Poisoning has increased for the last ten years and surpassed motor vehicle crashes as the leading cause of injury death in 2006. In 2011, there were 61 were opiate-related deaths.

In 2011, there were 1,200 visits to the hospital for poisoning (270 opiate-related). In addition, there were more than 3,500 discharges from the hospital for non-dependent abuse or dependence on drugs (1,050 opiate-related).

The majority of unintentional* poisonings (deaths - 82%; unintentional poisoning hospitalizations 62%) are due to prescription, over-the-counter, and illicit drugs.

For those that end up in hospital, the drugs of biggest concern are in the opiate and hallucinogen group, in particular, opiate-related pain medications, esp. Oxycontin, Vicodin & morphine. Over a 5 year period (2007-2011), over 50% of the opiate-related hospital visits were due to prescription drugs.

Opiate-related drugs are overprescribed, easily available, and can result in dependence and abuse.

There has been a dramatic increase in opiate–related hospital visits, including emergency department visits, over the past 10 years in Dane County.

In 2011, there were 270 and in 2012, 292 opiate-related hospital visits. In 2011, teens and young adults (15-24) were most affected.

[Data Source: Public Health Madison & Dane County]
• Drug poisoning/overdoses (resulting in death, hospital admissions or police arrests) are county-wide.

• There is an alarming increase in Madison EMS calls, where Narcan injections were given (mostly used to reverse opiate overdose).

  [Data source: Madison Fire & EMS]

• According to a 2012 Overdose survey (included over 500 current & past drug users):
  • 165 reported that they had had a personal overdose experience; 65% > once
  • More than 3/4 of people in treatment & recovery from opioid dependence, reported that they started their opiate use with prescription drugs.

  [Data Source: Public Health Madison & Dane County]

• In 2012, 7.1% (1,222) of Dane County high school students reported that they used prescription drugs and 5.7% used over-the-counter drugs for non medical reasons. 2.1 % reported having used heroin in the last 12 months.

  [Data Source: 2012 Dane County Youth Assessment]

• Dane County funded AODA treatment programs have shown a steady increase in clients with opiate problems, over the past 10 years. (There were about 100 in 2000 compared to over 315 in 2011.)

  [Data source: Dane County Health & Human Services]

* An unintentional poisoning is a poisoning in which the individual exposed to the substance is not attempting to cause harm to himself or herself or others. It can result from misuse and abuse of prescription or recreational drugs, overuse of drugs prescribed for medical reasons and exposure to chemicals, gases, venoms, biological toxins, and other substances.

For further questions about data, including original charts, contact Lisa Bullard-Cawthorne at 444-3542 or email lbullardcawthorne@publichealthmdc.com