UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Utah Suicide Toxicology Report
Fiscal Year 2011

UAC 26-4-28 Report to the Legislature

Introduction

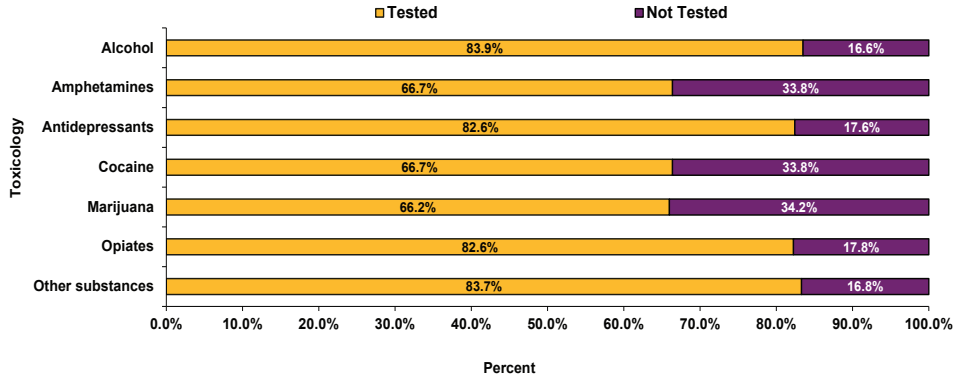
As a requirement of UAC 26-4-8, the Utah Department of Health is required to report "the types of substances found present in the samples taken from the body of a person who is suspected to have died as a result of suicide or assisted suicide."

Toxicology Results

In fiscal year 2011 (June 2010 through July 2011) there were 471 suicides.[1] Toxicology tests were conducted in 84.1% 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 and other substances were conducted for approximately 83.0%, tests for antidepressants and opiates were done for approximately 82.0%, and tests for amphetamines, cocaine, and marijuana were conducted for approximately 66.0% of suicides (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1: Percentage of suicides by toxicology tests, Utah, FY2011



The most common drug found in victims who died from suicide was other substances (43.7%). 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, FY2011

Toxicology	Screened	Present	Percent
Other substances	394	172	43.7%
Alcohol	395	104	26.3%
Antidepressants	389	97	24.9%
Opiates	389	79	20.3%
Marijuana	312	44	14.1%
Amphetamines	314	24	7.6%
Cocaine	314	7	2.2%

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

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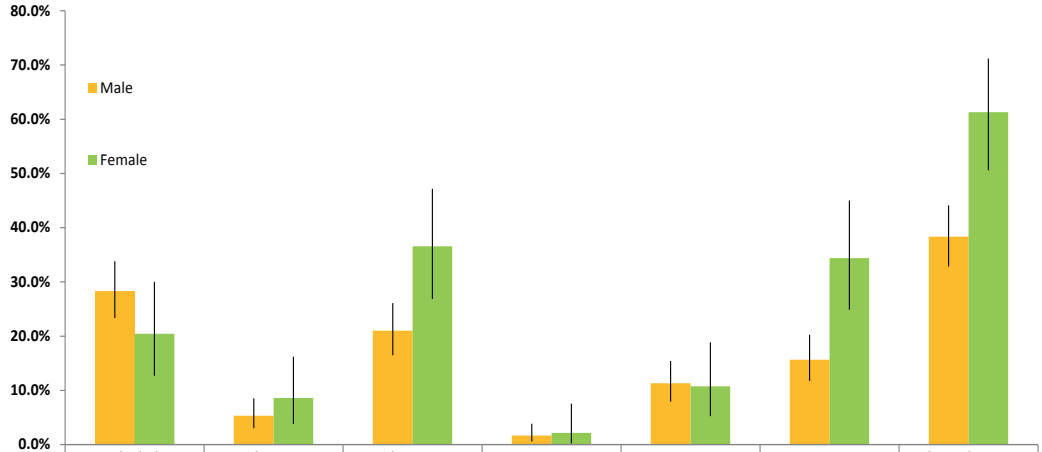
Females were significantly more likely to test positively for antidepressants, opiates, and other substances compared to males (**Figure 2**). There were no significant differences seen between age groups.

Figure 2: Percentage of suicides by sex and toxicology, Utah, FY2011



	Alcohol	Amphetamines	Antidepressants	Cocaine	Marijuana	Opiates	Other substances
Male	28.3%	5.3%	21.0%	1.7%	11.3%	15.7%	38.3%
Female	20.4%	8.6%	36.6%	2.2%	10.8%	34.4%	61.3%

Last updated: January 25, 2012

References

[1] Data is 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.

Dr. Todd C. Grey, M.D.
Chief Medical Examiner
(801) 584-8410
toddgrey@utah.gov