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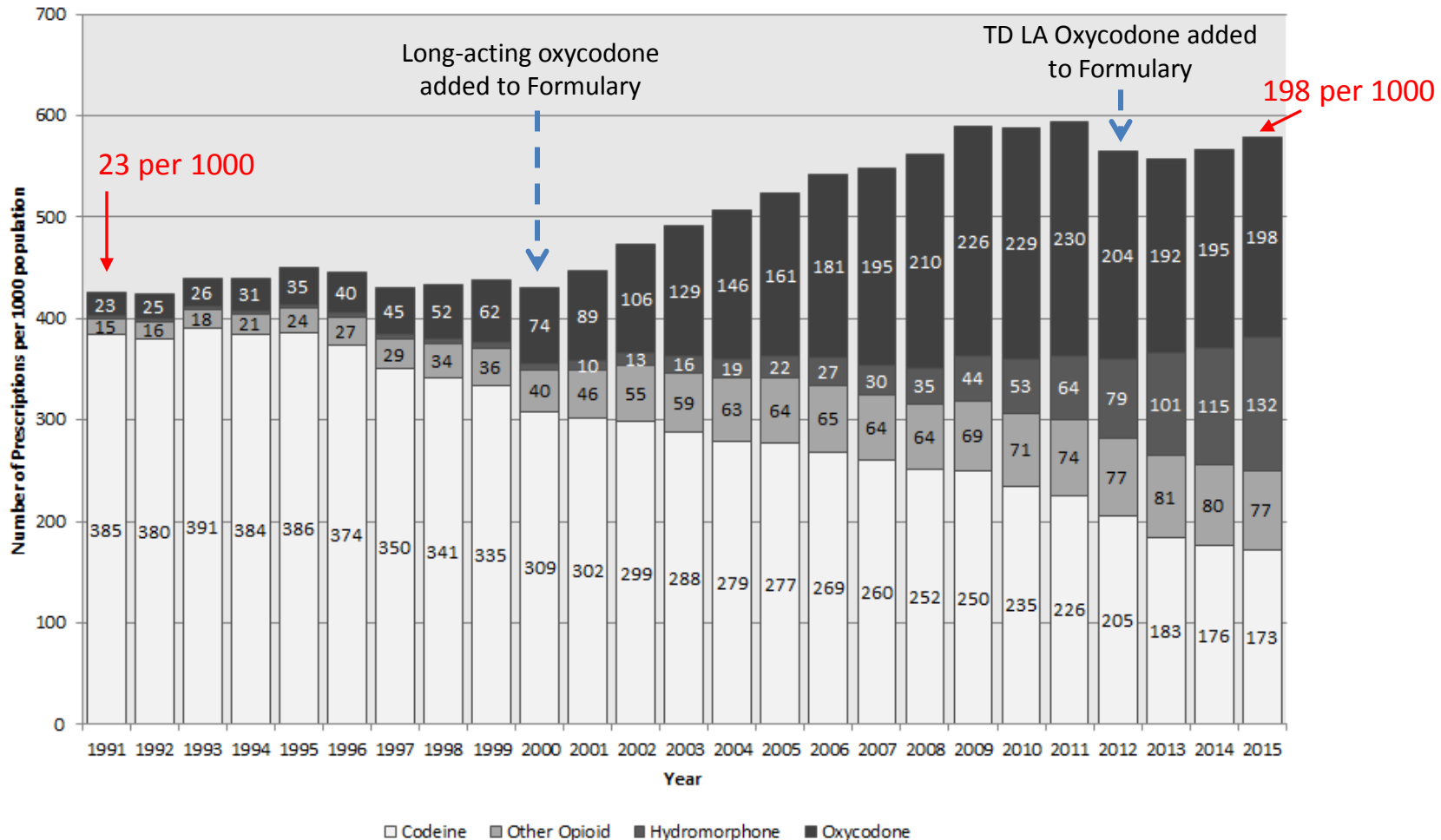


# Understanding the Evolution of the Opioid Epidemic in Canada, and the Risks of Poly-Substance Use

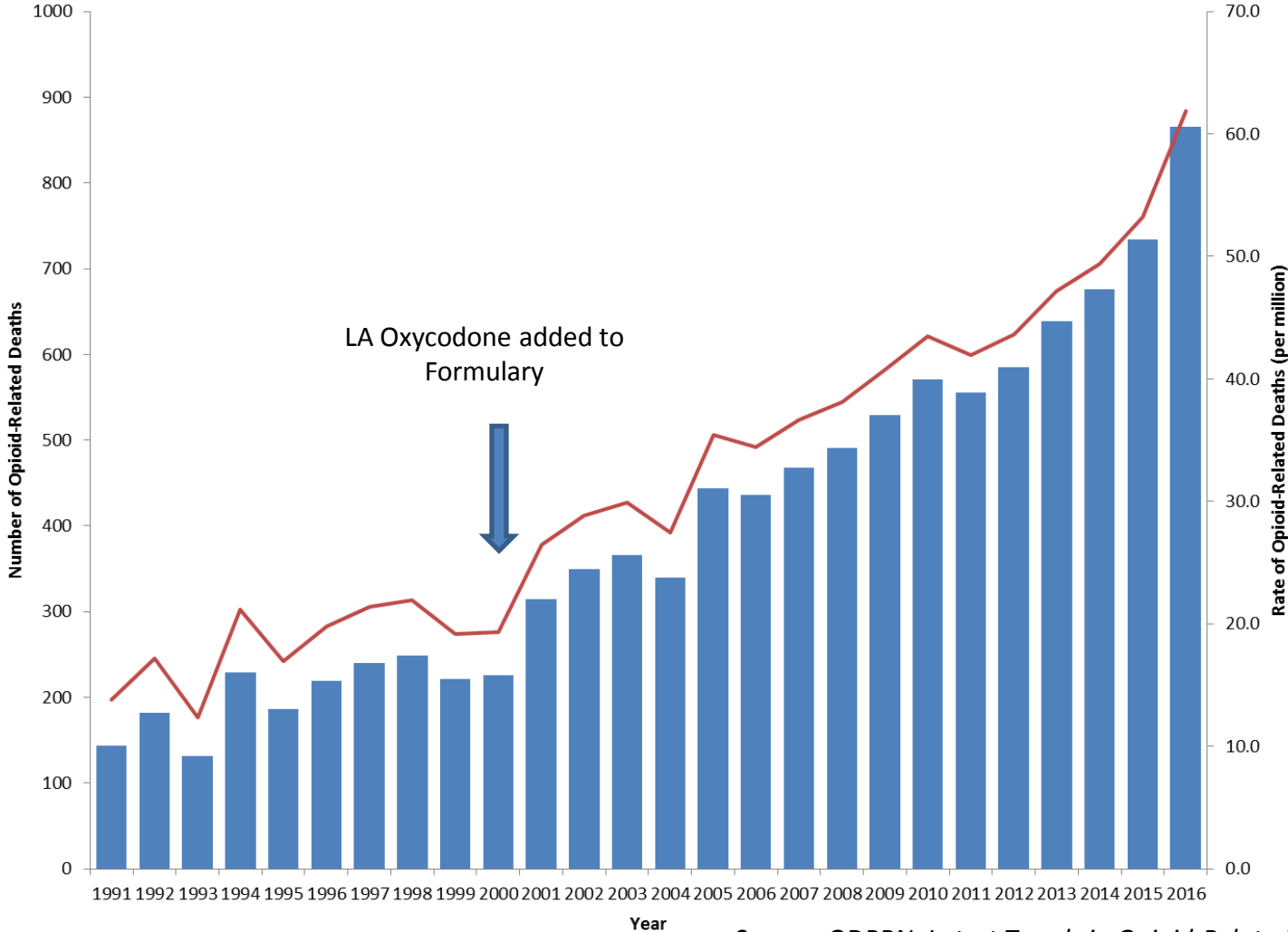
Tara Gomes

- How are opioid prescribing and related deaths **changing** in Ontario?
- How does combined use of opioids **with other substances** contribute to harm?
- What is the changing role of **prescription** vs. **illicit** opioids?

# Opioid Prescribing Trends in Ontario, Canada



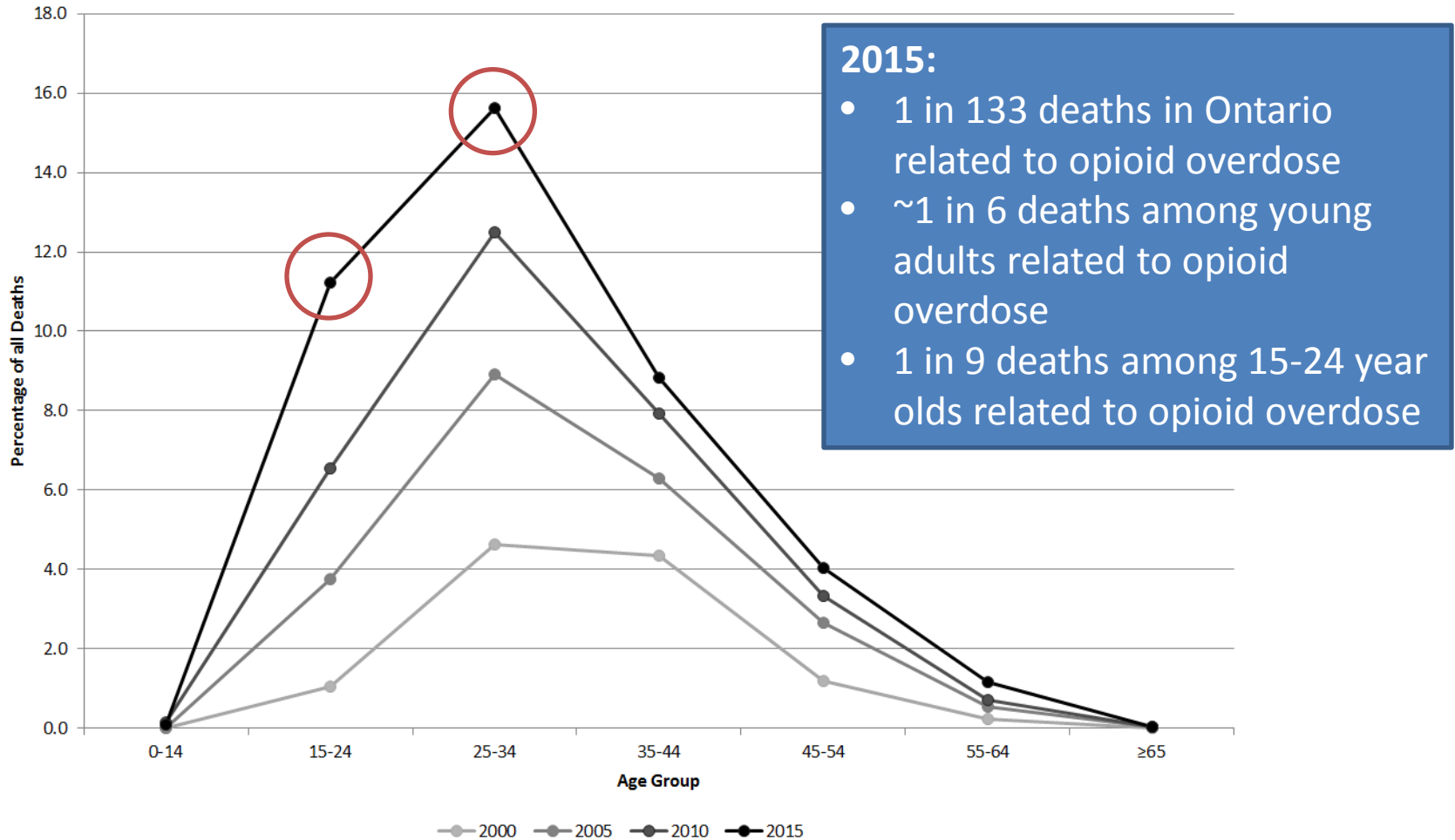
# Increasing Rates of Opioid Related Deaths



Source: ODPRN, Latest Trends in Opioid-Related Deaths in Ontario.


[http://odprn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ODPRN-Report\\_Latest-trends-in-opioid-related-deaths.pdf](http://odprn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ODPRN-Report_Latest-trends-in-opioid-related-deaths.pdf)

# Impact in Youth and Young Adults

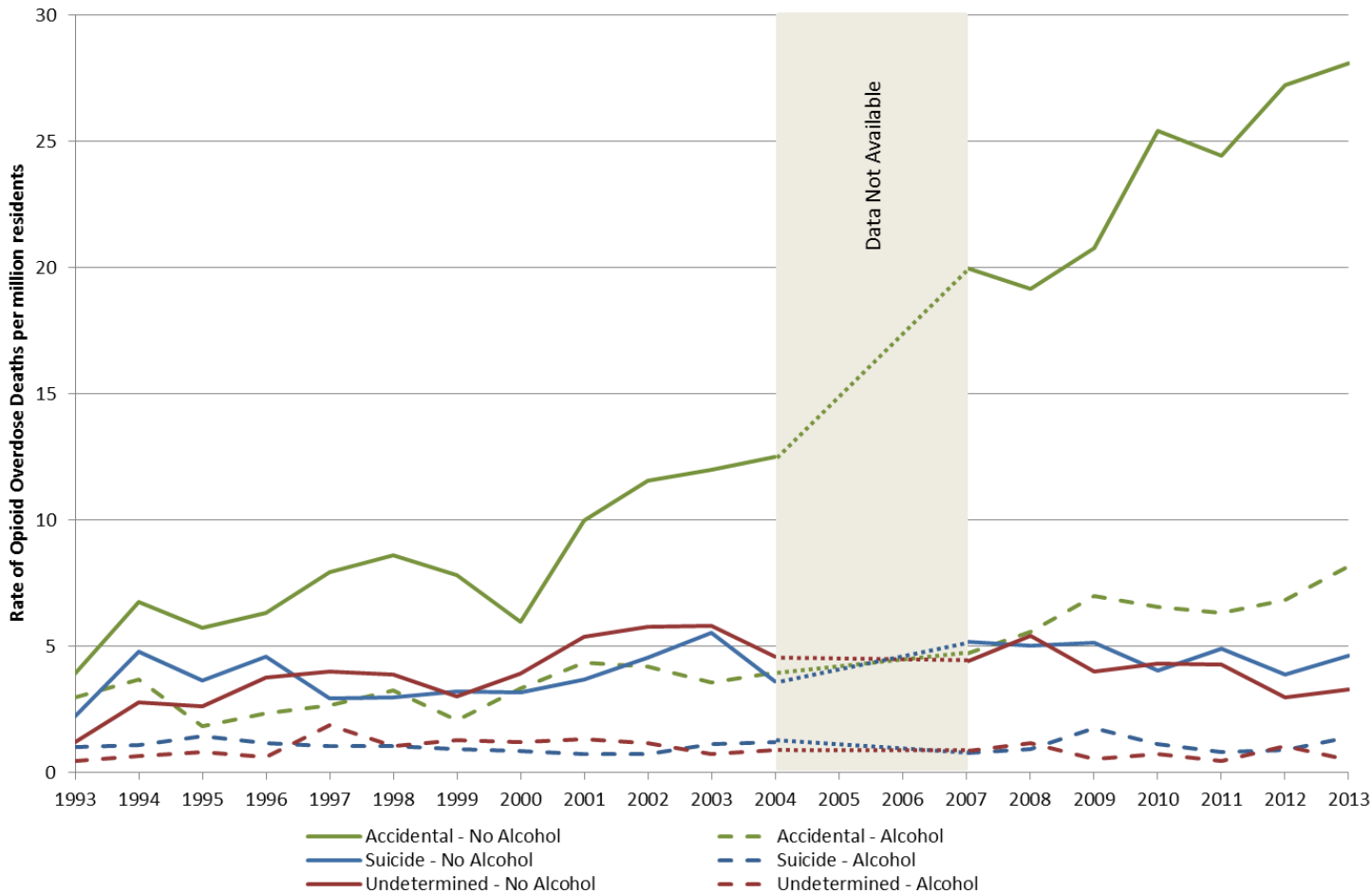


- What proportion of deaths in the US do you think are related to opioids?
  - 1 in 242
  - 1 in 111
  - 1 in 89
  - **1 in 65**
  - 1 in 36

# Role of multiple drugs

Characteristic	Number of Deaths (N=714)
Multiple Opioids Involved	295 (41%)
<b>Other Drugs Involved</b>	
Cocaine	230 (32%)
Cocaine and Fentanyl	94 (13%)
GHB	6 (1%)
 Benzodiazepines	363 (51%)
Antipsychotics	98 (14%)
Antihistamines	125 (18%)
Stimulants	157 (22%)
THC	26 (4%)
Tricyclic Antidepressants	65 (9%)
Other Antidepressants	270 (38%)

# Alcohol Involvement



1 in 5  
opioid-  
related  
deaths  
involves  
alcohol



# Emerging Evidence: Gabapentinoids

- Gabapentinoids exhibit dose-dependent CNS depression, and are increasingly co-prescribed with opioids.
- Warning exists on gabapentin labels regarding risk when combined with opioids, but not pregabalin.



To examine the risk of opioid-related death among people prescribed gabapentinoids and opioids, and whether this risk differs by drug or dose.

- **Nested Case-Control Study** → 1,417 opioid-related deaths and 5,097 matched controls
- **Main Exposure:** Gabapentinoids dispensed in prior 120 days
- **Secondary Exposures:**
  - Overlapping gabapentinoid prescription
  - Dose-response analysis

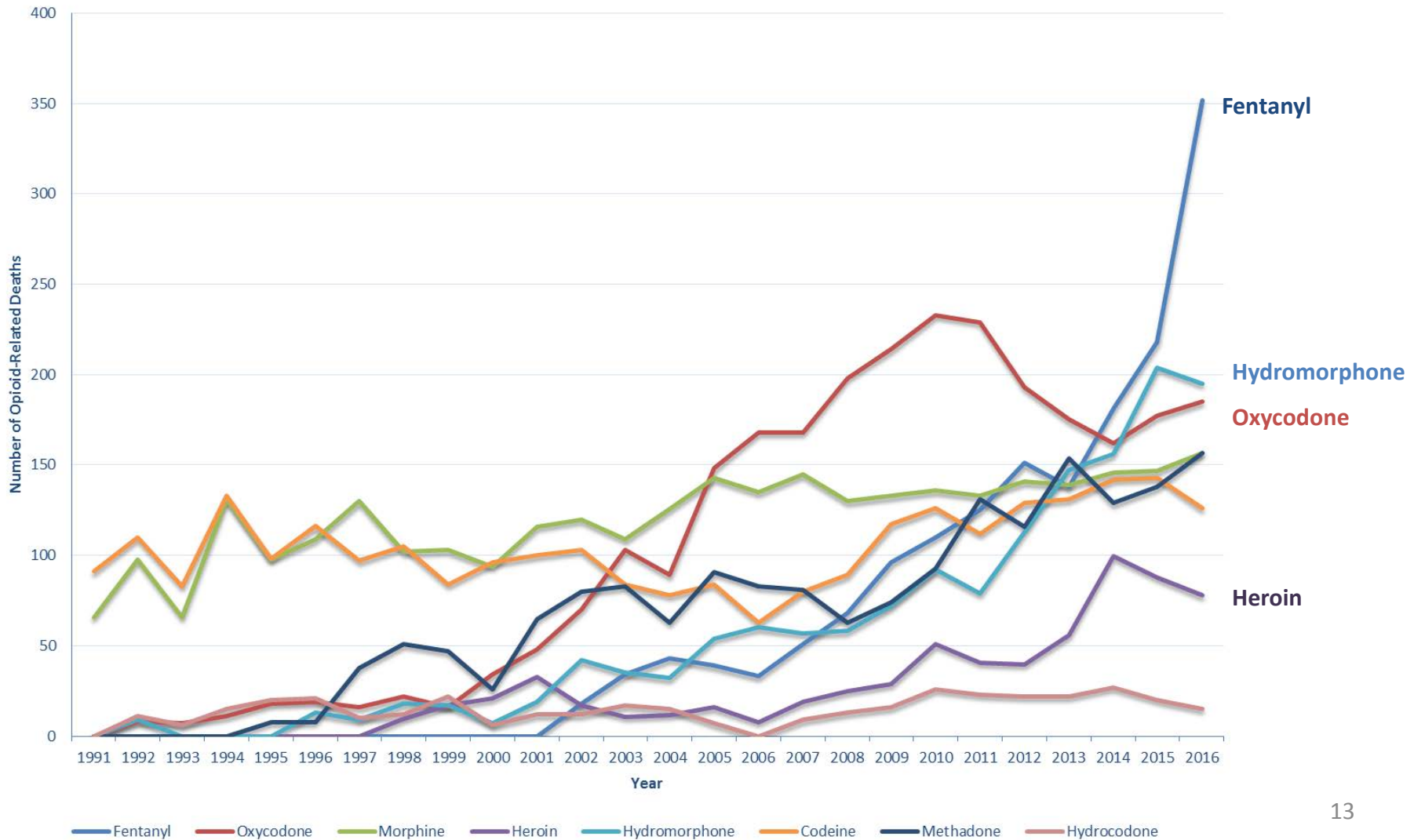
- SLIDE REMOVED – DATA UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR PUBLICATION

# Disentangling Prescribed from Illicit Opioids

**ODPRN**



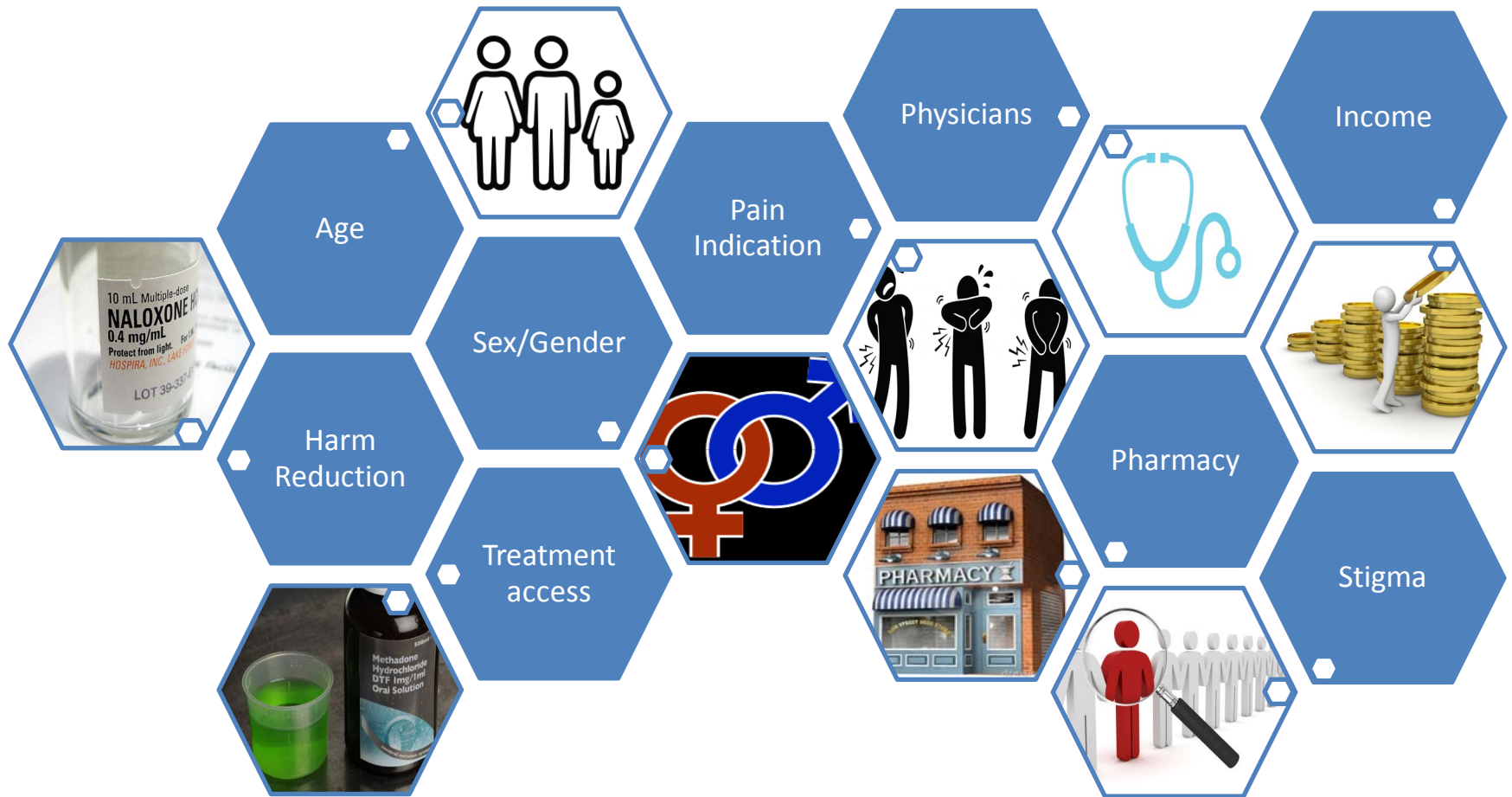
# Impact of Shifting Opioid Environment on Opioid-Related Deaths



- In 2016, what proportion of people dying from an opioid overdose had an active opioid prescription at time of death?
  - 45%
  - 33%
  - 20%
  - 10%
  - <5%

- SLIDES REMOVED – DATA UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR PUBLICATION

# Need for multidisciplinary approach





- **Ongoing Monitoring** of policies/programs
  - Delisting of high strength opioid formulations
  - Canadian guidelines
  - Prescriber ‘abandonment’
- **Harm reduction** as a means of reducing mortality risk with emerging illicit fentanyl analogues
- Engage in **dialogue** to understand needs/priorities of people with lived experience

*You don't really know what you are getting. It's cut with so many different things that today you might be taking one dose and be okay and you can take the same dose later on in the day or the next day and you can overdose because that one drug that you think you are taking, it's a combination of drugs.*

*So it's like playing Russian roulette...*

*years ago it, it was, it was straight. I won't say it was pure but it was clean, it wasn't cut with other drugs... today it's actually scary*

Thank you!

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