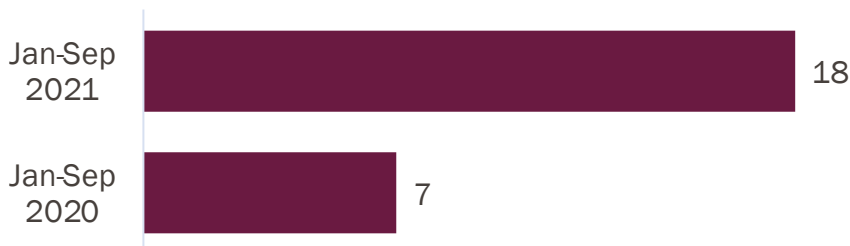


Stimulant overdoses have been increasing in Vermont. Cocaine’s involvement in opioid overdoses has been well documented. Methamphetamine involvement in opioid overdoses had been relatively rare in Vermont. However, the number increased from 2 in 2019, to 10 in 2020 and 18 for the first three quarters of 2021.

Fatal Opioid Overdoses involving Methamphetamine

From January to September 2021, there have been 18 opioid overdoses involving methamphetamine among Vermont residents. Most of these occurred in Vermont and nearly all involved fentanyl. There were four additional methamphetamine overdose deaths in this time period that did not involve opioids. The Health Department is monitoring this closely.

The number of fatal opioid overdoses involving methamphetamine has increased in 2021 compared to 2020.



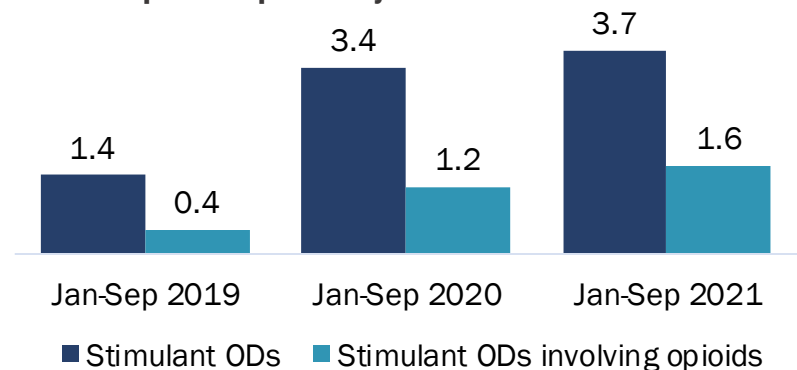
KEY POINTS

- **Fatal opioid overdoses involving methamphetamine are increasing.**
- **Nonfatal opioid overdoses involving stimulants have been increasing since 2019.**
- **Demographic data highlights males and individuals 30-39 are at highest risk for fatal opioid overdoses involving methamphetamine.**
- **The Health Department will monitor these trends and update this document with additional information.**
- **Naloxone should be provided to individuals who primarily use methamphetamine in case of fentanyl in the drug supply.**

Emergency Care Visits for Stimulant Overdoses

Emergent care facilities include 13 out of 14 Vermont hospitals and two urgent care facilities. The frequency of stimulant overdoses in emergent care visits has increased. Although the data from these visits often lacks sufficient detail to identify specific stimulants, methamphetamine was noted in a few instances in 2021. The Health Department will continue to monitor stimulant overdoses and investigate methamphetamine involvement.

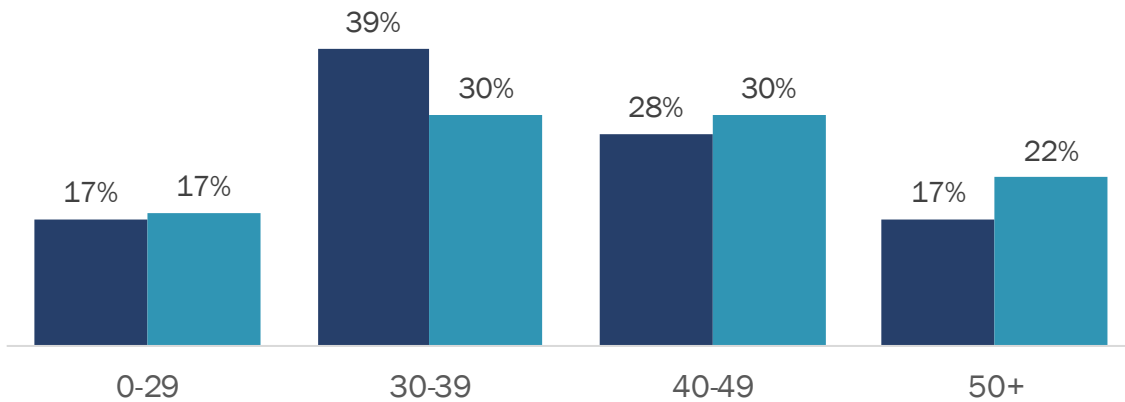
The average rate of stimulant overdoses per 10,000 emergency care visits has increased in 2021 compared to previous years.



Demographics of People who Died of Fatal Opioid Overdoses involving Methamphetamine

Demographic information identifies populations in Vermont that are at highest risk for opioid overdoses involving methamphetamines. Men and women die due to fatal opioid overdoses involving methamphetamine at similar rates (61% male vs. 67% male). Nearly two in five fatal opioid overdoses involving methamphetamine were among those 30 to 39 years old.

Fatal opioid overdose deaths involving methamphetamine were highest among the 30-39 age group. This is different than the age distribution of those who whose fatal opioid overdoses did not involve methamphetamine.



Geographic Distribution of Opioid Overdoses involving Methamphetamine

Over 60% of the fatal opioid overdoses involving methamphetamine occur among residents of three counties in Vermont. The counties with the most fatal opioid overdoses involving methamphetamine through September 2021 are **Chittenden (4)**, **Franklin (3)** and **Windsor (4)** counties. VDH will continue to monitor geographic distribution and will report if other counties are at disproportionate risk.

Overdose Prevention Considerations

It is unclear from the fatal overdose data if the use of both methamphetamine and opioids was intentional or accidental. There is the possibility that individuals are using methamphetamine without knowing it also contains fentanyl. It is important to ensure individuals who typically only use methamphetamine have access to naloxone, know how to use it, and know the signs of both an opioid and methamphetamine overdose.

It is also important for individuals intentionally using both opioids and methamphetamine to deploy standard harm reduction practices, such as:

- Avoid using alone
- Test for fentanyl
- Go slow, starting with a small amount to test for drug strength
- Carry naloxone
- Call 911 in case of a suspected overdose

For more information on overdose prevention techniques and where to find free naloxone, visit www.KnowODVT.com.

Key Takeaways

Methamphetamine-involved deaths and the role of stimulants in overdoses are on the rise in Vermont. The Health Department will monitor these trends closely and update this document as the situation evolves. It is important for individuals who use opioids or methamphetamine to deploy standard harm reduction practices.

Sources:

Fatal overdose data are from the [Vermont Vital Statistics System](#) and only include deaths that occurred among Vermont residents. Data from 2020 and 2021 are preliminary and subject to change. Emergent care visit data is from [ESSENCE](#) and is preliminary and subject to change. This brief is a product of the Vermont Department of Health, Division of Health Surveillance.

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