Drug Overdose Mortality in Estonia

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

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

2011
- Estonian: 16%
- Russian: 71%
- Other: 13%

2015
- Estonian: 19%
- Russian: 75%
- Other: 6%

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

• NIHD Health Statistics and Health Research database / Mortality Table SD41: Direct drug-related deaths by sex and age

• Validation study NIHD and Estonian Forensic Science Institute
  G. Denissov et al “The impact of changing classifications on official fatal poisoning figures.” Rom J Leg Med, 2012 (open access)

• The latest IDU population study

• An overview of fentanyl misuse