

# Mindful Continuing Education

## Illicit Drug Use, Disorders, and Overdose Deaths in the U.S.

### Abstract

**1. Each of the following is an accurate statement about illicit drug use in the United States EXCEPT:**

- A. Drug use and subsequent overdoses continue to be critical and complicated public health challenges across metropolitan/nonmetropolitan areas in the United States
- B. The decline in illicit drug use by young adults ages 18-24 and the lower prevalence of illicit drug use disorders in urban areas during 2012–2014 are encouraging signs
- C. The increasing rate of drug overdose deaths in rural areas, which surpassed rates in urban areas, is cause for concern
- D. Understanding the differences between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas in drug use, drug use disorders, and drug overdose deaths can help public health professionals to identify, monitor, and prioritize responses

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### Introduction

**2. Drug overdoses are now the leading cause of injury death in the United States, and although prescription drugs were primarily responsible for the rapid expansion of this large and growing public health crisis, illegal drugs such as heroin, illicit fentanyl, cocaine, and methamphetamines now are contributing substantially to the problem.**

- A. True
- B. False

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### Results-National Survey of Drug Use and Health

**3. From 2003–2005 to 2012–2014, the prevalence of past month use of illicit drugs was highest in large metropolitan areas, and from 2012–2014, respondents aged 26–34 years had the highest prevalence of past-month use of illicit drugs for all urban levels.**

- A. True
- B. False

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## Discussion

**4. Although the National Survey of Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) showed that past-month use of illicit drugs was lower in nonmetropolitan areas compared to metropolitan areas, people in rural areas may be particularly vulnerable because:**

- A. The prevalence of drug use disorders among people reporting past-year illicit drug use in nonmetropolitan areas was similar to that in metropolitan areas, and individuals with substance use disorders are at higher risk for drug use-related morbidity and mortality
- B. Drug overdose deaths in rural areas have increased, surpassing rates in urban areas
- C. Research indicates that nonmetropolitan areas have less access to substance abuse treatment services and other risk reduction strategies
- D. All of the above

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**5. Which is NOT an accurate statement about the involvement of prescription opioids in drug misuse and overdose deaths?**

- A. Monitoring prescribing levels along with understanding the local illicit drug trade is important for prevention efforts
- B. Although recent studies suggest that a leveling off and decline has occurred in opioid prescribing rates since 2012 and in high-dose prescribing rates since 2009, overall opioid prescribing remained high in 2015
- C. While access to health care and prevention services varied, the number of opioid prescriptions remained steady across levels of urbanization
- D. Reducing the number of persons initially exposed to prescription opioids might reduce the illicit use of opioids, the subsequent risk of addiction, and the use of illicit drugs

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**6. Strengthening the health care delivery system while improving the integration of primary, specialty, and substance abuse services can provide the nexus of care needed to reduce drug misuse, particularly in urban areas.**

- A. True
- B. False

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## Limitations

**7. Illicit drug overdoses may be underestimated in survey results because lengthy investigations are often required including toxicology assessments, and this sometimes results in a death being categorized as “pending manner and cause of death.”**

- A. True
- B. False

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