Methadone Deaths in Ohio

Produced as a companion to the CDC’s recent publication - *Vital Signs: Risk for Overdose from Methadone Used for Pain Relief — United States, 1999–2010*  
http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm61e0703a1.htm?s_cid=mm61e703a1_e

Methadone continues to contribute to Ohio’s prescription drug overdose epidemic. Unintentional overdoses involving methadone in Ohio increased from 3 percent (14 deaths) in 2000 to a high of 14 percent in 2005 (144 deaths). Most recently in 2010, methadone was involved in a substantial 1 in 10 (10%) unintentional overdoses or 155 deaths.

Contributing to these deaths, cumulative retail distribution of methadone in Ohio also increased dramatically (882 percent) over the past decade from 39 kg in 2000 to a high of 383 kg in 2010.

This amounts to approximately 40 methadone overdoses per 100 kg methadone dispensed in 2010.

![Graph showing unintentional drug overdoses involving methadone and methadone retail distribution in kilograms, Ohio, 2000-2010](image)

Sources: 1. ODH Office of Vital Statistics; 2. DEA ARCOS Retail Drug Distribution Reports

Notes:
- Deaths involving any mention of methadone were included in this analysis; some of these deaths may have been methadone only overdoses; however, other substances may have been included.
- Deaths involving mentions of other specific opioids (e.g., hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine, fentanyl) are not available in Ohio overdose data due to limitations in coding specificity.
- Methadone used for pain treatment and methadone used for opioid substance abuse treatment are not distinguished in Ohio overdose data. Most experts agree that methadone deaths are more likely to result from the substances’ use as a pain medication. This is due to the timing of the increase in deaths coinciding with the increase in use of methadone as a prescription analgesic and the increased dangers of methadone to opioid naïve patients versus long-term users of opioids in treatment.