



Title:	Methadone-associated deaths by formulation as reported by the Researched Abuse, Diversion and Addiction-Related Surveillance System
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Abstract:

Aims: To describe methadone-associated deaths by formulation as reported to RADARS System poison centers (PC).

Methods: PCs use a standard electronic system to record calls from the public. RADARS System PCs cover 44 states (84% of the US population) and perform quality checks to verify coding accuracy. We describe deaths associated with methadone by formulation (2006-2008).

Results: 180 methadone-associated deaths were reported. Mean age was 35.9 years (SD 13.7), and a majority (63.9%) were male. Fifty-five (30.6%) were associated with tablets, 5 (2.8%) with liquids, 3 (1.7%) with diskettes and 117 (65.0%) were not classifiable due to incomplete data. 114/142 (80.3%) deaths were associated with intentional exposures (55 suspected suicides, 2 intentional misuse, 38 intentional abuse and 19 intentional unknown). In 28 of the deaths, patients co-ingested other substances (21.4% opioids, 57.1% benzodiazepines, 25% psychotropics, 10.7% ethanol and 17.9% illicit drugs).

Conclusions: Of available data, most deaths are associated with tablet exposures. However, we cannot create a point estimate for deaths associated with methadone tablets as drug formulation information was not available for many exposures. Our conclusions are limited to cases reported to PCs.

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