Post-release overdose deaths – how big is the problem

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Acute risk of drug-related death among newly released prisoners in England and Wales.

- Confidential database linkage of sentenced prisoners in England and Wales, released during 1998, 1999 or 2000*

- 36,515 male and 12,256 female prisoners – all deaths to November 2003

- There were 442 recorded deaths, of which 261 (59%) were drug-related.

- Opioids were involved in 95% of deaths,
Post-release mortality rates (males)

$n = 36,515$
Post-release mortality rates (females)

n = 12,256
Relative 1\textsuperscript{st} Week mortality

- **Among women**
  - In the first year after prison release there were 100 female deaths (8.3 expected in the general population)
  - > 10 x that observed at 52 wks (OR 10.6; 95 %CI 4.8-22.0)
  - 69 x that in age-matched population

- **Among men**
  - In the first year after prison release there were 342 male deaths (45.8 were expected in the general population)
  - ~ 8 x that observed at 52 weeks (OR 8.3; 95 %CI 5.0-13.3)
  - 29 x that in age-matched population
55% of the drug-related deaths were attributed to ‘mental and behavioural disorders’
31% were classified as due to ‘accidental poisoning’
The attributed cause of the remaining deaths was as follows:
- 28 (11%) were poisonings where intention could not be determined
- five (2%) were classified as intentional poisonings
- two (1%) were classified as ‘external injury or poisoning’
Other Evidence


Integrated Drug Treatment System in Prisons

- Increased range of treatment options: detoxification and maintenance OST

- Integrating clinical and enhanced psychological treatments in prison within one care plan

- Integrating prison and community treatment to prevent damaging interruptions either on reception into custody or on release back home.
Evaluation of IDTS Outcomes

- 20,000 IDTS clients who received Opiate Substitution Treatment at 42 prisons in England

- Assigned at release into two groups: not receiving OST (opiate intolerant) and receiving OST (opiate tolerant)

- Followed up for one & 10 years through databases:
  - Mortality: National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR)
  - Treatment uptake: National Drug Treatment Monitoring System/
  - Re-conviction/Re-incarceration: Police National Computer.

- First report 2012