Connecticut Department of Public Health
Drug Overdose Monthly Report

Fatal Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Report

Key Findings About Drug Overdose Decedents, 2019 – July 2023*

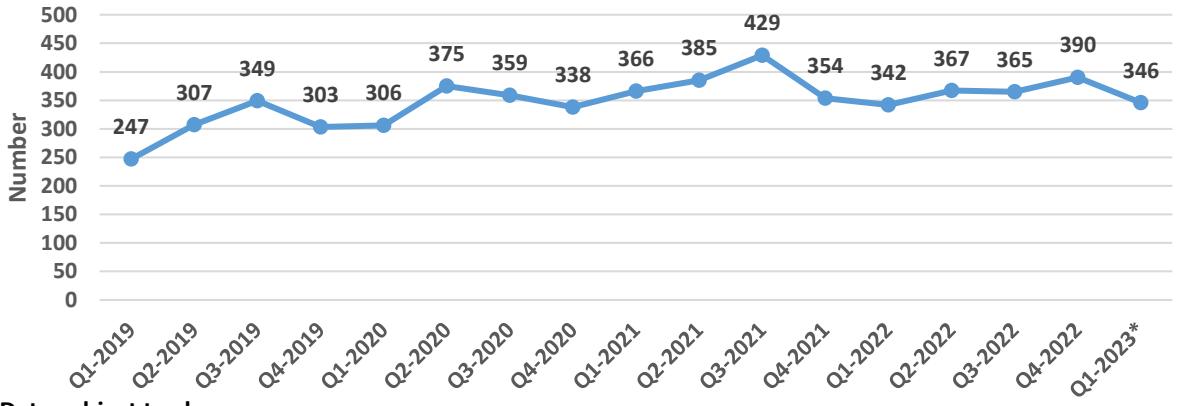
- The current monthly report is based on confirmed fatal drug overdose cases from 2019 to the 1st week of July 2023. Data from 2023 are preliminary and may change due to pending cases. The period of analysis includes January 2020 through June 2023.
- **2023* data overview**: As of the 1st week of July there were 692 overdose-related deaths in 2023, with 111 in January, 128 in February, 107 in March, 115 in April, 130 in May and 88 in June. Approximately 82.5% of these deaths involved fentanyl. Data are subject to change due to pending cases.
- **2022 data overview:** From January to December 2022, there were 1,464 confirmed unintentional and undetermined intent fatal drug overdoses.
- **Comparison between 2020-2022:** There were 1,531 confirmed deaths for 2021, which represents an increase of 11.4% compared to the previous year, 2020 (N=1,374). Final data from 2022 suggest a decrease in drug overdose deaths by 4.3%, compared to 2021.
- **Demographic data for 2022:** Males had a higher mortality rate than females in 2022 (60.0 vs. 21.1 per 100,000 population, respectively). In 2022, the mortality rate was highest for the non-Hispanic Black population and for 35–44-year-olds.
- **Place of death in 2021 and 2022:** Most of the decedents died at a residence (either their own or someone else's) in 2021 (60%) and in 2022 (63%).
- **Fentanyl-involved drug overdose deaths:** The average percentage of fentanyl- or fentanyl analog-involved deaths was 85% for 2020, 2021 and 2022.
- **Xylazine, an animal tranquilizer, in drug overdose deaths:** For the first time in 2019, xylazine/fentanyl combinations were found to be involved in drug overdoses and this lethal combination continued to be a problem in 2020 (N=141), 2021 (N=298), and in 2022 (N=354). In preliminary data of 2023, there were 150 deaths (21.7%) involving a xylazine/fentanyl combination.
- **New and emerging substances:** Para-fluorofentanyl, a fentanyl analog, emerged in 2020 and was present in 13 overdose deaths that year, 94 in 2021, 32 in 2022, and 20 in 2023. The Injury and Violence Surveillance Unit (IVSU) from the Department of Public Health (DPH) continues to monitor for other new emerging substances which include but are not limited to Flualprazolam (benzodiazepine family) and the Nitazene family of substances (novel synthetic opioids).

*Data subject to change due to pending cases.
Updated on 8-10-2023; Data Source: Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), per CDC-SUDORS grant guidelines.

For substance use disorder information visit: **https://www.drugfreect.org.**
For information on the CT DPH Opioids and Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention Program in the Office of Injury and Violence Prevention, visit: **https://www.ct.gov/dph/injuryprevention.**

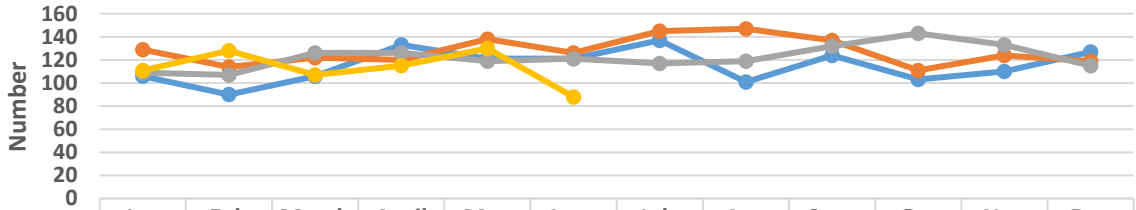
1: Number of Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths, Connecticut, 2019-June 2023*. Based on final 2022 data there was a decrease of 4.3% in drug overdose deaths compared to the previous year of 2021. The charts below represent the data by quarter (Figure 1a) and by month count (Figure 1b) of confirmed drug overdose deaths. Quarterly drug overdose data show that for the years 2019, 2020 and 2022, Quarter 1 had the lowest number of unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose deaths within that specific year. Overall, Quarters 2 and 3 were generally highest with the exception of 2022. In 2022, Quarter 4 had the highest number however those numbers were substantially lower than the number that occurred during Q3 of 2021. Monthly data show that July and August of 2021 had the highest number of deaths. In 2022, October had the highest number of deaths for that year. Data for year 2023 may change due to the processing of pending cases.

Figure 1a: Number of Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths by Quarter, Connecticut, 2019-March 2023*



***Data subject to change**

Figure 1b: Number of Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths by Month, Connecticut, 2020-June 2023*



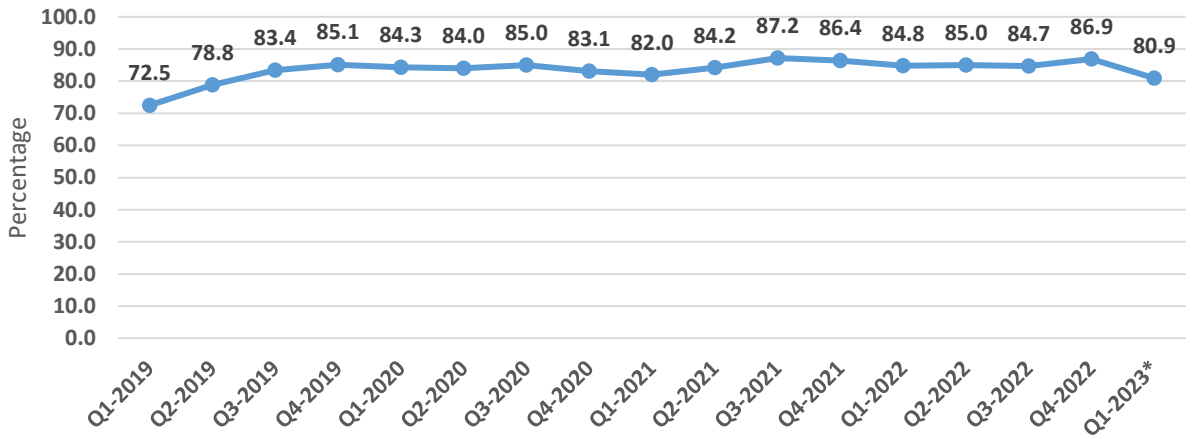
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	106	90	106	133	121	121	137	101	124	103	110	127
2021	129	114	122	120	138	126	145	147	137	111	124	119
2022	109	107	126	126	119	121	117	119	132	143	133	115
2023*	111	128	107	115	130	88						

***Data subject to change**

2020 2021 2022 2023*

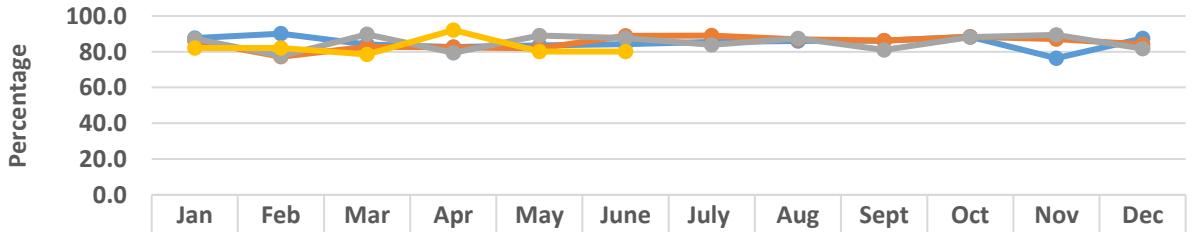
2: Percentage of Fentanyl-Involved Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths, Connecticut, 2019-June 2023*. The average percentage of fentanyl-involved deaths remained high between 2019-June 2023*. The charts below represent the percentage of fentanyl involved drug overdose deaths by quarter (Figure 2a) and by month (Figure 2b). The average percentage of fentanyl- or fentanyl analog-involved deaths was 80% for 2019 which increased to 85% in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023*. Data for year 2023* may change due to the processing of pending cases.

Figure 2a: Percentage of Fentanyl-Involved Unintentional and Undetermined intent Drug Overdose Deaths by Quarter, Connecticut, 2019-March 2023*



***Data subject to change**

Figure 2b: Percentage of Fentanyl-Involved Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Overdose Deaths by Month, Connecticut, 2020-June 2023*

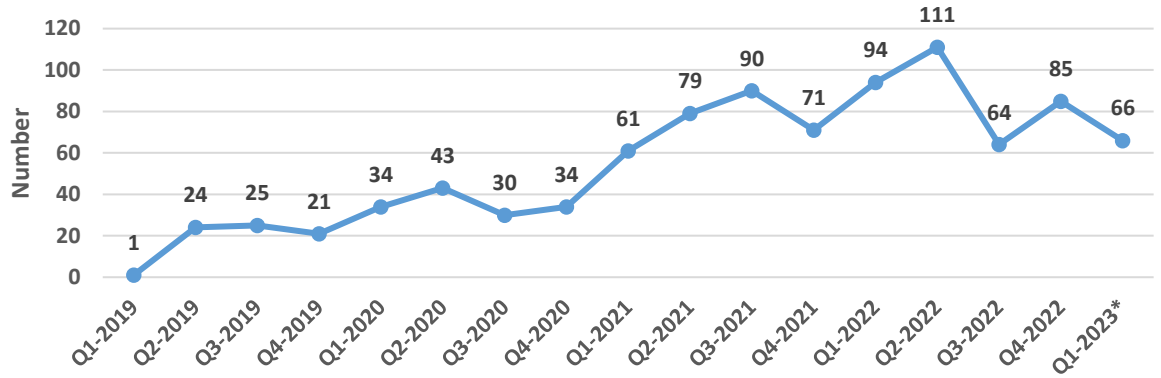


	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	87.6	90.1	84.1	82.7	83.5	84.3	85.4	86.1	86.2	88.3	76.4	87.4
2021	86.2	77.2	82.8	82.5	81.9	88.9	89.0	87.0	86.2	88.3	87.1	84.0
2022	87.2	77.6	89.7	79.4	89.1	87.6	83.8	87.4	81.1	88.1	89.5	81.7
2023*	82.0	82.0	78.5	92.1	80.1	80.2						

***Data subject to change**

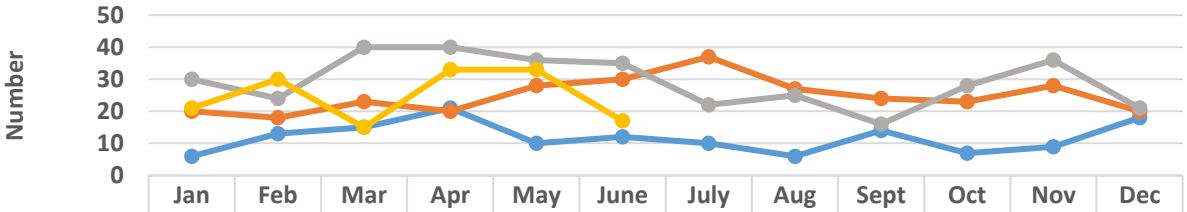
3: Number of Xylazine-Involved Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths, Connecticut, 2019-June 2023*. To enhance drug effects, recreational drugs are often adulterated with other pharmacological agents such as xylazine, a veterinary sedative not intended for human use. In Connecticut, xylazine was first identified as a novel and emerging adulterant in fatal drug overdoses in March 2019 and the number of xylazine-involved deaths has increased each year between 2019-June 2023*. The charts below represent the number of xylazine-involved drug overdose deaths by quarter (Figure 3a) and by month (Figure 3b). Quarter 2 of 2022 had the highest number of xylazine-involved deaths and this number dropped substantially during Q3 and Q4. The highest number of xylazine-involved deaths occurred during March and April of 2022 (N=40). Overall, Year 2023* shows a lower trend for monthly numbers compared to 2022, although 2023 data are subject to change due to pending cases.

Figure 3a: Number of Xylazine-Involved Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Drug Overdose Deaths by Quarter, Connecticut, 2019-March 2023*



***Data subject to change**

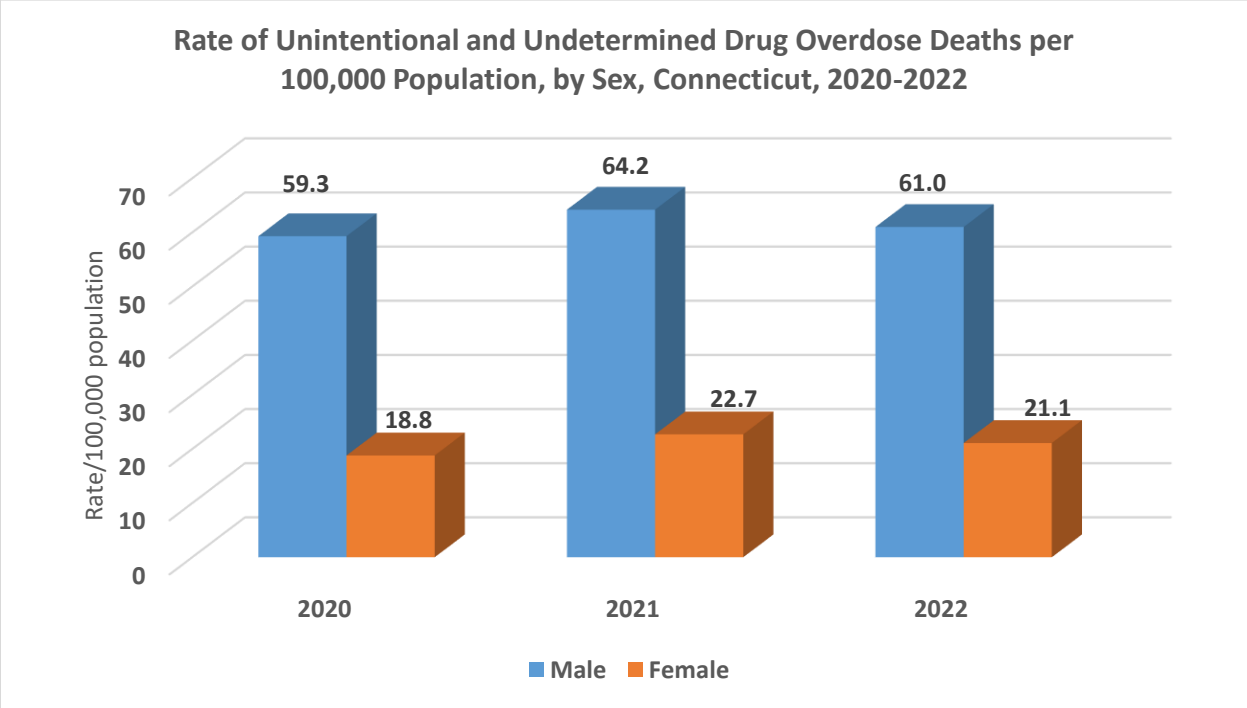
Figure 3b: Number of Xylazine-Involved Unintentional and Undetermined Intent Overdose Deaths By Month, Connecticut, 2020-June 2023*



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	6	13	15	21	10	12	10	6	14	7	9	18
2021	20	18	23	20	28	30	37	27	24	23	28	20
2022	30	24	40	40	36	35	22	25	16	28	36	21
2023*	21	30	15	33	33	17						

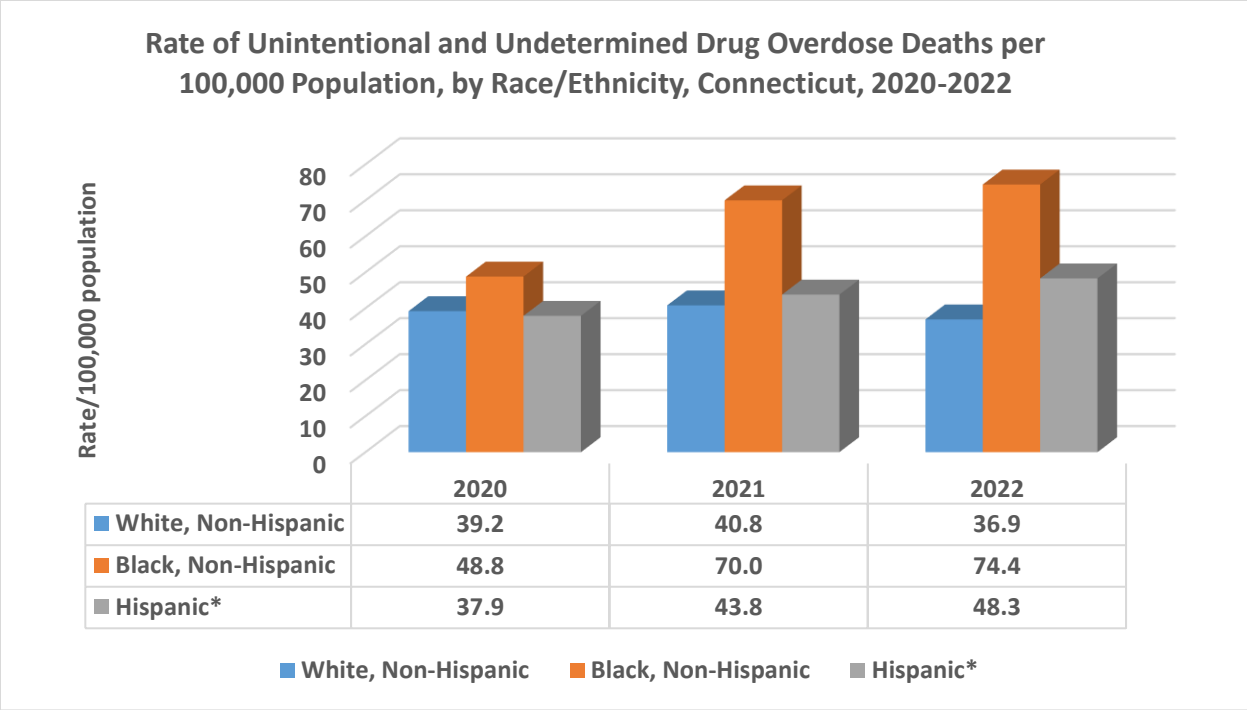
***Data subject to change**

Drug overdose death rates were higher in males compared to females during 2020 through 2022. Rates of unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose-related deaths were consistently higher among males when compared to females. The bar graph below represents rates of unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose death by sex (rate per 100,000 sex-specific population) during 2020 through 2022.



Drug overdose death rates were higher among the non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic populations compared to the non-Hispanic White population.

Between 2021 to 2022, the drug overdose mortality rate substantially increased in the non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic populations compared to 2020. The graph below represents the unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose mortality rate in Connecticut, by race/ethnicity for years 2020-2022.

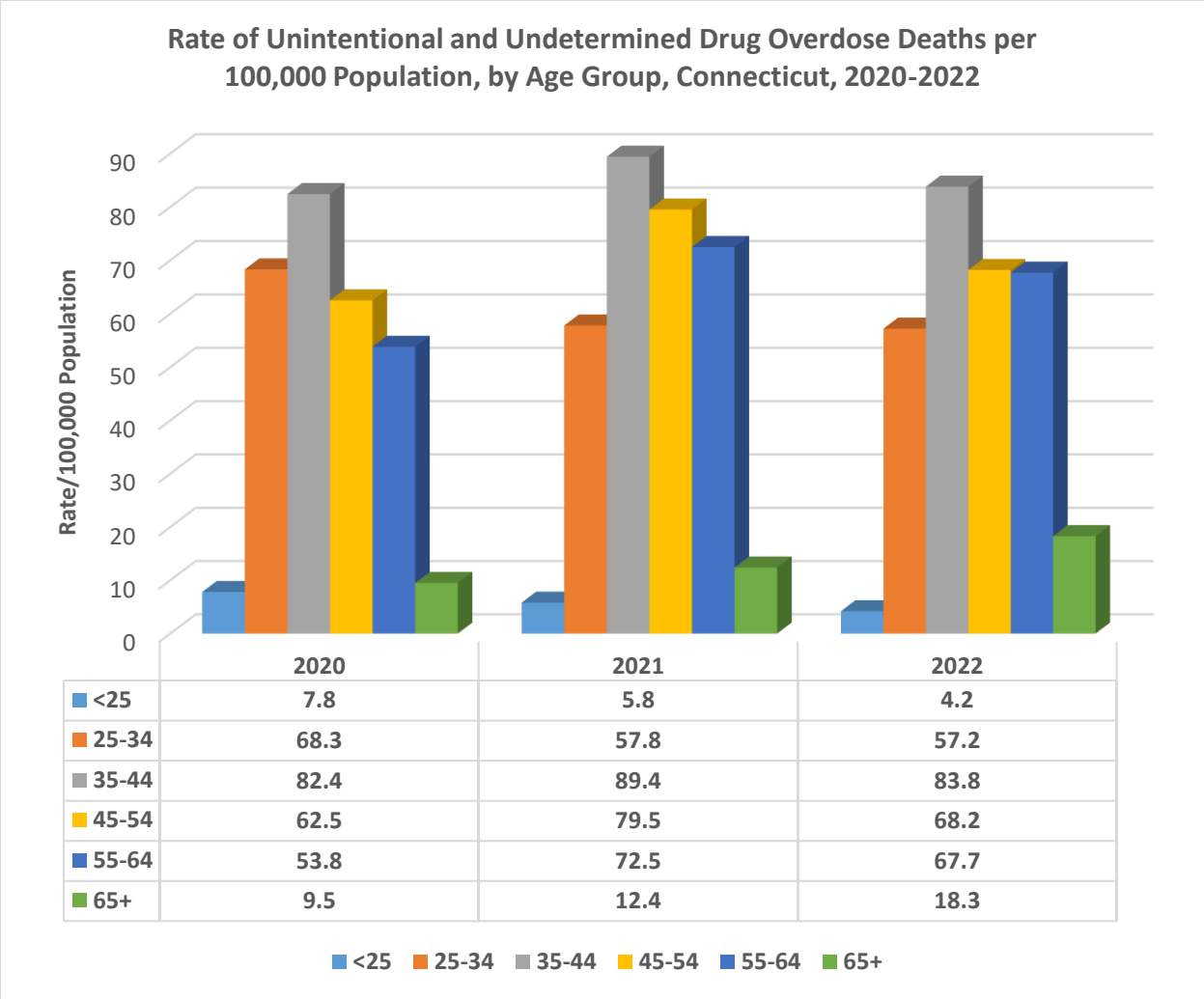


***All races of Hispanic ethnicity**

Note: Count for 'Other Non-Hispanic' population which includes American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian or Pacific Islander were lower than 20 and the rates were not calculated.

Drug overdose death rates were highest in the 35–44-year-old age group in Connecticut, 2020-2022.

Drug overdose death rates were calculated per 100,000 age-specific population and were highest among the 35–44-year-old age group, followed by the 45-54- and 55–64-year-old age groups in 2021 and 2022. The graph below represents the unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose mortality rate in Connecticut, by age group, by year for 2020-2022. There is an increasing trend in drug overdose death rate from 2020 through 2022 for the 65+ year-old age group.

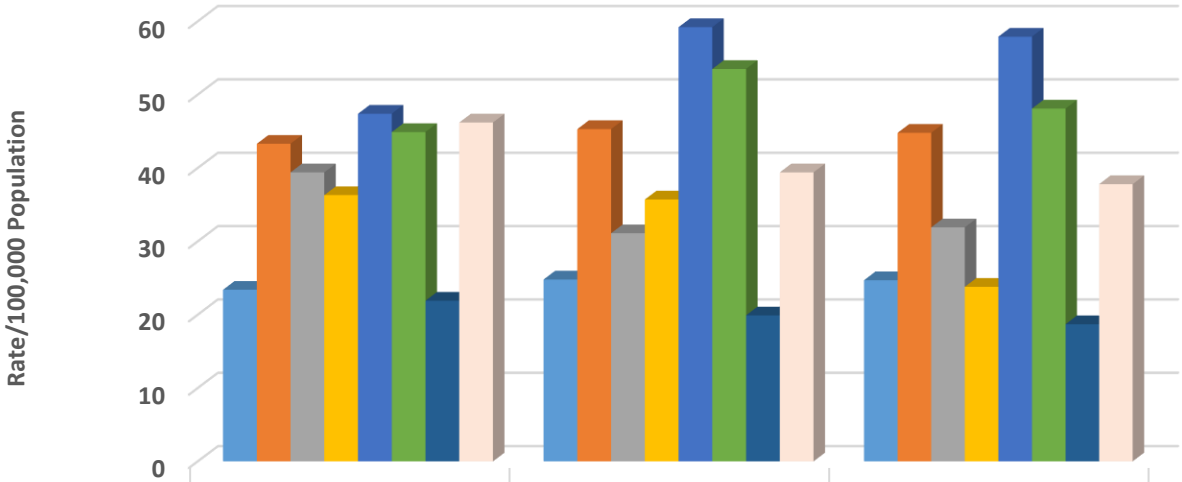


	2020	2021	2022
<25	7.8	5.8	4.2
25-34	68.3	57.8	57.2
35-44	82.4	89.4	83.8
45-54	62.5	79.5	68.2
55-64	53.8	72.5	67.7
65+	9.5	12.4	18.3

Drug overdose death rates in Connecticut, by County of Injury, 2020-2022

The graph below represents the unintentional and undetermined intent drug overdose mortality rate in Connecticut, by injury county, for 2020-2022. The data suggest that in 2022, New London County (57.9) had the highest drug overdose death rate followed by New Haven County (48.1) and Hartford County (44.8). Lowest rates were seen in Tolland County (18.7) followed by Middlesex County (23.8) for 2022.

Rate of Unintentional and Undetermined Drug Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Population, by Injury County, Connecticut, 2020-2022



	2020	2021	2022
Fairfield	23.4	24.8	24.7
Hartford	43.3	45.3	44.8
Litchfield	39.4	31.1	31.9
Middlesex	36.3	35.7	23.8
New London	47.4	59.2	57.9
New Haven	44.9	53.5	48.1
Tolland	21.9	19.9	18.7
Windham	46.2	39.4	37.8

Fairfield Hartford Litchfield Middlesex New London New Haven Tolland Windham