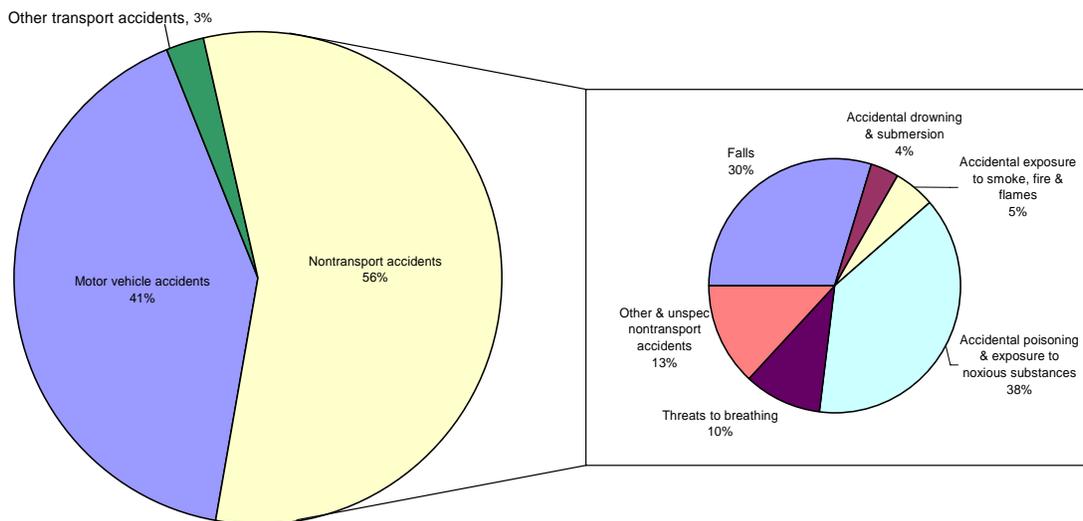


Unintentional Drug Poisonings in Delaware

Deaths due to unintentional drug poisonings, or overdoses, have risen dramatically over the last 25 years. In 2004-2008 accidental poisonings were the second leading cause of unintentional injury death, accounting for 20 percent of all accidental deaths.

Figure 1. Accidental Causes of Death by Specific Cause of Injury, Delaware, 2004-2008



Source: Delaware Health Statistics Center

In 2004-2008, accidental poisoning deaths accounted for 21.5% (335 of 1557) of all unintentional injuries, second only to motor vehicle deaths, which accounted for 41.2% (642 of 1557) of all unintentional injury deaths.

- Drug poisoning deaths accounted for 92.8% (311 of 335) of accidental poisoning deaths. The most commonly involved drugs were narcotics, including cocaine, other opioid pain medications, and methadone.
- **Overall, in 2004-2008 unintentional drug poisoning deaths accounted for 20% of all unintentional injury deaths.**

By contrast, in 1981-1985, accidental poisoning deaths accounted for only 3.4% (36 of 1059) of all unintentional injuries; drug poisoning deaths accounted for 66.7% (24 of 36) of accidental poisoning deaths.

- **Overall, in 1981-1985 unintentional drug poisoning deaths accounted for 2.3% of all unintentional injury deaths.**

Drug poisoning mortality rates have increased ninefold since 1981-1985.

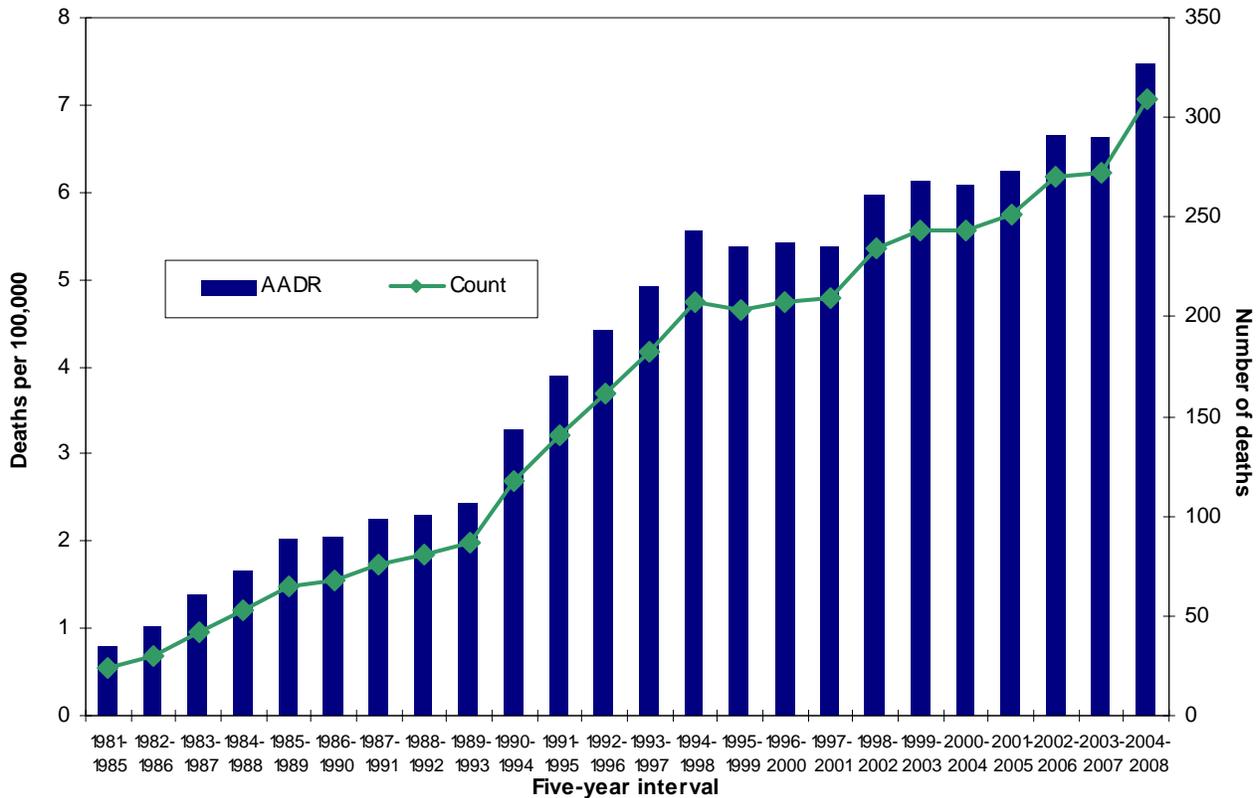
One in five unintentional injury deaths between 2004 and 2008 were due to accidental drug overdoses.

People who died from drug overdoses were most likely to be white, male, and in their late 30s to early 40s.

Drug overdose mortality rates for men were more than twice that of women, as were rates for whites compared to blacks.

The number of accidental drug poisoning deaths, or drug overdoses, increased from 24 in 1981-1985 to 311 in 2004-2008, which corresponded to an 839 percent increase in the age-adjusted death rate (AADR), from .8 to 7.5 deaths per 100,000 population. The graph below shows the trend and the

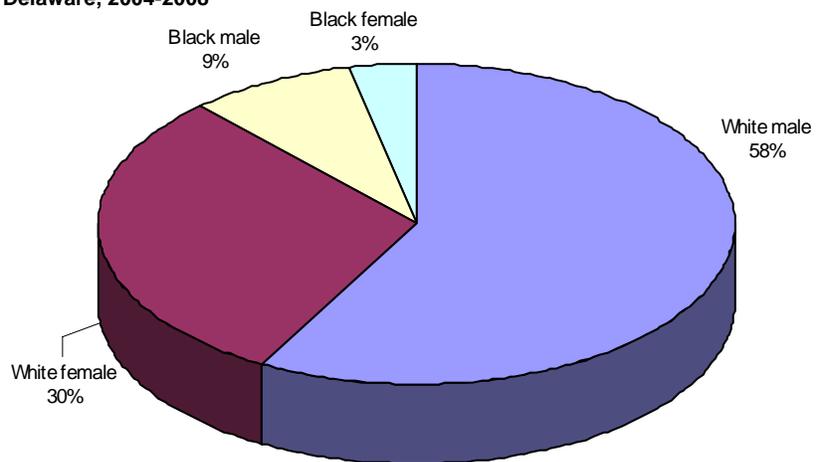
Figure 2. Five-year Age-adjusted Death Rate and Number of Deaths Due to Accidental Drug Poisonings Delaware, 1981-2008



Note:
Rates are adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population.
Source: Delaware Health Statistics Center

Figure 3. Distribution of Unintentional Drug Deaths by Race and Sex Delaware, 2004-2008

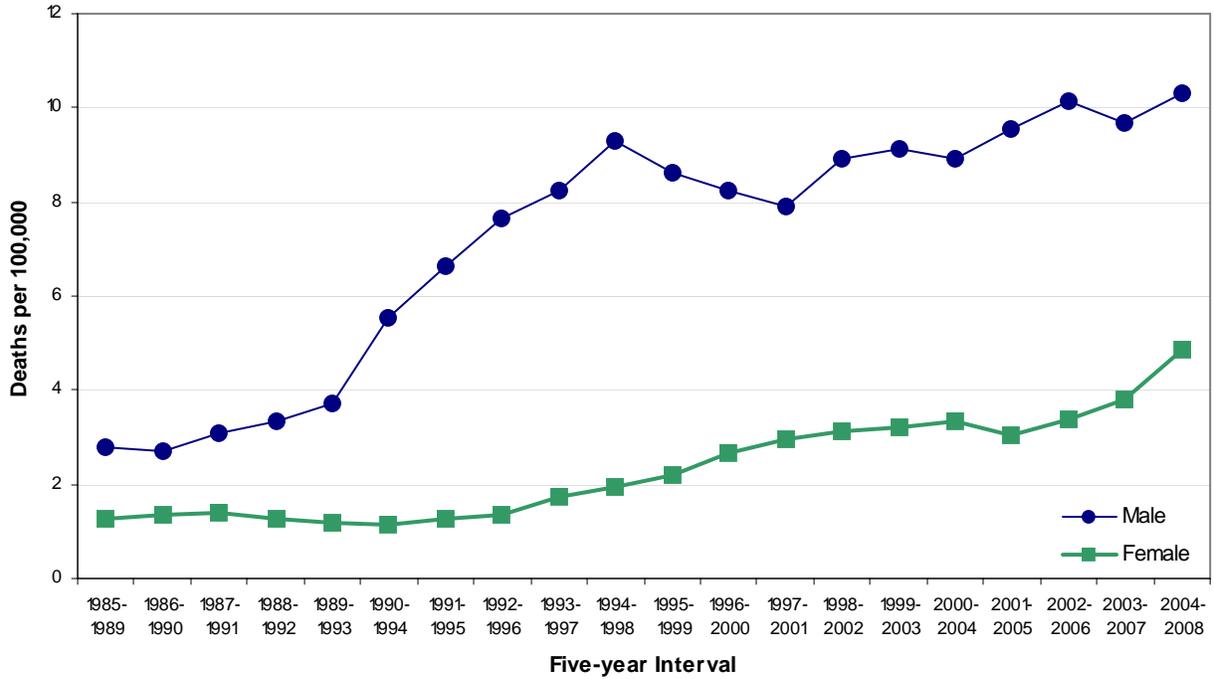
The majority of unintentional drug poisonings were white males. In 2004-2008, white males between the ages of 25 and 54 accounted for nearly half of all unintentional drug poisonings, with the youngest group, those aged 25-34, making up the largest single percentage (see figure 6 for detailed distribution).



Source: Delaware Health Statistics Center

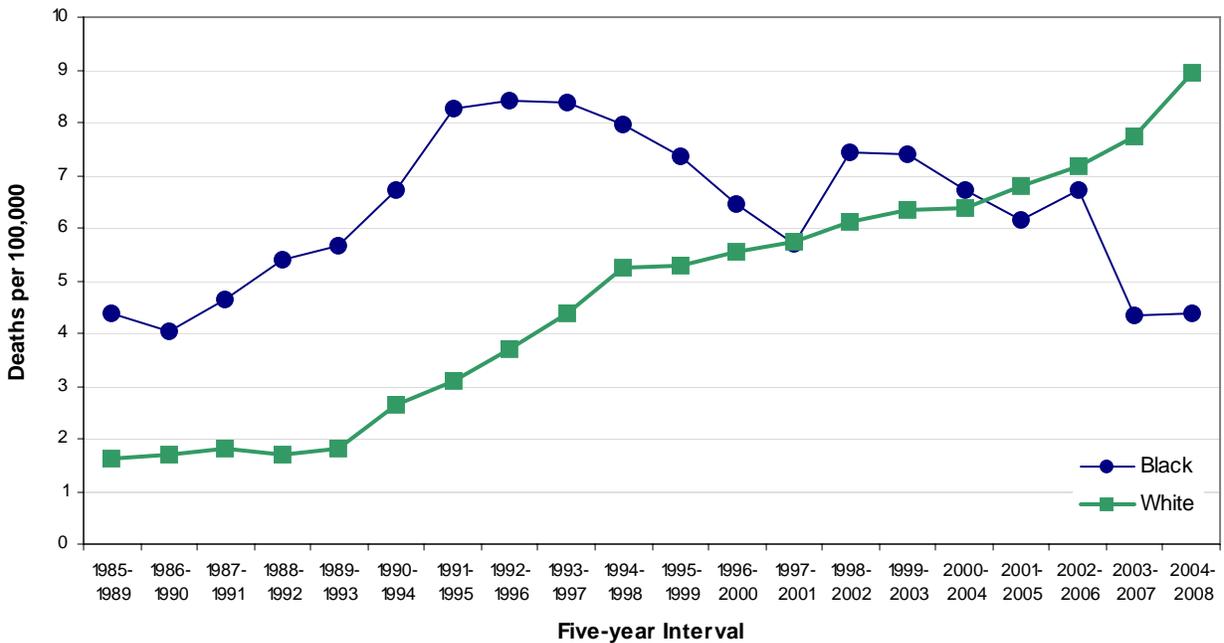
Though recent AADRs for drug overdoses of males are more than double that of females, both experienced similar trends in their rates, which more than tripled between 1985-1989 and 2004-2008. The same trend did not appear when looking at the mortality trends by race; the steady increase in white AADRs resulted in a 455 percent increase, while black rates rose and subsequently declined to its earliest rates.

Figure 4. Five-year Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rates by Sex, Delaware, 1985 - 2008



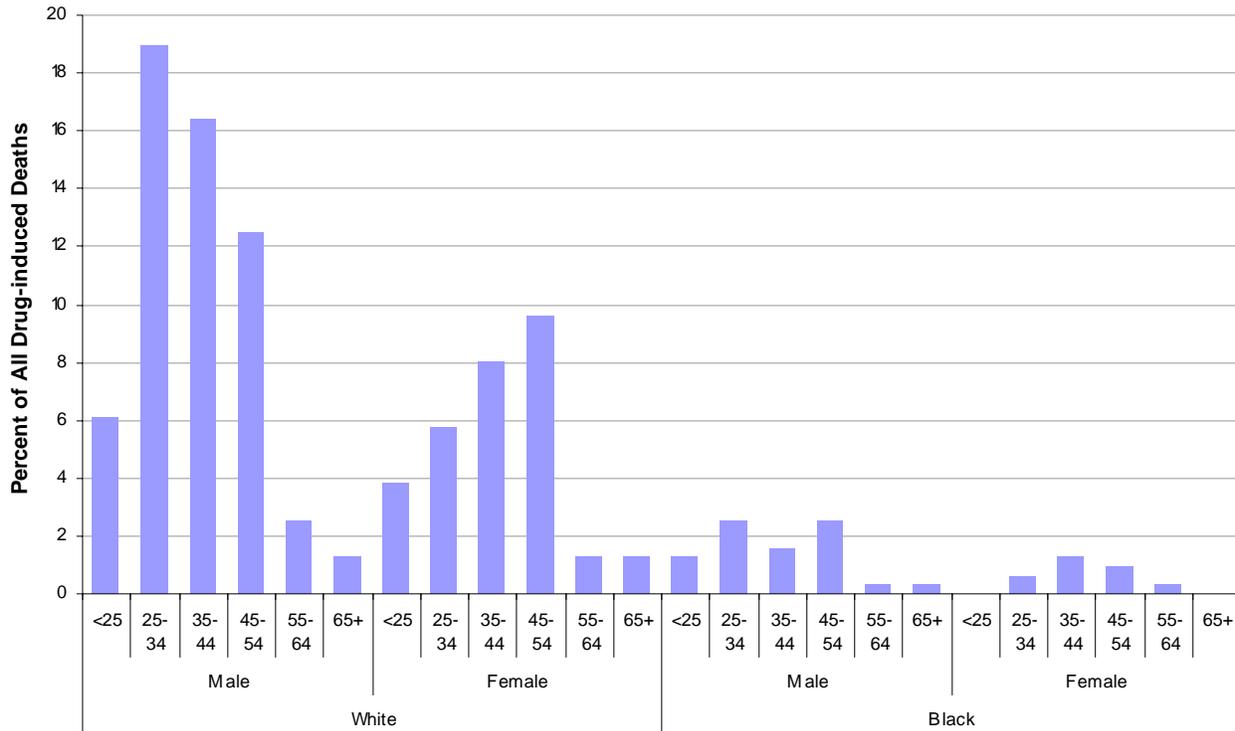
Note: Rates are adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population.
Source: Delaware Health Statistics Center

Figure 5. Five-year Age-Adjusted Drug Overdose Mortality Rates by Race, Delaware, 1985 - 2008



Note: Rates are adjusted to the 2000 U.S. standard population.
Source: Delaware Health Statistics Center

**Figure 6. Distribution of Unintentional Drug Poisoning Deaths by Race, Sex, and Age Group
Delaware, 2004-2008**



Source: Delaware Health Statistics Center



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Division of Public Health

If you have comments, suggestions, and/or questions, please contact the Delaware Health Statistics Center at (302) 744-4541.

Reported by Barbara Gladders