

April 8, 2026

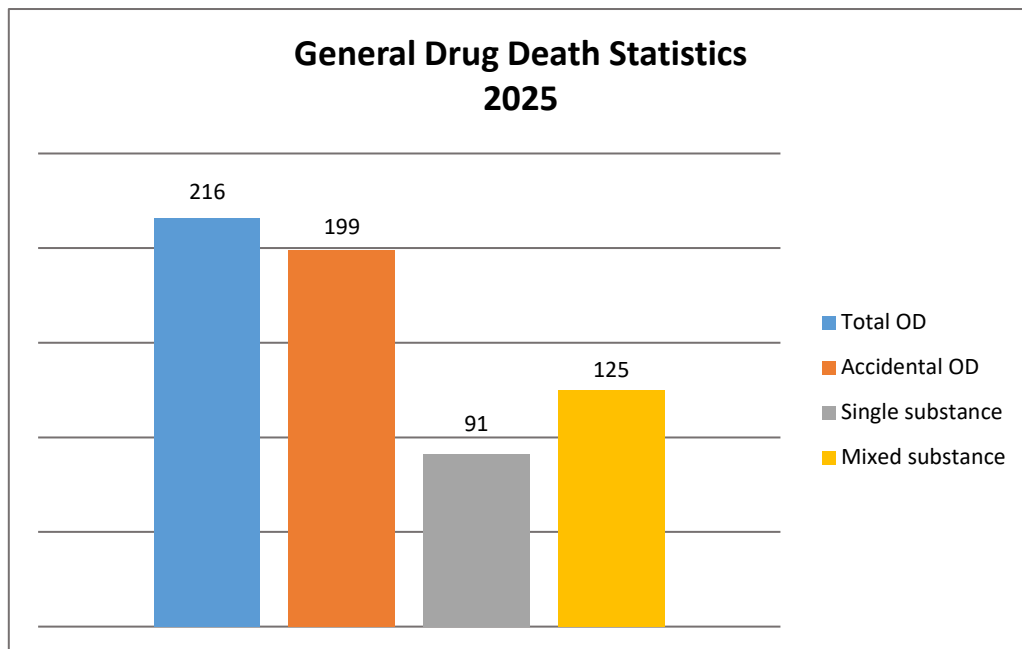
Special Report: 2025 Fatal Overdoses

2,097 deaths were reported to the Ventura County Medical Examiner's Office during the 2025 calendar year. Jurisdiction was accepted for 1,078 of these deaths, requiring further investigation and certification. Postmortem examinations were performed on 796 cases. Of the cases investigated, 216 deaths were due to overdose with illicit drugs, medications, alcohol or other substances.

Of the 216 overdose deaths, 199 were accidents, 14 were suicides, two deaths were of undetermined manner, and one death was a homicide. Of these overdose deaths, men accounted for 154 deaths (71.3%) and women accounted for 62 deaths (28.7%).

Note: Please see the noteworthy trends and appendix at the end of this report. Multiple drugs or medications may be involved in one case; therefore, one should not add the numbers of individual substances. The same case may be represented multiple times with different drugs or drug categories. For example, a death due to fentanyl is included in both the fentanyl and opioid totals.

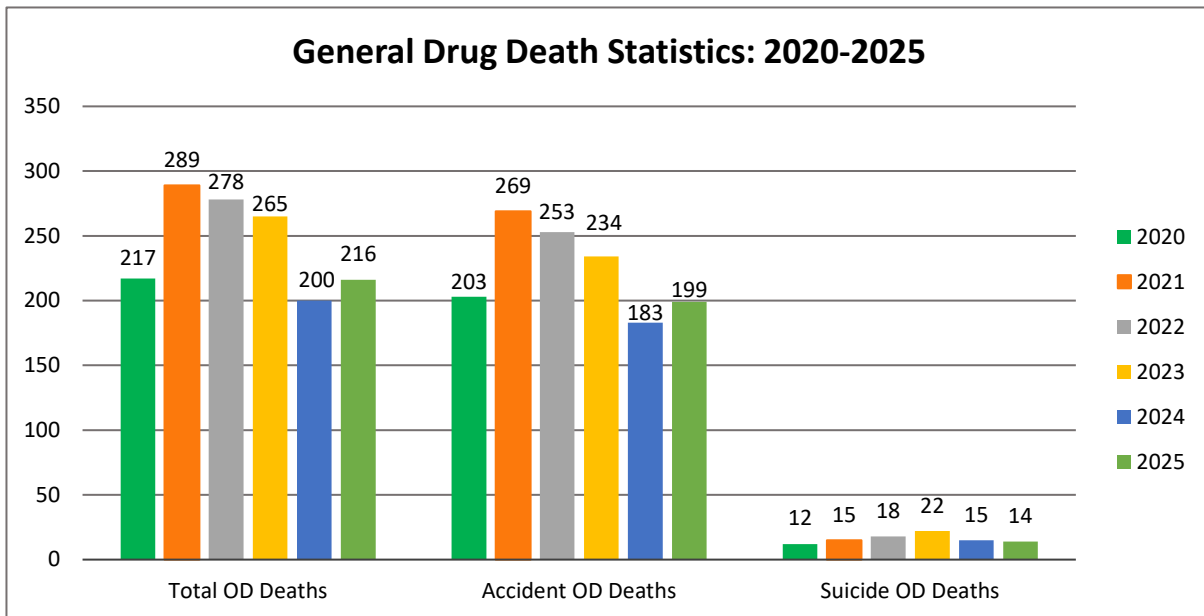
Overdose by city reflects the location of injury (overdose). In some cases, the location of death is different than the location of injury because of transport to a medical facility prior to death.



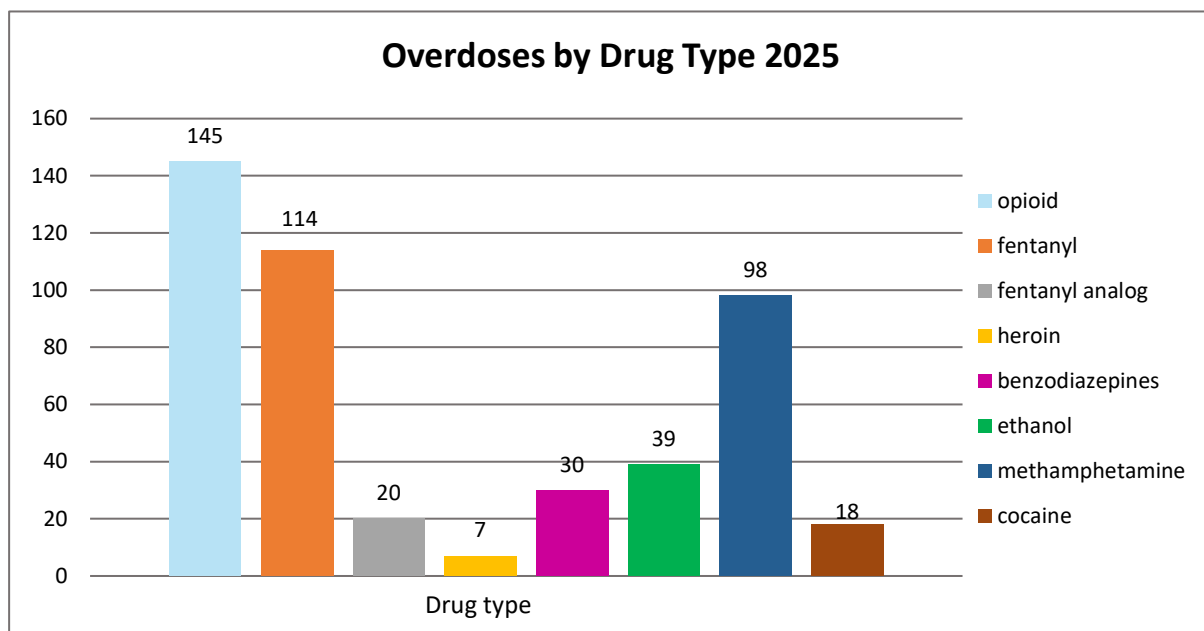
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In 2025, the manner of death for two OD deaths was undetermined and one was homicide.



Drug categories should not be added. Some overdoses involve multiple drugs and some categories are subsets of one another (e.g. fentanyl and heroin deaths are both opioid deaths and will be included in the opioid category. Similarly, fentanyl analogs are a subset of fentanyl deaths and are included in the total number of fentanyl deaths).



COUNTY of VENTURA

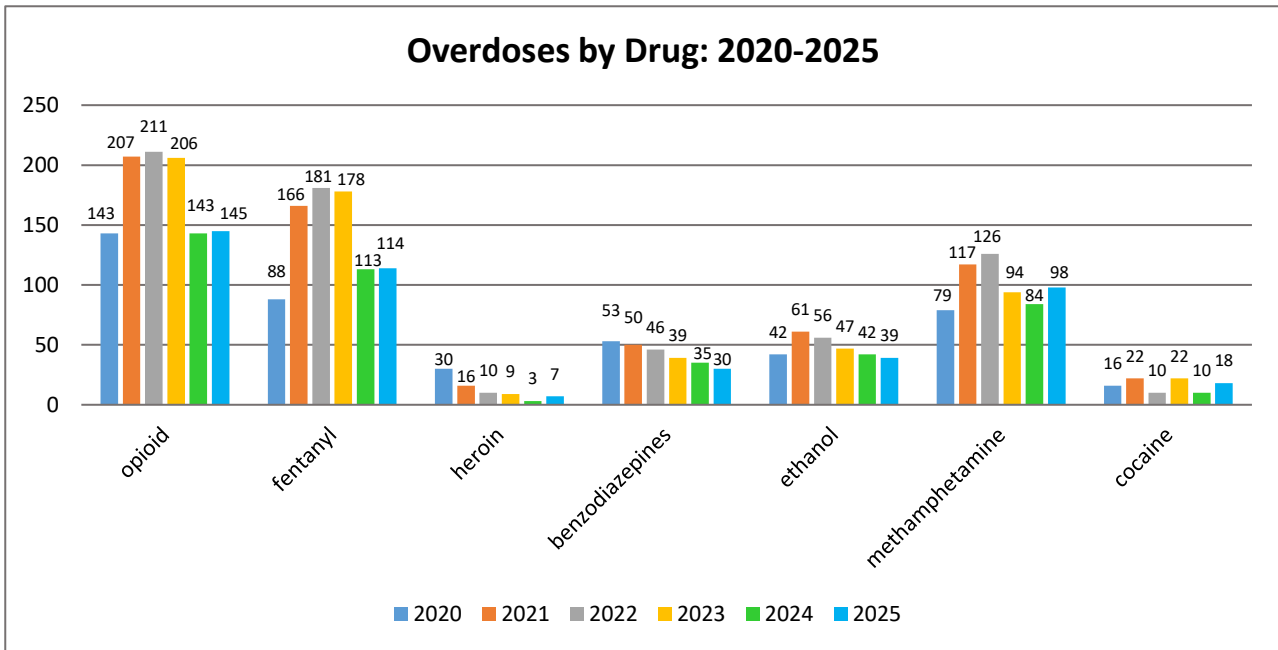
Medical Examiner's Office

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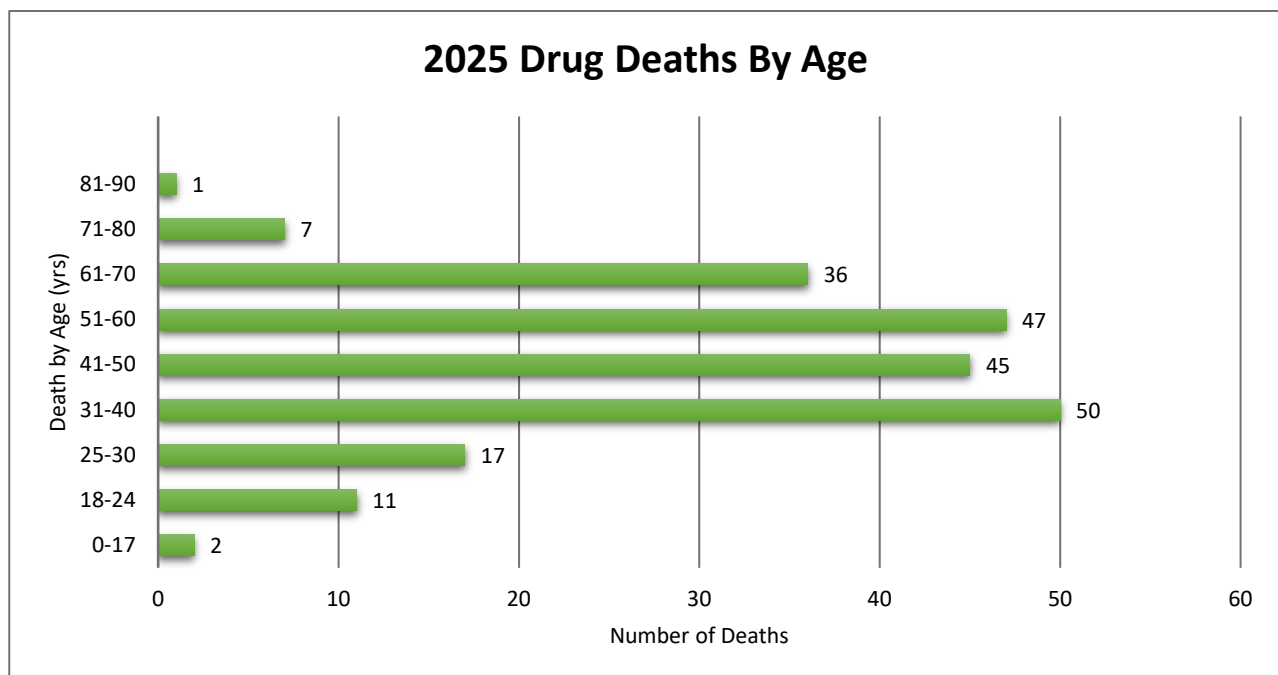
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Fentanyl is an opioid drug. A death resulting from fentanyl will be included in the totals for both opioid and fentanyl overdoses.





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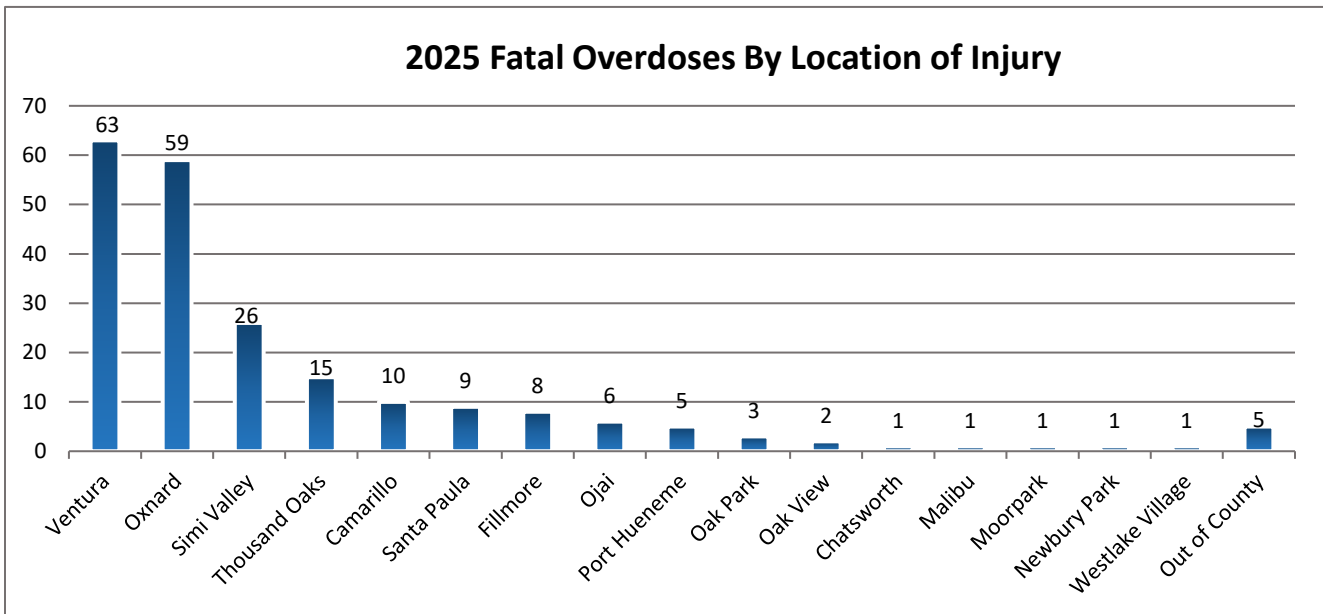
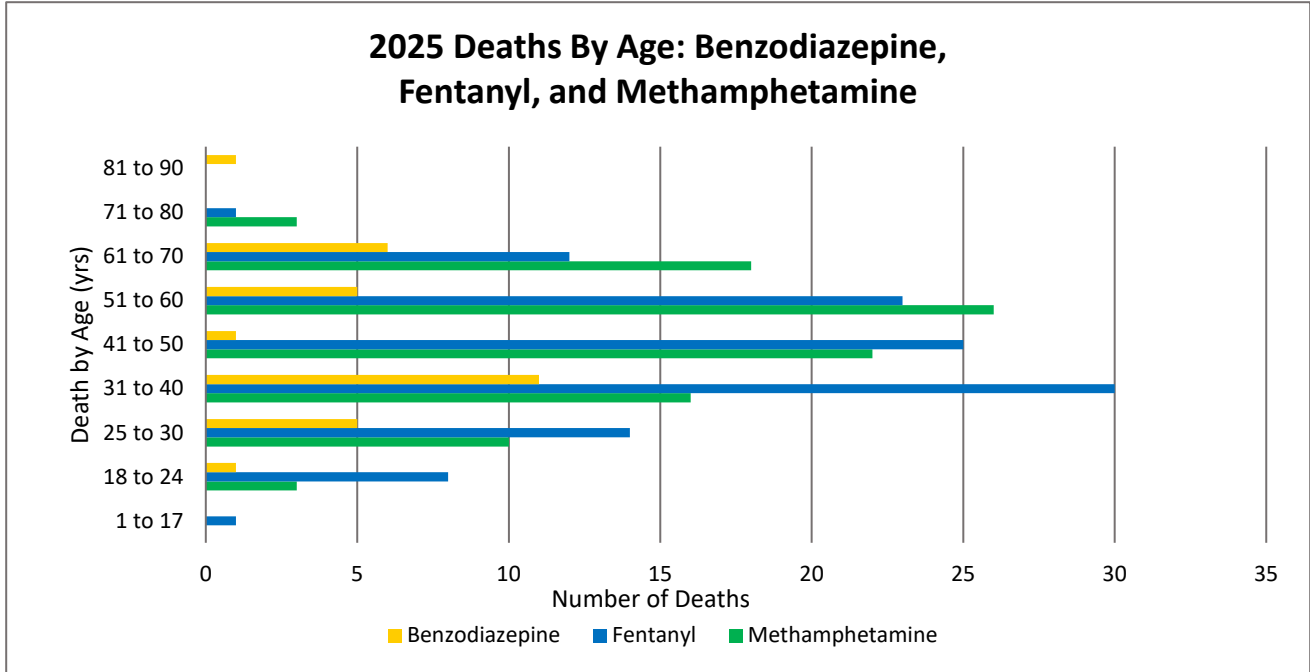
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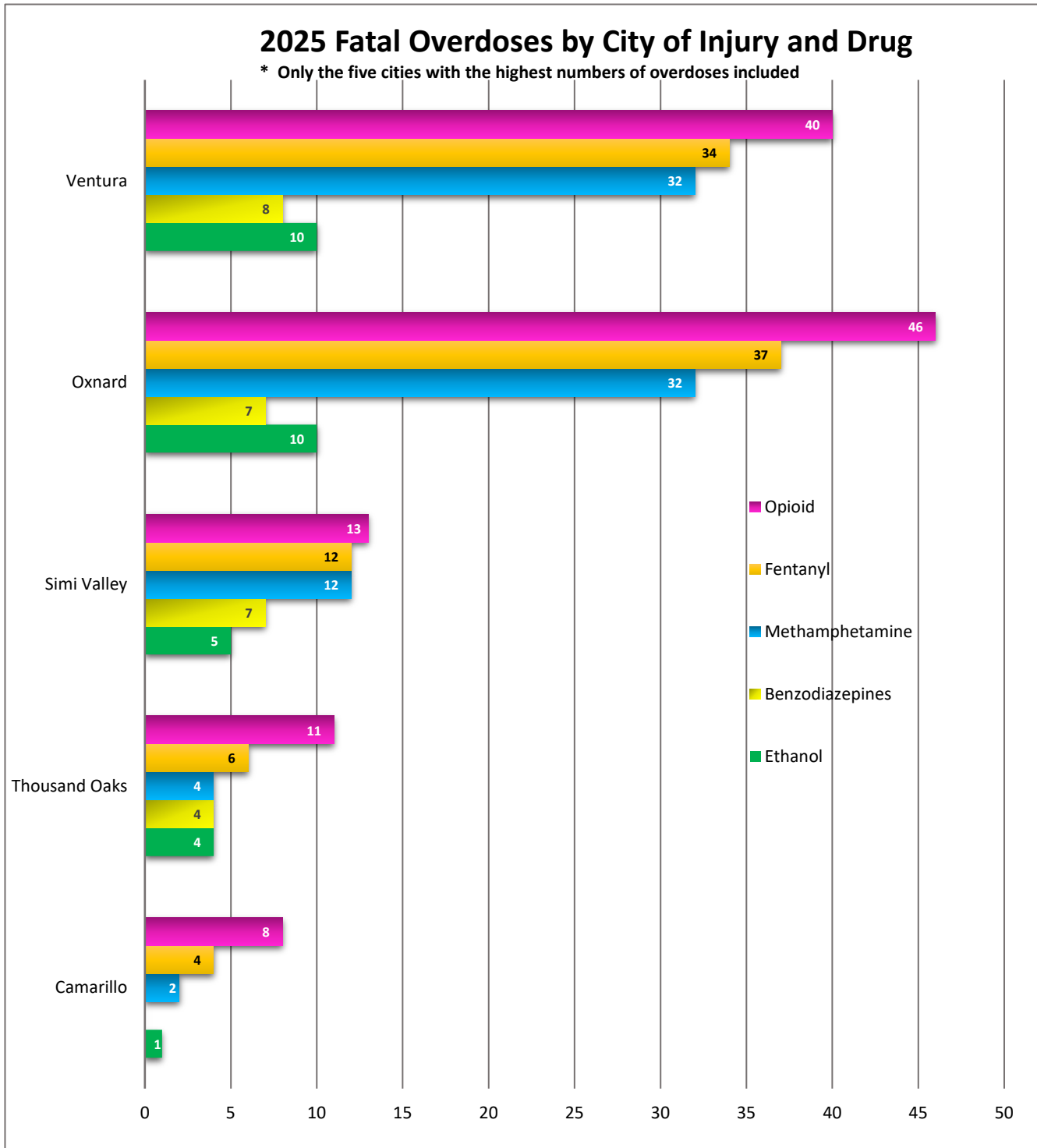




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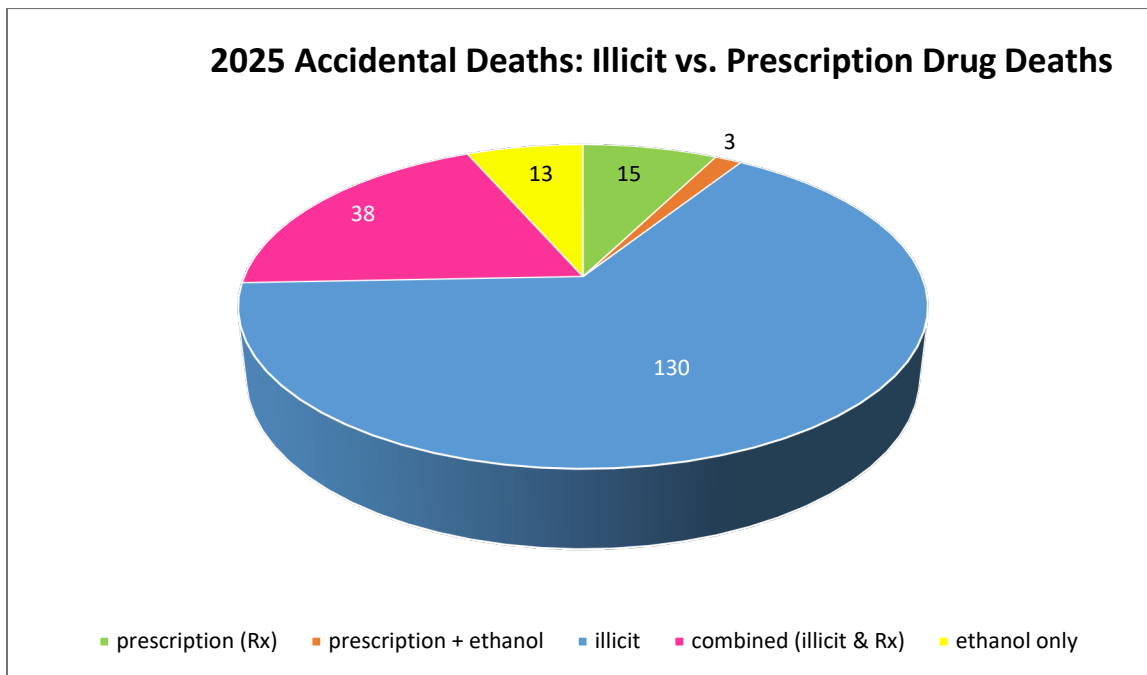
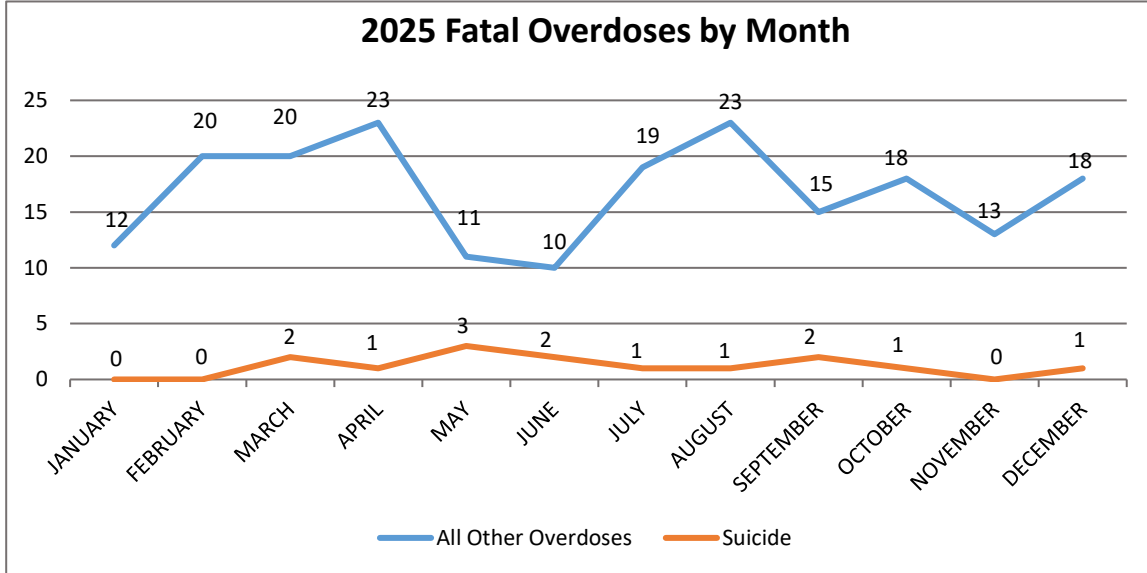
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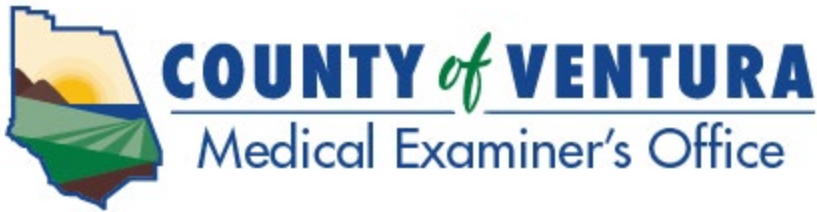
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Prescription drugs refers to medications commonly obtained through prescription; however, in some deaths, the prescription drugs may have been illicitly obtained.



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Data Explanation/Overview:

Multiple drugs or medications may be involved in one case; therefore, one should not add the numbers of individual substances. The same death may be represented multiple times in one graph because the overdose involved multiple drugs or because a drug was included in more than one category. For example, because fentanyl is an opioid, a death due to fentanyl will be included in both the fentanyl and opioid totals.

Overdose by city reflects the location of injury (overdose). In some cases, the location of death is different than the location of injury because of transport to a medical facility prior to death.

Noteworthy trends:

- 1) The total number of overdoses in 2025 represents an 8% increase since 2024 and a 25.3% decrease since 2021, when the number of overdoses was the highest in the history of the County.
- 2) The number of opioid and fentanyl related overdoses were similar to the previous year. Overall opioid deaths increased by two (1.4%) and fentanyl related overdoses increased by one (0.9%).
- 3) Methamphetamine related overdoses increased by 16.7% compared to the previous year.
- 4) The highest number of overdose deaths in 2025 was between ages 31 to 40 years (50 deaths). The highest number of fentanyl overdose deaths was also between ages 31 and 40 (30 deaths).
- 5) The potent fentanyl analog known as carfentanil contributed to 14 deaths.
- 6) Mitragynine (a kratom compound) contributed to three deaths.
- 7) Synthetic opioids from the nitazene and orphine drug classes each contributed to one death.
- 8) A number of novel psychoactive substances (NPS) contributed to deaths in Ventura County in 2025 including carfentanil (14), acetyl fentanyl (6), N-Pyrrolidino Ethylene Isotonitazene (1), cychlorphine (1), clonazolam (1), bromazolam (2), desalkylgidazepam (1), flualprazolam (1), mitragynine (3), xylazine (1) and MDMA (1).

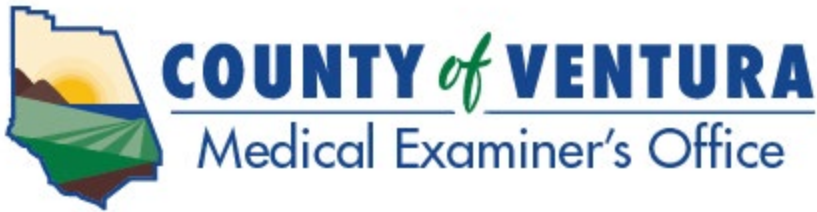
APPENDIX:

Benzodiazepines: Sometimes called “benzos,” these are sedatives (central nervous system depressants) often used to treat anxiety, insomnia, and other conditions. Combining benzodiazepines with other central nervous system depressants like opioids or alcohol increases a person’s risk of overdose and death.

Bromazolam: Bromazolam is a novel benzodiazepine which is not approved for medical use in the United States. Bromazolam has been reported in the illicit drug supply in combination with other drugs like fentanyl.

Carfentanil: Carfentanil is a fentanyl analog which is approximately 100 times more potent than fentanyl.

Cocaine: Cocaine is a powerfully addictive stimulant drug obtained from leaves of the coca shrub that stimulates the central nervous system. Cocaine has high potential for abuse but can be administered by a doctor for legitimate medical uses, such as local anesthesia for some eye, ear, and throat surgeries.



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Ethanol: In this report, ethanol refers to ethyl alcohol (drinking alcohol). Ethanol is a central nervous system depressant and can be especially dangerous when combined with other central nervous system depressants like benzodiazepines or opioids.

Fentanyl: Pharmaceutical fentanyl is a synthetic opioid, approved for treating severe pain, typically advanced cancer pain. Since the 1990s, the drug has been available in a patch or lozenge for easy and effective delivery of time-released medicine. It is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Illicitly produced fentanyl is sold through illicit drug markets for its heroin-like effect, and it is often mixed with other drugs, such as methamphetamine, or pressed into counterfeit prescription pills. *In the graphs, the fentanyl total includes prescription and illicit fentanyl as well as fentanyl analogs.*

Fentanyl Analogs: Fentanyl analogs are illicit and often deadly alterations of the medically prescribed drug fentanyl. The analogs have a similar chemical structure to fentanyl, and they have similar pharmacological effects as the original drug.

Heroin: An illegal, highly addictive opiate drug processed from morphine and extracted from certain poppy plants.

Methamphetamine: A highly addictive central nervous system stimulant drug that is also categorized as a psychostimulant. Methamphetamine use has been linked to mental disorders, problems with physical health, violent behavior, and overdose deaths.

Mitragynine: Mitragynine is an opioid compound found in the plant known as kratom. The substance is banned in many states but continues to be sold widely throughout California.

Nitazenes: This is a class of potent synthetic opioids derived from the compound nitazene. N-Pyrrolidino ethylene isotonitazene is a rarely encountered nitazene analog which contributed to one overdose in Ventura County in 2025.

Opiates: Opiates are chemical compounds that are extracted or refined from natural plant matter (poppy sap and fibers). Examples of opiates include opium, morphine, codeine, and heroin.

Orphines: Orphines are a new class of potent synthetic opioids which are rarely encountered to date. Cychlorphine, an orphine believed to have similar or greater potency than fentanyl, contributed to one death in Ventura County in 2025.

Opioid drugs: "Opioid drugs" is a broad term which includes both natural, plant derived opiates and synthetic opioid drugs. Opioids work in the brain to produce a variety of effects, including pain relief. As a class of substances, they act on opioid receptors to produce morphine-like effects. Opioid drugs include both illicit and prescribed substances including fentanyl (prescribed or illicit), oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, heroin, methadone etc.

Synthetic Opioid Drugs: Synthetic opioids refer to drugs that bind to opiate receptors which are produced in a lab and not derived from plant matter. The pharmaceutical industry has created more than 500 different opioid molecules. Some are widely used medically, some are not. Examples of well-known opioids used medically in the U.S include hydrocodone, oxycodone, oxymorphone, methadone, fentanyl and loperamide.

Xylazine: Xylazine is a tranquilizer that is not approved for human medical use in the United States. This drug is a central nervous system depressant which is increasingly being found in the illegal drug supply in the US. Like other central nervous system depressants, this drug can be life-threatening when combined with opioids like fentanyl.