



Utah Suicide Toxicology Report Fiscal Year 2012

UAC 26-4-28 Report to the Legislature

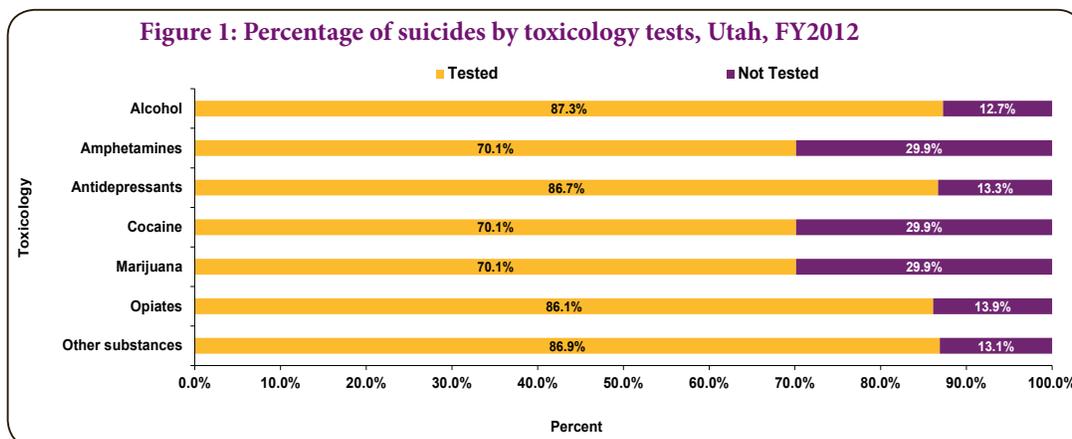
Introduction

As a requirement of UAC 26-4-8, the Utah Department of Health is required to report “the types of substances found present in the samples taken from the body of a person who is suspected to have died as a result of suicide or assisted suicide.”

Toxicology Results

In fiscal year 2012 (June 2011 through July 2012) there were 532 suicides.¹ Toxicology tests were conducted in 97.6% (n=519) of suicides. Toxicology tests are not conducted for all suicides. For example, based on investigation and medical history, tests for illicit drugs may not be conducted.

Tests for alcohol, antidepressants, and other substances were conducted for approximately 87.0% of suicides and tests for opiates were conducted for 86.1% of suicides. Tests for amphetamines, cocaine, and marijuana were conducted for 70.1% of suicides (**Figure 1**).



The most common drug found in victims who died from suicide was ‘other substances’ (43.9%). This category includes over-the-counter medications and benzodiazepines, such as anti-anxiety medications and muscle relaxants. The least common was cocaine (2.2%) (**Table 1**).

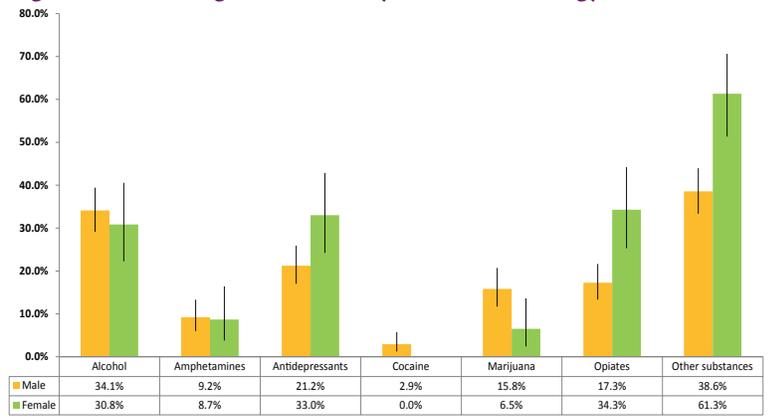
Table 1: Summary of suicide toxicology test results, Utah, FY2012

Toxicology	Screened	Present	Percent
Other substances	451	198	43.9%
Alcohol	453	151	33.3%
Antidepressants	450	108	24.0%
Opiates	447	95	21.3%
Marijuana	364	49	13.5%
Amphetamines	364	33	9.1%
Cocaine	364	8	2.2%

Of those who tested positive for alcohol, the average Blood Alcohol Concentration percent (BAC) was nearly two times (0.15%) the legal limit. The legal BAC for Utah is 0.08%.

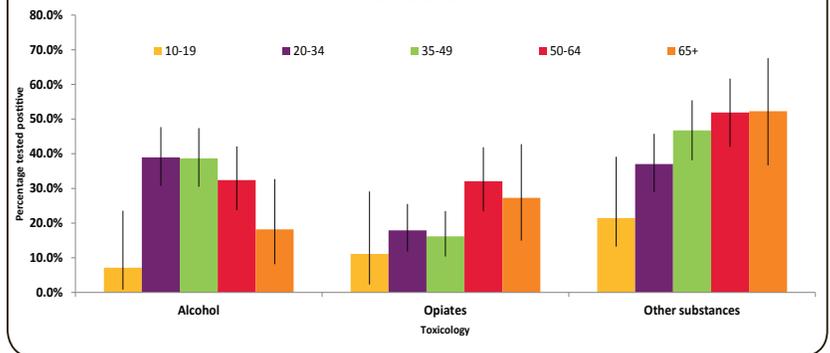
Females were significantly more likely to test positive for opiates and other substances compared to males (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Percentage of suicides by sex and toxicology, Utah, FY2012



Persons 20 to 34, 35 to 49, and 50 to 64 years old were significantly more likely to test positive for alcohol compared to persons 10 to 19 years old. Persons 50 to 64 years old were significantly more likely to test positive for opiates compared to persons 35 to 49 years old. Persons 50 to 64 years old were significantly more likely to test positive for other substances compared to persons 10 to 19 years old (Figure 3). There were no significant differences in age groups for the presence of amphetamines, antidepressants, cocaine, and marijuana.

Figure 3: Percentage of suicides by age group and toxicology, Utah, FY2012



Last updated: November 26, 2012

References

¹Data are from the Utah Violent Death Reporting System (UTVDRS). UTVDRS is an initiative of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to systematically collect violent death data from death certificates, medical examiner records, police reports, crime lab records, and supplemental homicide reports on suicides, homicides, deaths of undetermined intent, unintentional firearm-related deaths, and deaths due to legal intervention.

Our Mission...

Is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability, and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care; and promoting healthy lifestyles.

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