



**Tervise Arengu Instituut**  
National Institute for Health Development

# Drug Overdose Mortality in Estonia

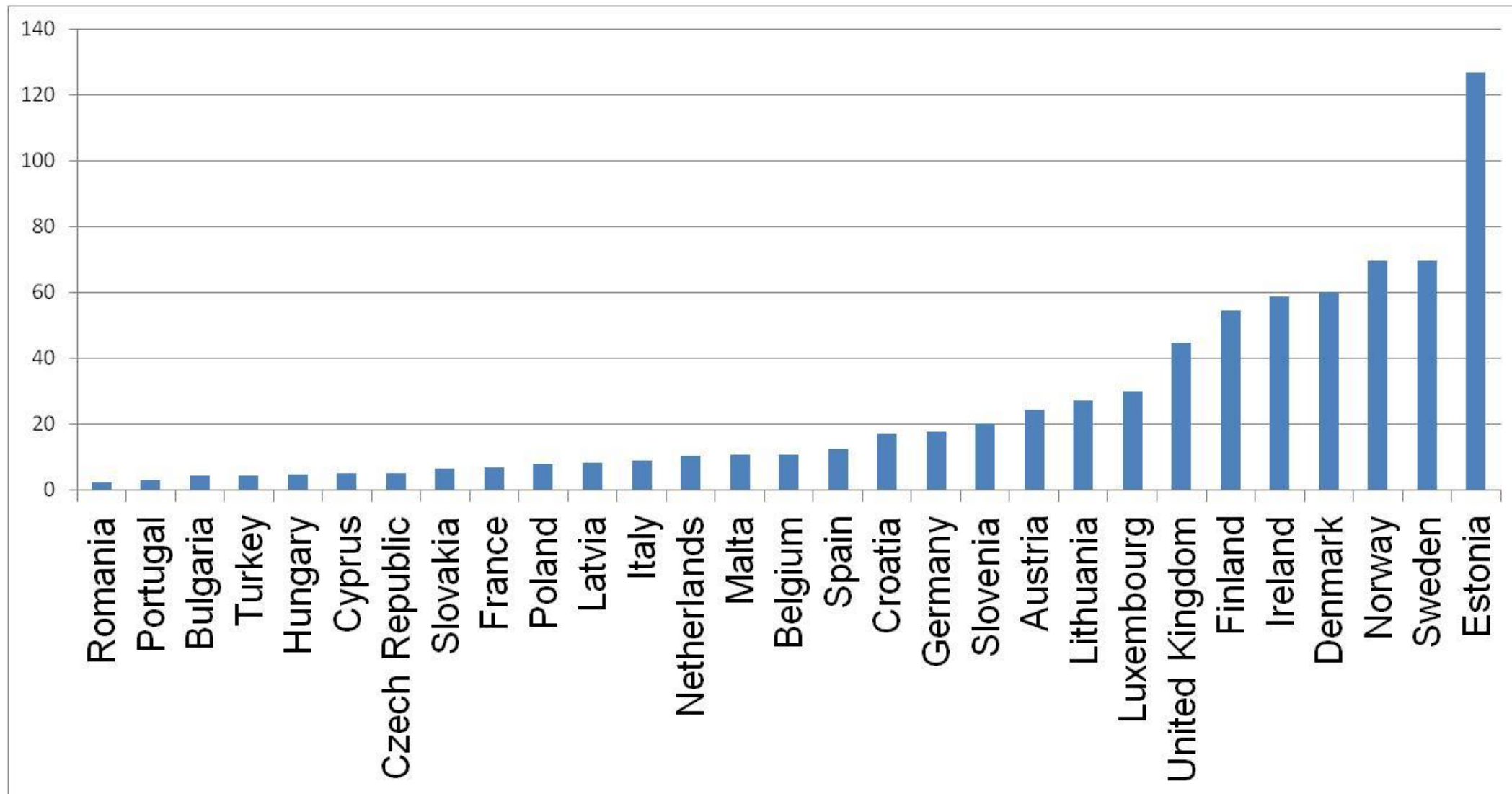
Gleb Denissoff, Head of Estonian Causes of Death Registry

Baltic Spice Alert Conference #2

Tallinn, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2016



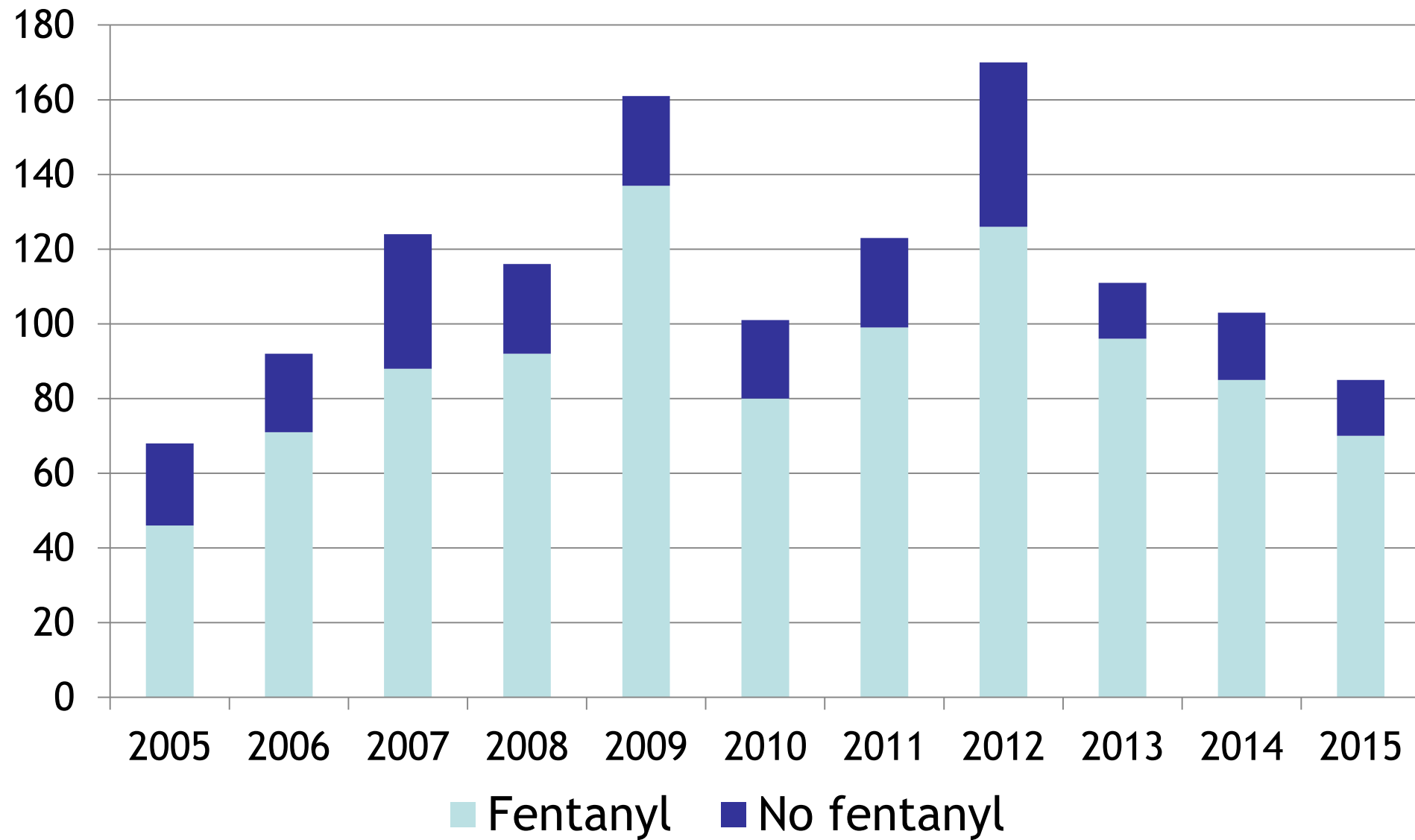
# Drug-induced deaths per million population aged 15-64 years



- Source: European Drug Report. Trends and Developments. 2015. EMCDDA 2015



## Unusual toxicology pattern - fentanyles



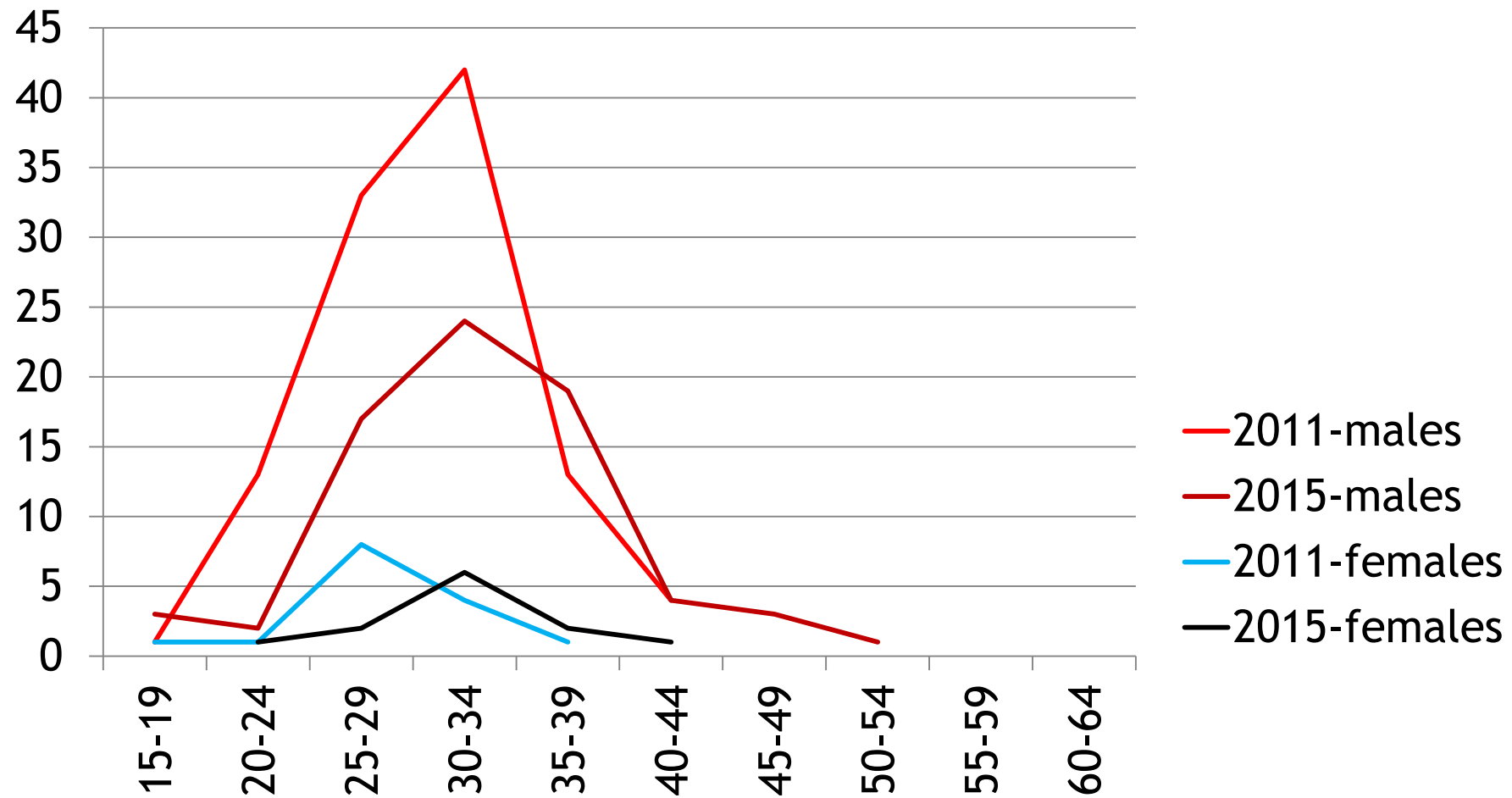
Absolute numbers of DRD, Estonian Causes of Death Registry



## How could it happen?

- First fentanyl was brought from China via Russia under street name “White Chinese” causing mortality outbreaks in Russia and Estonia
- Then disappeared from Russia, but remained the most popular illicit opiate in Estonia
- Not a new substance, used for anaesthesia for decades, sometimes diverted
- Easy to cause dependence, high risk of overdose
- 3-methyl-fentanyl is not used for medication, must be produced illegally
- Often mixed with amphetamine and its likes, alcohol, diazepam, ibuprofen

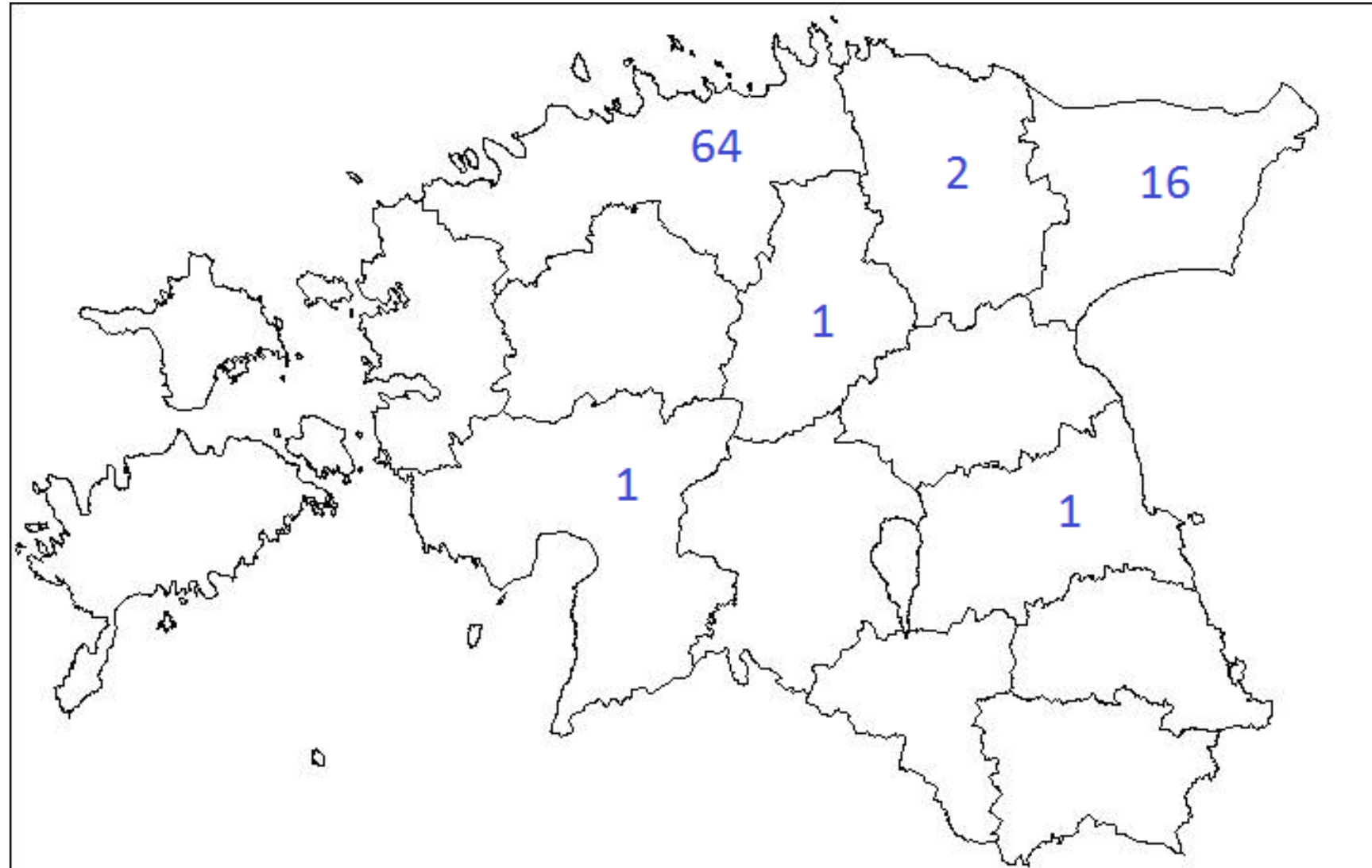
## Profile of the victims: sex and age



Absolute numbers of DRD, Estonian Causes of Death Registry

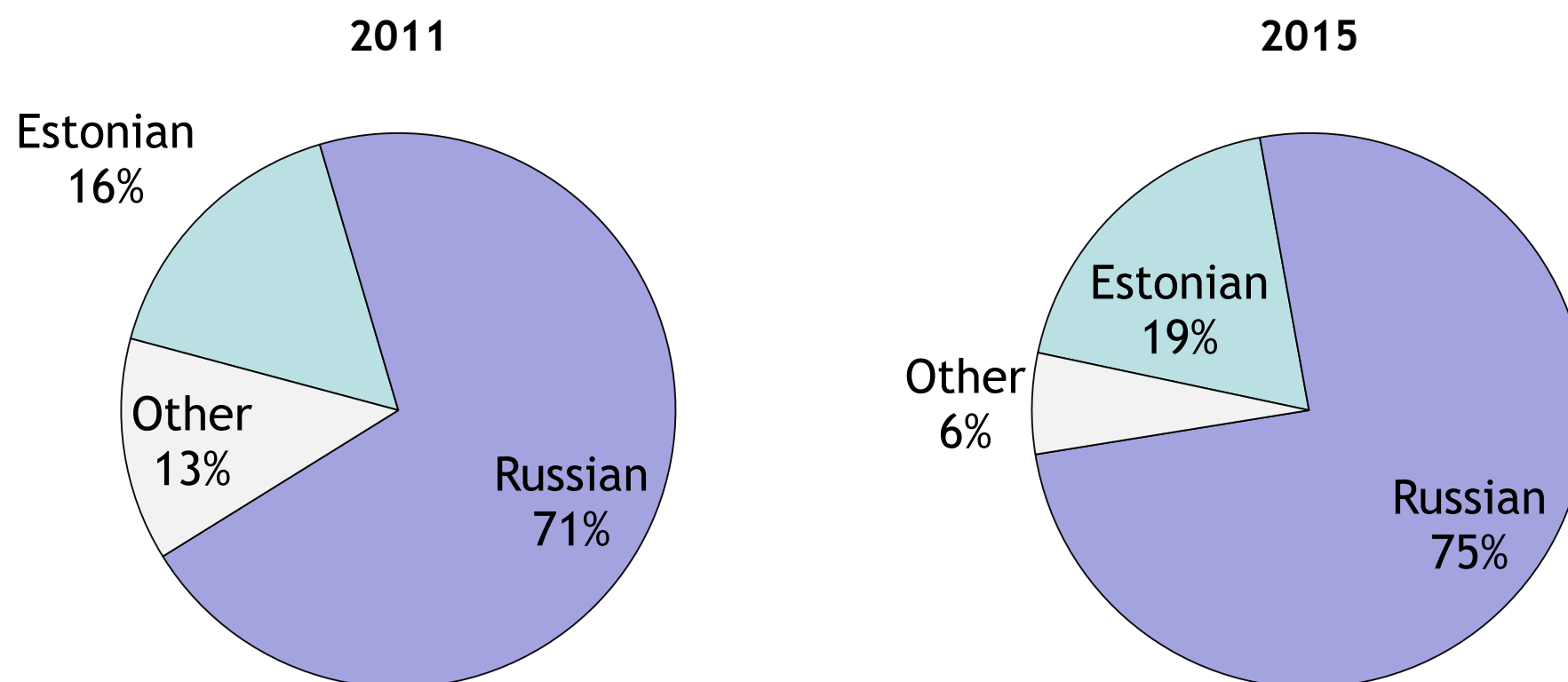


## Profile of the victims: place of residence



Absolute numbers of DRD in 2015, Estonian Causes of Death Registry

## Profile of the victims: ethnic origin



DRD, Estonian Causes of Death Registry



## Most recent developments

- Studies show IDU population is shrinking and ageing
- Naloxone programme launched in end-2013
- Underreporting remains stable (less than 10%)
- Hopes for decline in DRD numbers..?





## References

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- The latest IDU population study  
A. Uusküla et al “A decline in the prevalence of injecting drug users in Estonia, 2005-2009.” International Journal of Drug Policy, 2013
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