

# Nevada State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System

## Report of 2020 Deaths – Southern Nevada

**Overview:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) is a program that supports state, territorial, county, and city health departments in obtaining more comprehensive and timelier data on overdose morbidity and mortality. The program is meant to enhance opioid overdose surveillance, reporting, and dissemination efforts to better inform prevention and early intervention strategies.

The information contained in this biannual report highlights **overdose mortality** within Southern Nevada Counties utilizing the State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS) for the period beginning **January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2020**.

**Data Source:** SUDORS uses death certificates and coroner/medical examiner reports (including post-mortem toxicology testing results) to capture detailed information on toxicology, death scene investigations, route of drug administration, and other risk factors that may be associated with a fatal overdose.

**Case Definitions:** A death that occurred in Nevada where the decedent's place of residence was Nevada and was assigned any of the following ICD-10 underlying cause-of-death codes on the death certificate: X40-44 (unintentional drug poisoning) or Y10-Y14 (drug poisoning of undetermined intent); or a death classified as a drug overdose death by the Medical Examiner/Coroner. *Stimulants* speed up the body's systems and include methamphetamine, cocaine, and prescription stimulants (Adderall, Ritalin). *Benzodiazepines* are psychoactive drugs that are depressants that produce sedation, include sleep, and prevent seizures (brand names include Valium and Xanax) (DEA).

**Limitations:** Data is delayed due to the time required to abstract data from multiple sources. Data completeness is dependent on information documented at time of death and therefore leads to large amounts of missing data.

**The report includes details on:**

Section 1: Demographic Characteristics of Cases

Section 2: Breakdown of Top Substances Listed in the Cause of Death

Section 3: Mental Health, Substance Use, and Institutionalization Prior to Death

This publication was supported by the Nevada State Department of Health and Human Services through Grant Number NU17CE925001 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Department nor the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Key Findings:

There were **907 accidental/undetermined intent drug overdose deaths** reported in SUDORS among Nevada residents living in Southern Nevada counties from **January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2020**.

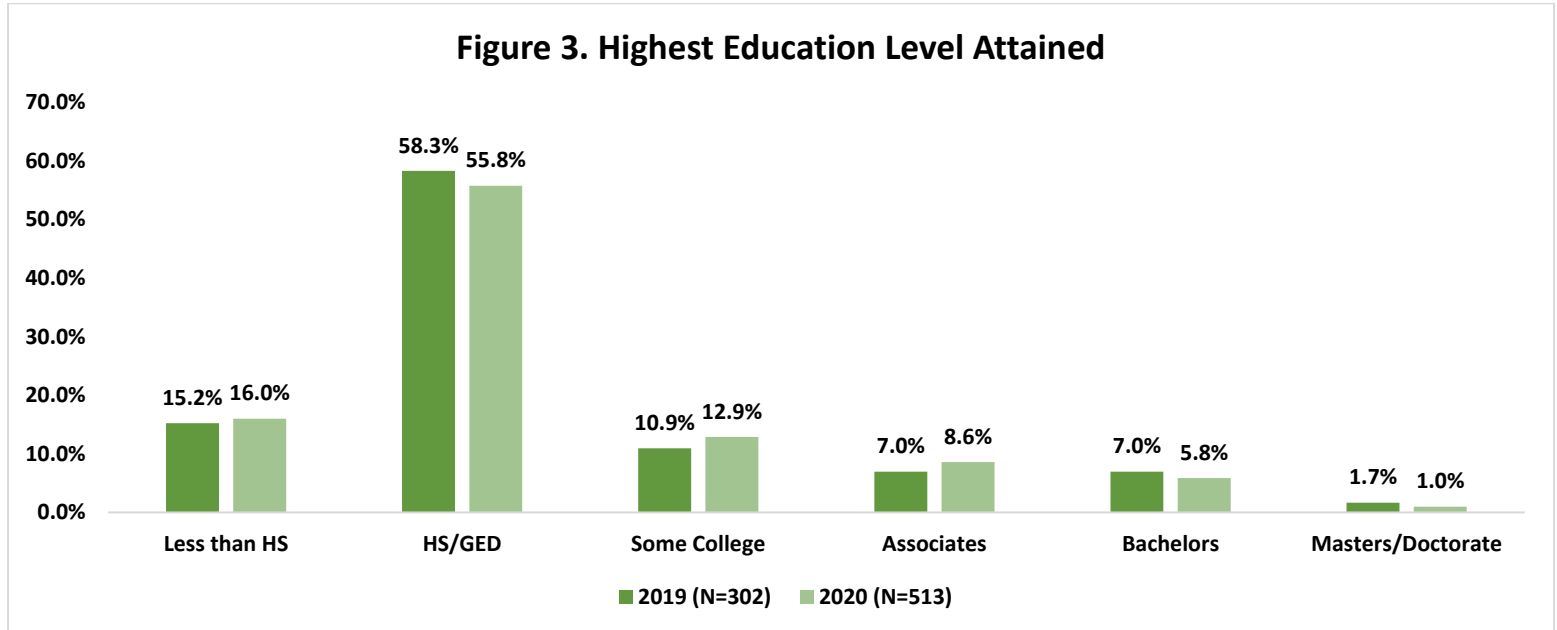
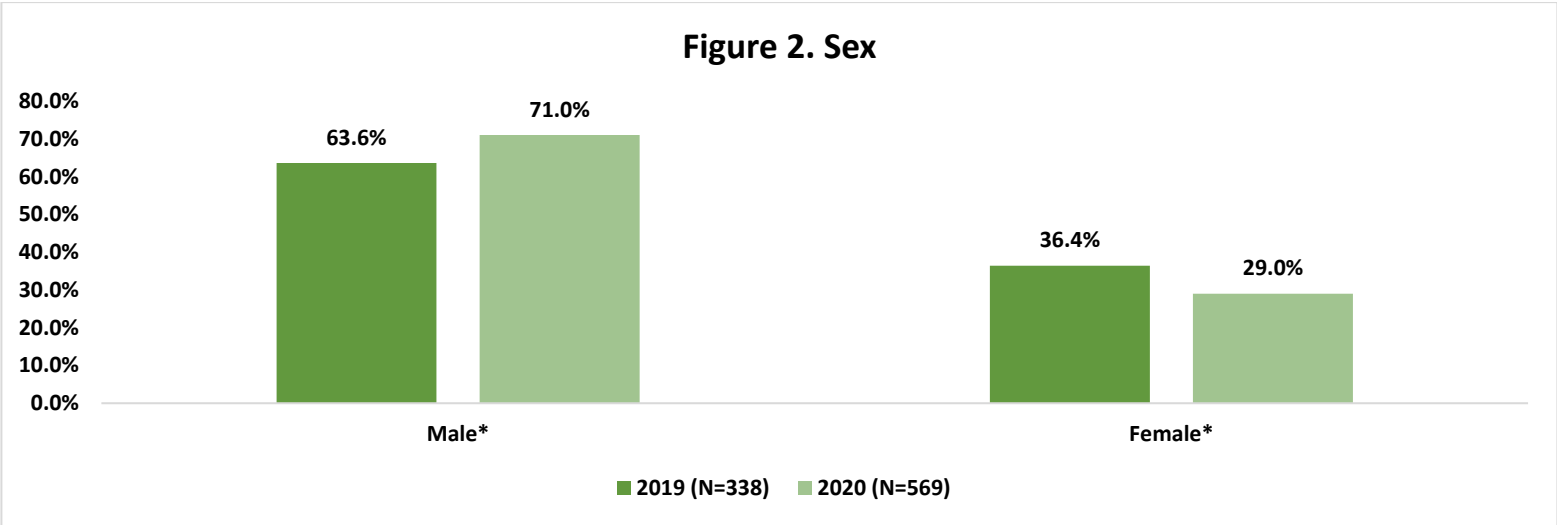
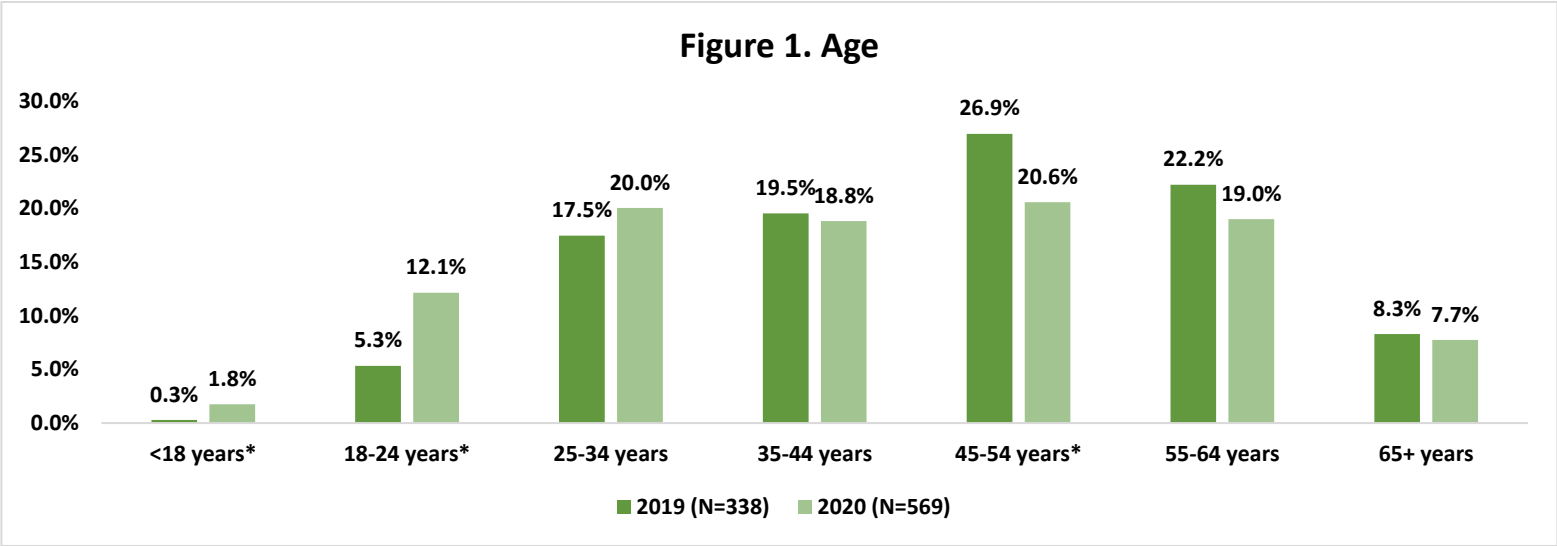
- There was a 68% increase in deaths from 2019 to 2020.
- Cases were mostly male, white, had a high school education and between the ages of 45-54 (**Figures 1-4**).
- There was a significant increase in the percentage of deaths attributed to fentanyl (257% increase) and an increase in the percentage of deaths attributed to benzodiazepines (146% increase) (**Figure 8**).
- Nearly 1 in 3 deaths in Southern Nevada had an opioid and stimulant present (**Figure 10**).
- There was a significant increase in the percentage of Hispanic overdoses (152% increase) (**Figure 4**).
- Opioids were listed in the cause of death for 2/3 of cases (**Figure 8**).
- 1 in 9 cases in 2020 had a previous overdose some time prior to their fatal overdose (**Figure 11**).

## Questions or comments?

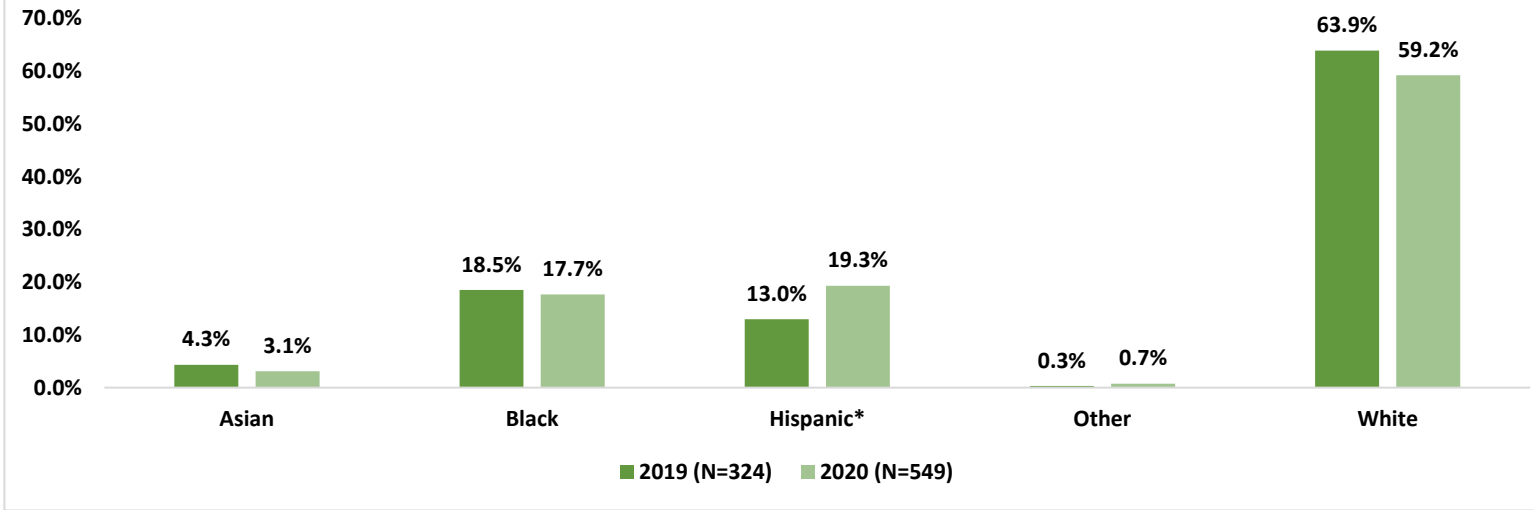
Please contact Nevada OD2A's opioid epidemiologist, Shawn Thomas, MPH, at [shawnt@unr.edu](mailto:shawnt@unr.edu).



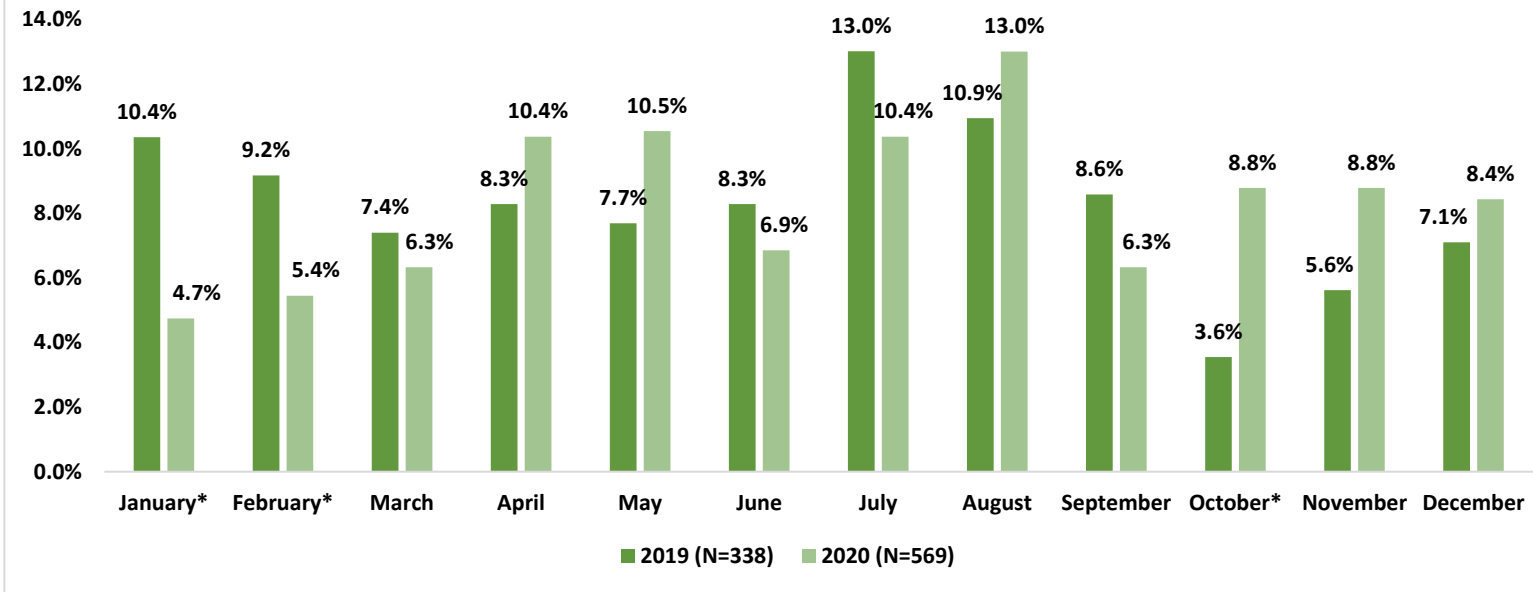
# Section 1: Demographic Characteristics of Cases



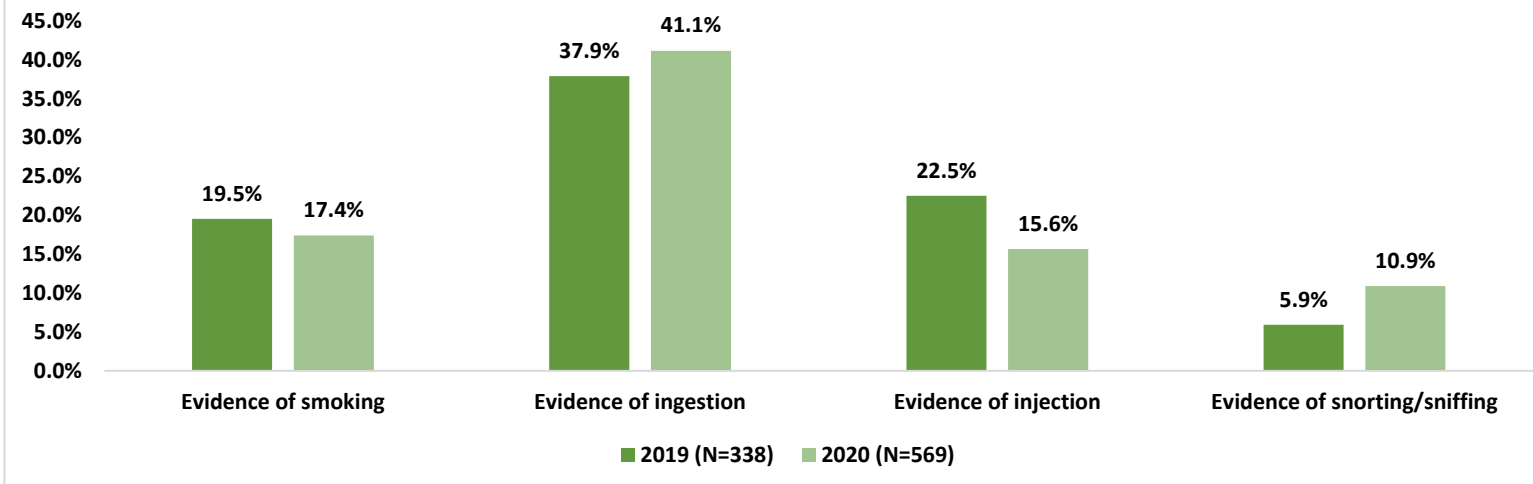
**Figure 4. Race/Ethnicity**



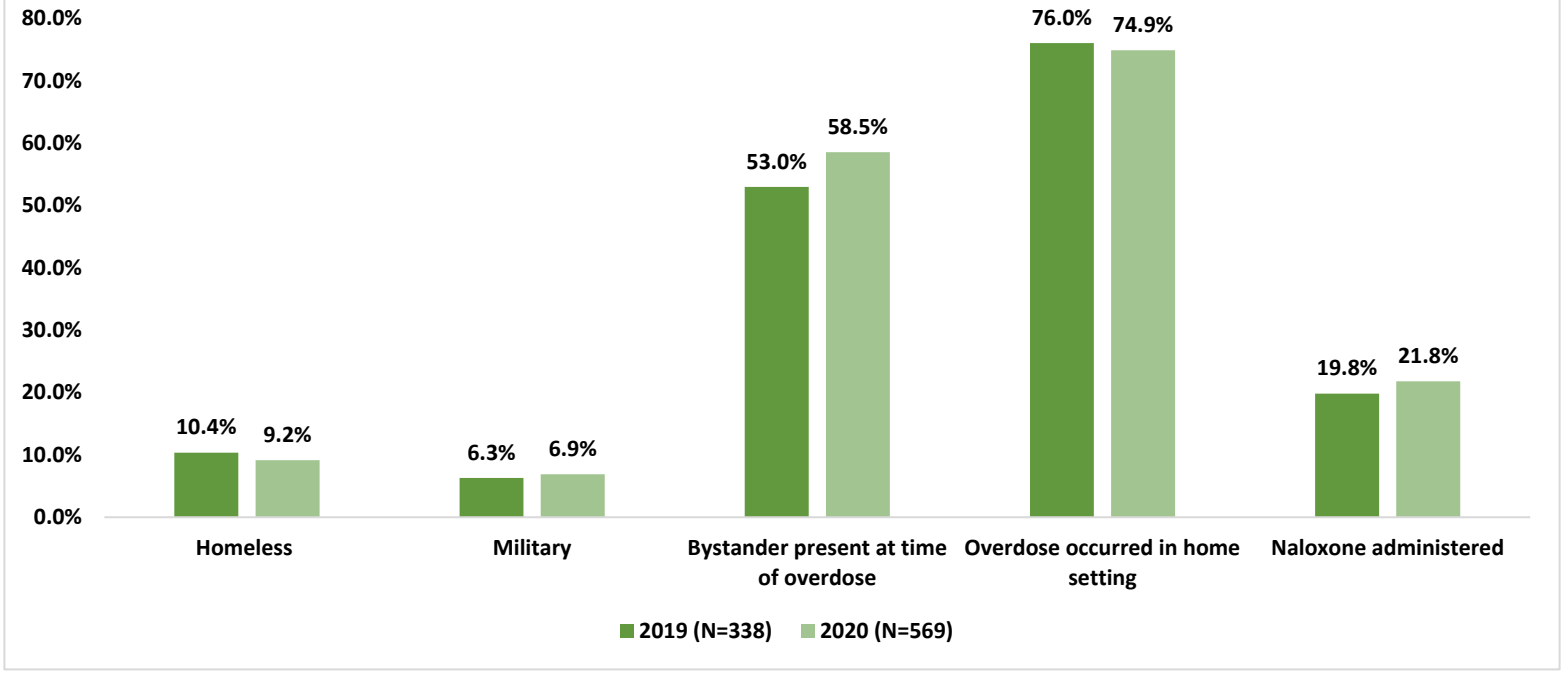
**Figure 5. Percentage of Deaths by Month**



**Figure 6. Evidence of route of administration**



**Figure 7. Other Information Regarding Case**



Data not available for all cases in Figures 3-4. Percentages exclude missing data, so these statistics may not represent the true proportion of case characteristics. \*Indicates statistically significant differences between years.

**Summary:** There were 338 drug overdose deaths of unintentional/undetermined intent in 2019 compared to 569 deaths in 2020 in the jurisdiction of the Clark County Coroner among Nevada residents. In 2020, deaths were highest among the 45-54 year old population, followed by the 55-64 year old population. There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of deaths among those <18 years of age (0.3% in 2019 to 1.8% in 2020) and 18-24 years of age (5.3% in 2019 to 12.1% in 2020). There was a significant decline in the percentage of deaths among those 45-54 years of age, from 26.9% of deaths in 2019 to 20.6% of deaths in 2020 (Figure 1). There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of deaths among males (63.6% to 71.0%) and a decline in the percentage among females (36.4% to 29.0%) from 2019 to 2020. There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of deaths seen in those identified as Hispanic from 2019 (13.0%) to 2020 (19.3%) (Figure 4). There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of deaths in October 2019 (3.6%) to 2020 (8.8%) (Figure 5). In 2020, bystanders were present at nearly 60% of overdoses, 3 in 4 overdoses occurred in a home dwelling, and naloxone was administered in only 1 in 5 overdoses.

# Section 2: Breakdown of Top Substances Listed on the Cause of Death

Figure 8. Opioids contributing to death

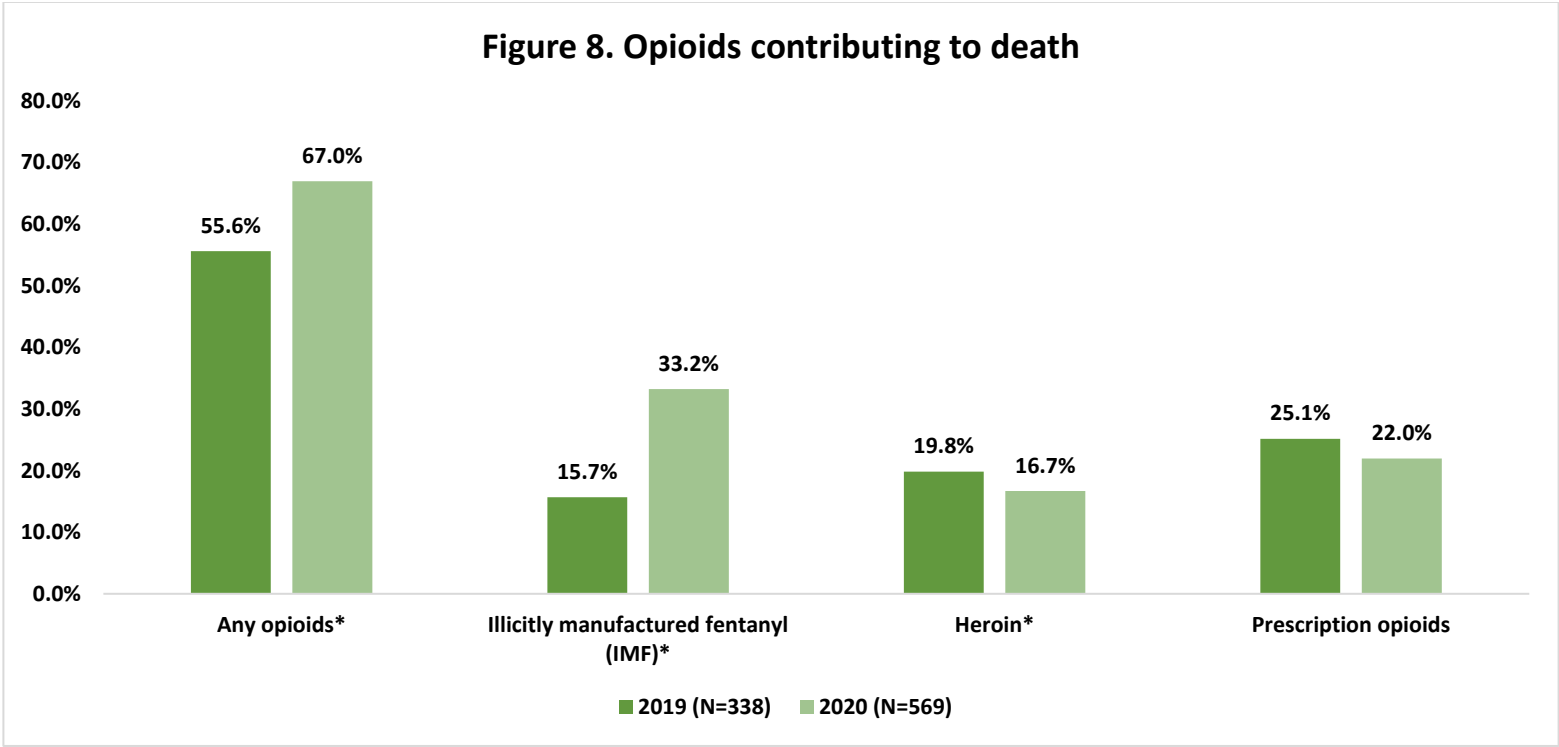
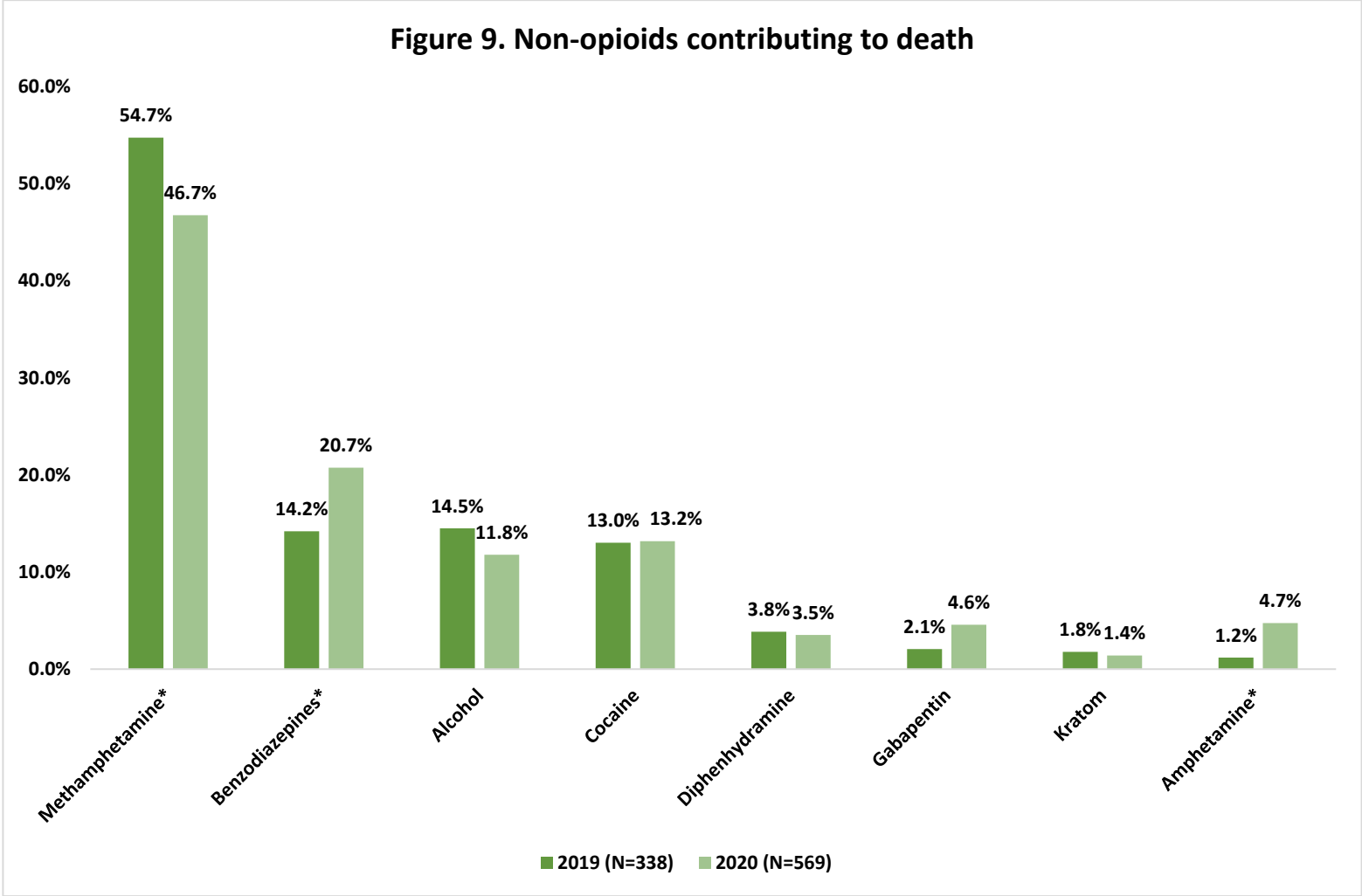
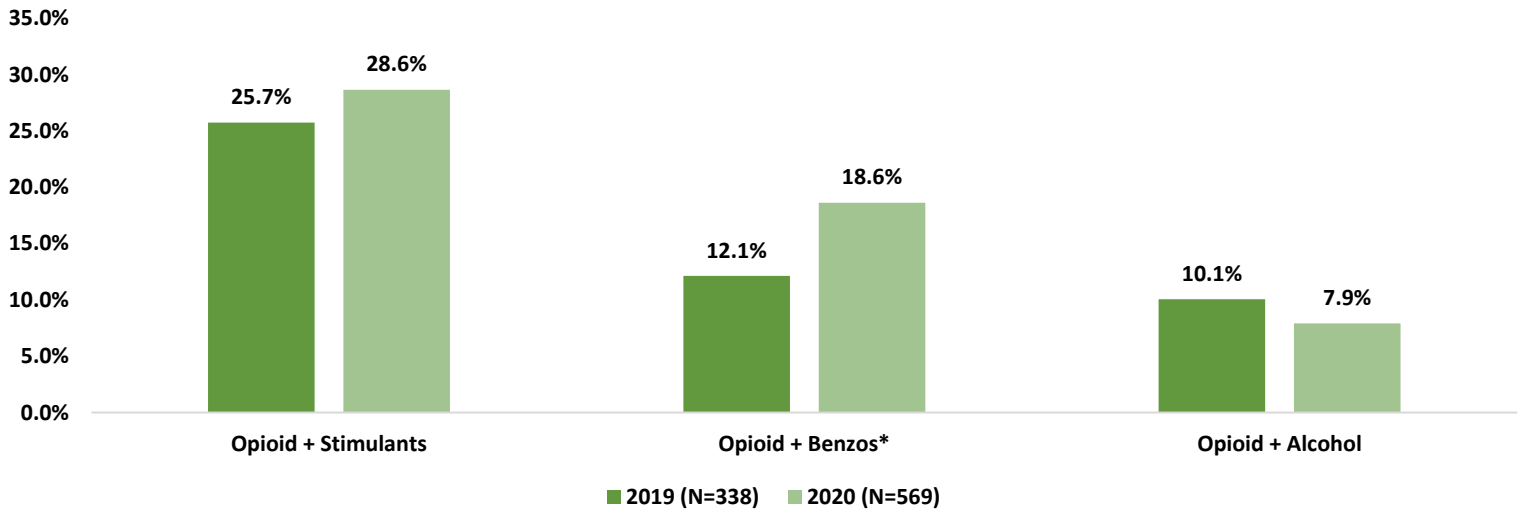


Figure 9. Non-opioids contributing to death



**Figure 10. Cases where opioids and other substances contributed to death**

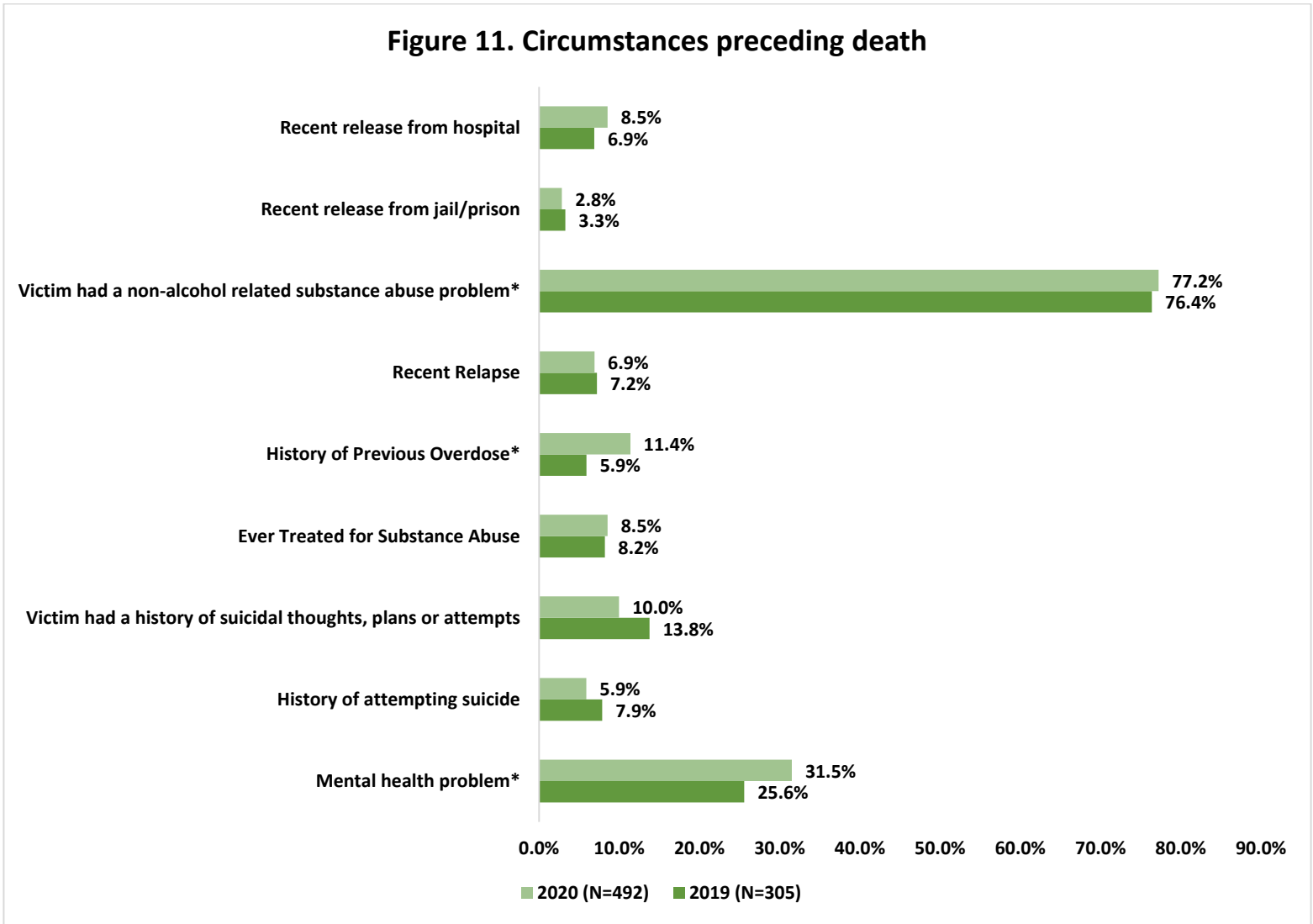


Substances listed in Figures 8 and 9 are not mutually exclusive, and decedents may have had multiple substances listed in the cause of death. \*Indicates statistically significant differences between years.

**Summary:** There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of deaths attributed to fentanyl from 2019 (15.7%) to 2020 (33.2%) (Figure 8). There was a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of deaths attributed to heroin from 2019 (19.8%) to 2020 (16.7%) (Figure 8). There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of deaths attributed to any opioid from 2019 (55.6%) to 2020 (67.0%) (Figure 8). There was a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of deaths attributed to methamphetamine from 2019 (54.7%) to 2020 (46.7%) (Figure 9). There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of deaths attributed to benzodiazepines (14.2% in 2019 to 20.7% in 2020), as well as amphetamine (1.2% in 2019 to 4.7% in 2020) (Figure 9). There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of deaths attributed to opioids and benzodiazepines from 2019 to 2020 (Figure 10).

### Section 3: Mental Health, Substance Use, and Institutionalization Prior to Death

**Figure 11. Circumstances preceding death**



Circumstances prior to death were not available for all cases in Figure 11. Percentages exclude missing data and likely underestimate the true proportion of case characteristics. \*Indicates statistically significant differences between years.

**Summary:** Among those with known circumstances prior to death, there was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of those with a reported mental health problem, from 25.6% in 2019 to 31.5% in 2020 (Figure 11). There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of those with a previous overdose, from 5.9% in 2019 to 11.4% in 2020 (Figure 11). There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of those with a non-alcohol related substance abuse problem, from 76.4% in 2019 to 77.2% in 2020 (Figure 11).