaths by Gender 2012-2015





The data analyzed in this report was provided by the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office and includes confirmed overdose deaths in Milwaukee County from January 2012 through December 29, 2015.

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