

Unintentional Drug Poisoning Deaths Dallas County 1997-2013

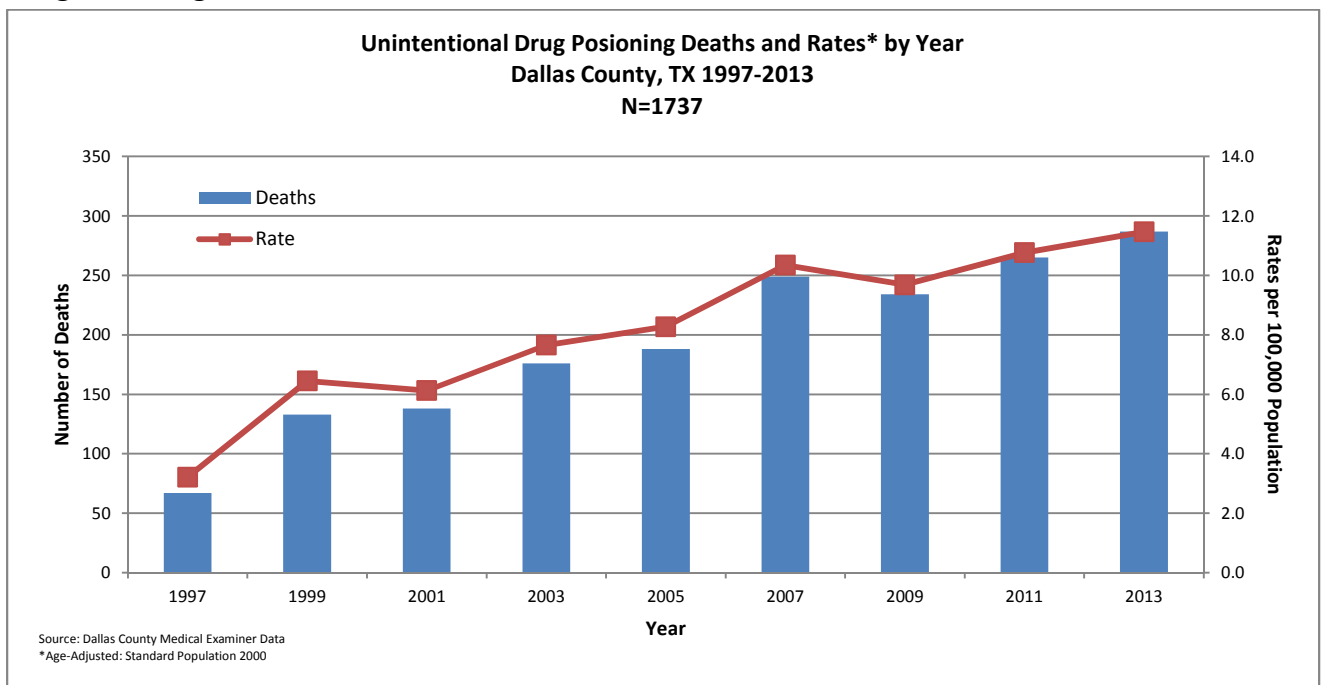
From 1997-2013, there were 3351 unintentional poisoning deaths. Unintentional poisoning deaths made up one of every four unintentional injury deaths in Dallas County. Ninety-eight percent of the poisoning deaths involved some type of drug.

For this analysis, we performed detailed review of unintentional drug poisoning deaths for every other year (i.e. every second year) from 1997-2013. There were 1767 deaths involving a drug, and 30 poisoning deaths that did not involve a drug, (such as carbon monoxide poisoning, ingestion of anti-freeze and the inhalation of various gases) that were excluded from the analysis, leaving 1737 drug-related deaths.

Unintentional Drug Poisoning Deaths were defined based on the Medical Examiner’s ruling on manner and cause of death. Because of the large numbers involved, a more detailed review of the deaths was conducted for every other year (i.e. 1997, 1999, 2001, etc.) . For those years, cause of death was categorized into the following drug types: Heroin, Cocaine, Alcohol, Methamphetamine, Opiates, Opioid prescription drugs, Benzodiazepines, Other and Mixed drugs. The “Other” category includes other specific drugs not part of Opioid prescription drugs or Benzodiazepines drug categories, as well as over the counter medicine.

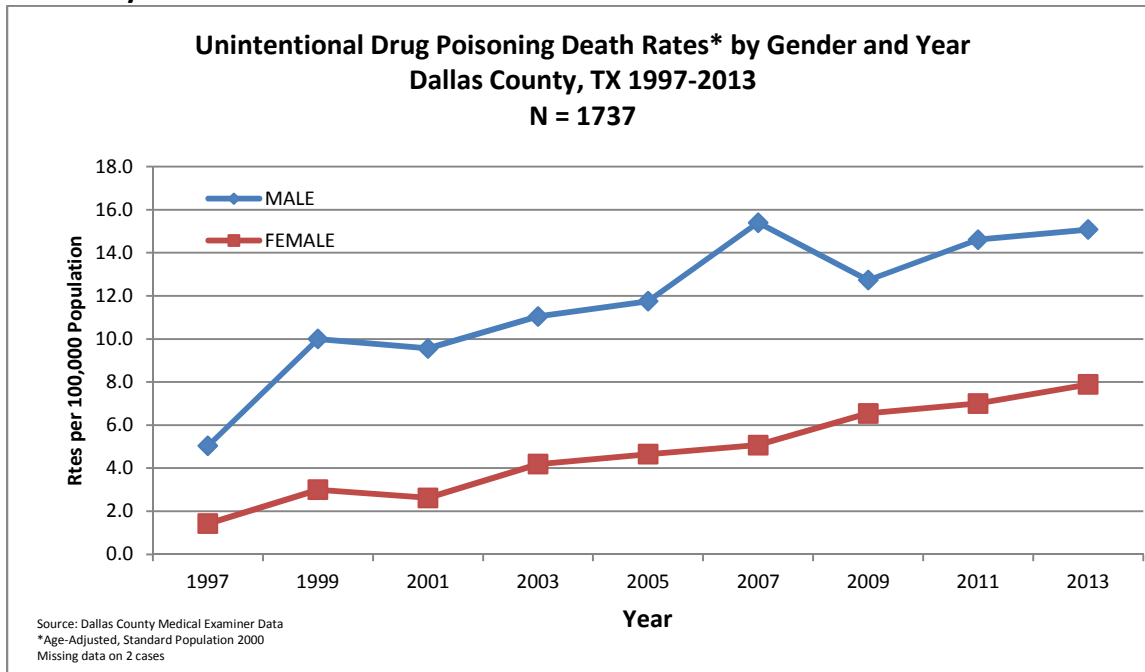
These categories were also collapsed into 3 broad categories: Illegal/Illicit Drugs, Prescription Drugs and Other Drugs. “Other Drugs” included over the counter medication, alcohol , opiates, mixed drugs, drug overdoses etc. Each drug poisoning death may have mentions of multiple drug types, so totals of the various drugs will exceed the numbers of deaths.

Drug Poisoning Deaths, 1997-2013



The number of deaths and death rate has increased 3-fold during this time period. This increase is statistically significant.

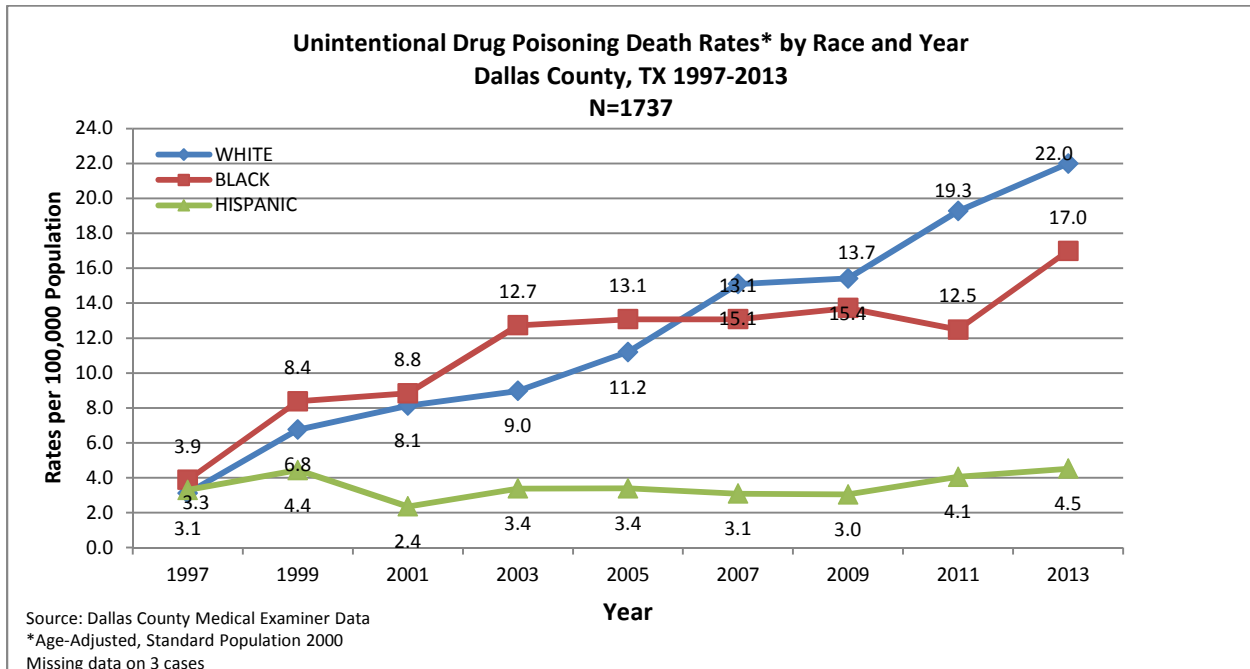
Deaths by Gender



Seventy-two percent of the Unintentional Drug Poisoning deaths were male.

The death rates for males have increased almost 3-fold from 1997 to 2013. For females, the death rate has increased over 5-fold during the same time period.

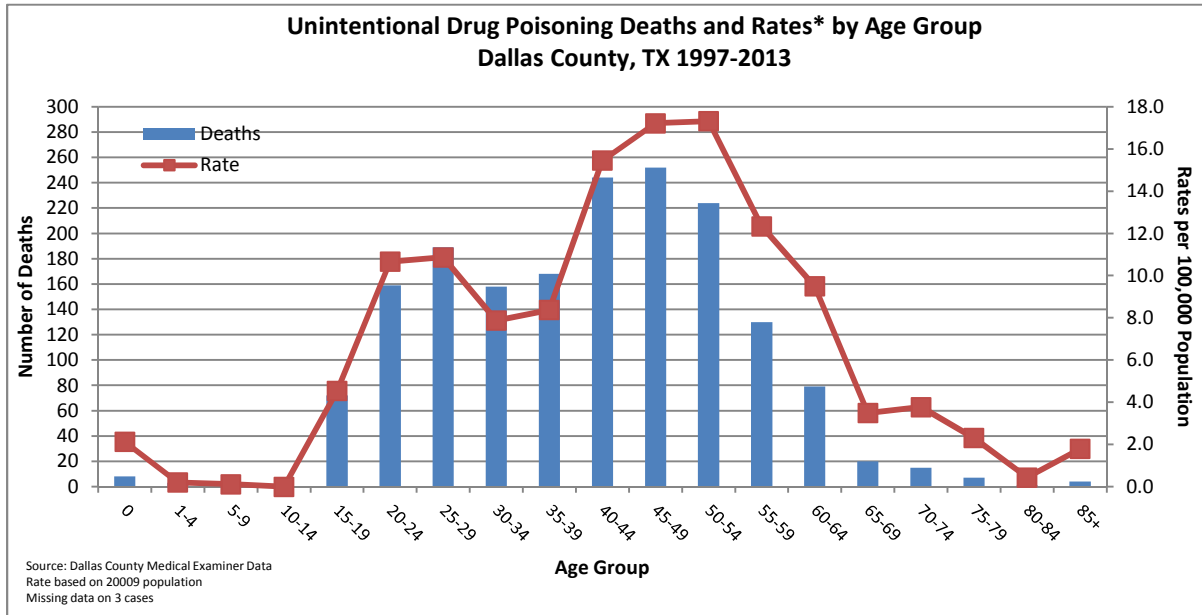
Deaths by Race/Ethnicity



This graph looks at the trends in unintentional drug poisoning death rates by race/ethnicity.

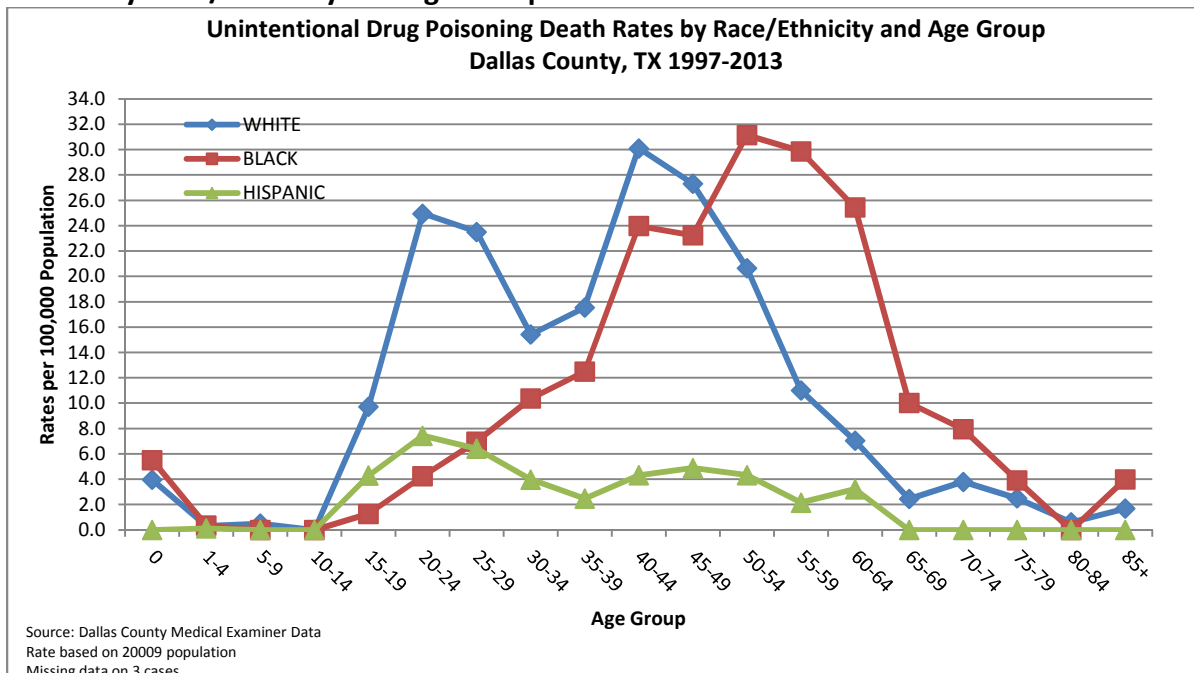
Fifty-four percent of the deaths were White, 29% Black, and 16% Hispanic. In the White population the death rate has increased almost 6-fold, in the Black population it has increased by 4-fold, and in the Hispanic population there has been much less increase. The increase for Whites and Blacks are statistically significant.

Deaths by Age Group



The average age of drug poisoning victim was 40 years, and ranged was from 0 to 94 years. The majority of drug poisoning deaths (51%) occurred between ages 35-54. The highest death rates were for age group 45-54.

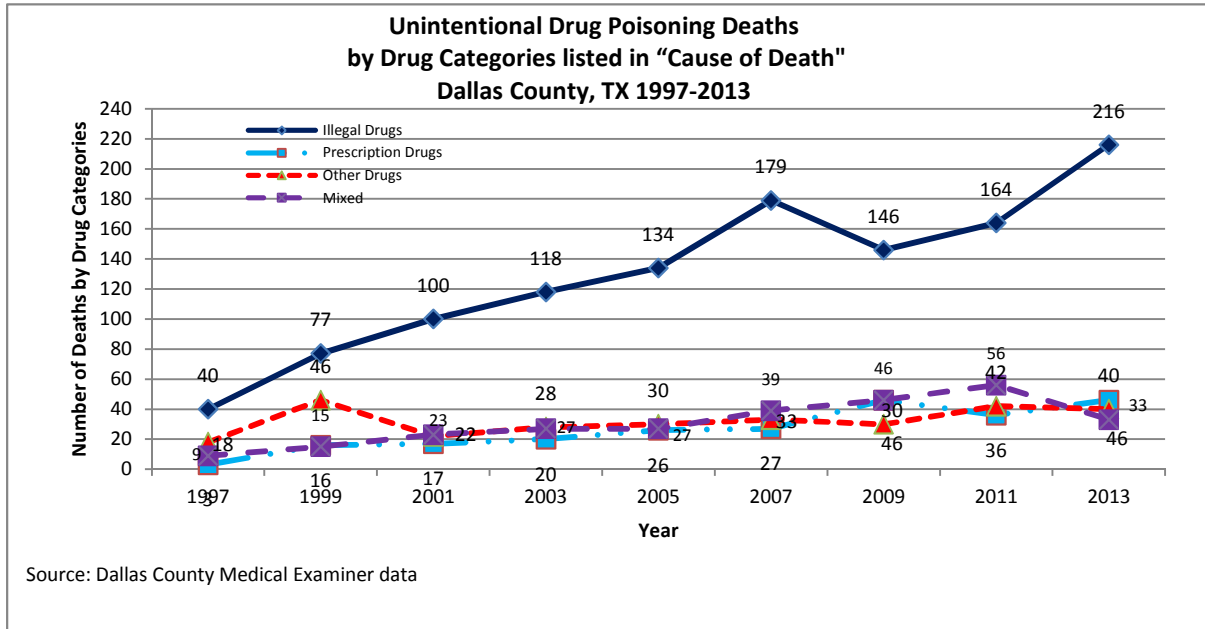
Deaths by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group



There is a different age profile of unintentional poisoning death rates by race. For the white population, there are two peaks: the 20-24 age group, and 45-49 age group. In the Black population, the highest death rate was in ages 50-54. Among the Hispanic population, the death rate peaked at ages 20-24.

Deaths by category of drug

In Dallas County, “illegal drugs” was the leading category listed under cause of death. This is contrast with data from the U.S as a whole, where in 2013, “Prescription Drugs” were the leading cause of Unintentional Drug Poisoning deaths. In Dallas County, Illegal drugs have accounted for the majority of poisoning deaths since 1997. Cocaine was the leading drug mentioned, followed by heroin



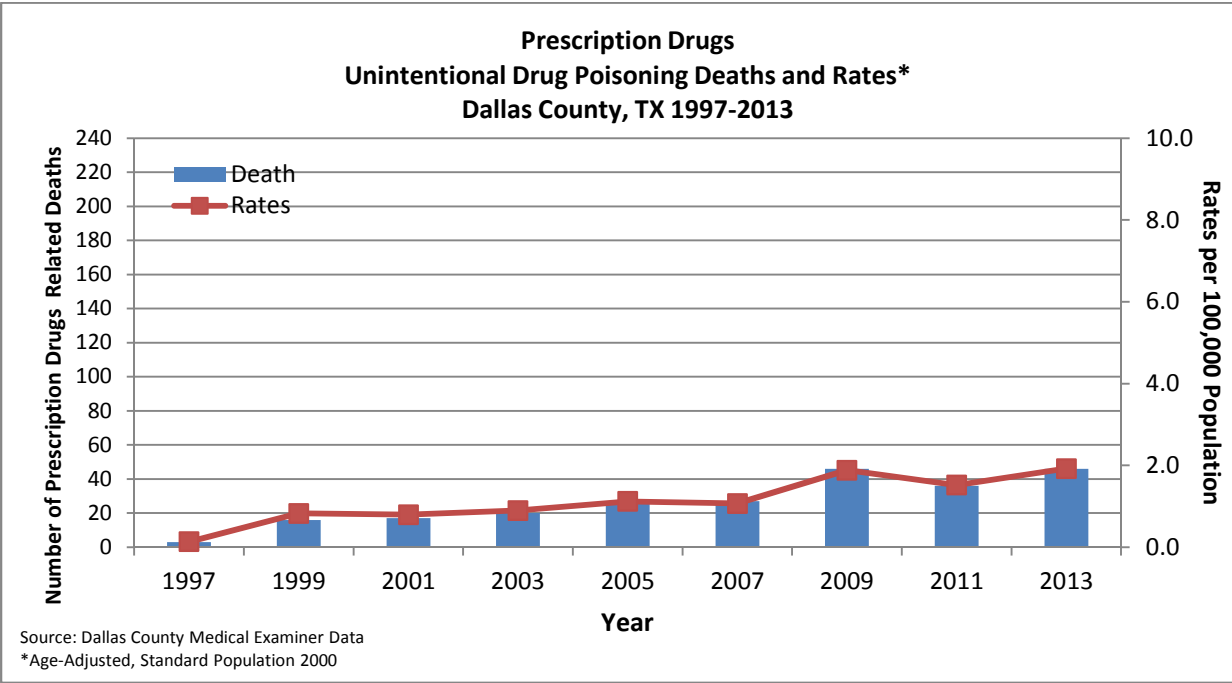
Drug Poisoning Deaths by Drug Group* and by year

	Illegal Drugs	Prescription Drugs	Other Drugs	Mixed
1997	40	3	18	9
1999	77	16	46	15
2001	100	17	22	23
2003	118	20	28	27
2005	134	26	30	27
2007	179	27	33	39
2009	146	46	30	46
2011	164	36	42	56
2013	216	46	40	33
TOTAL	1174	237	289	275

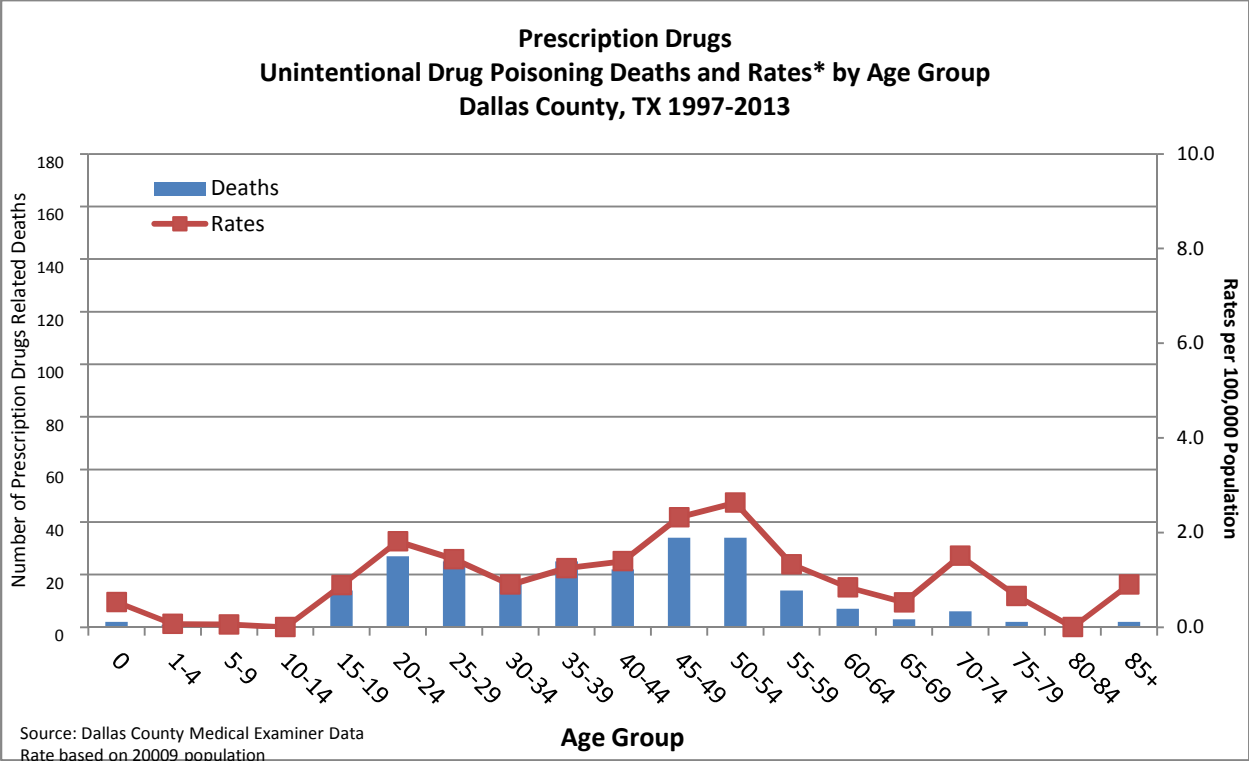
*Totals are more than 1757 because more than one drug group could be assigned to the death.

Deaths involving Prescription Drugs

Prescription drugs were defined as Opioid prescription drugs and Benzodiazepine-related drugs and other prescription drugs. The number of deaths has increased 4-fold, but remains lower than illegal drug deaths. In 2013, prescription drug deaths made up 51.8% of the unintentional drug deaths in the US, compared to 13% mentioned in the Dallas County ME’s records.



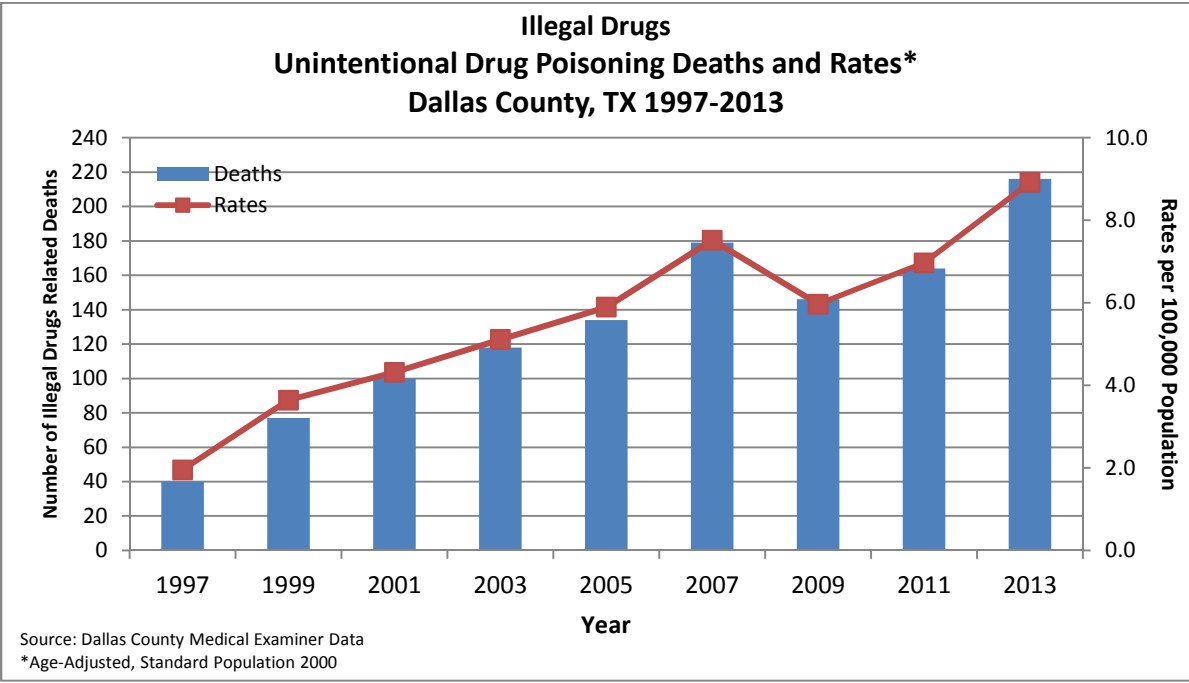
Deaths by Prescription Drugs by Age Group



The highest death rates were for age group 50-54.

Deaths involving Illegal Drugs

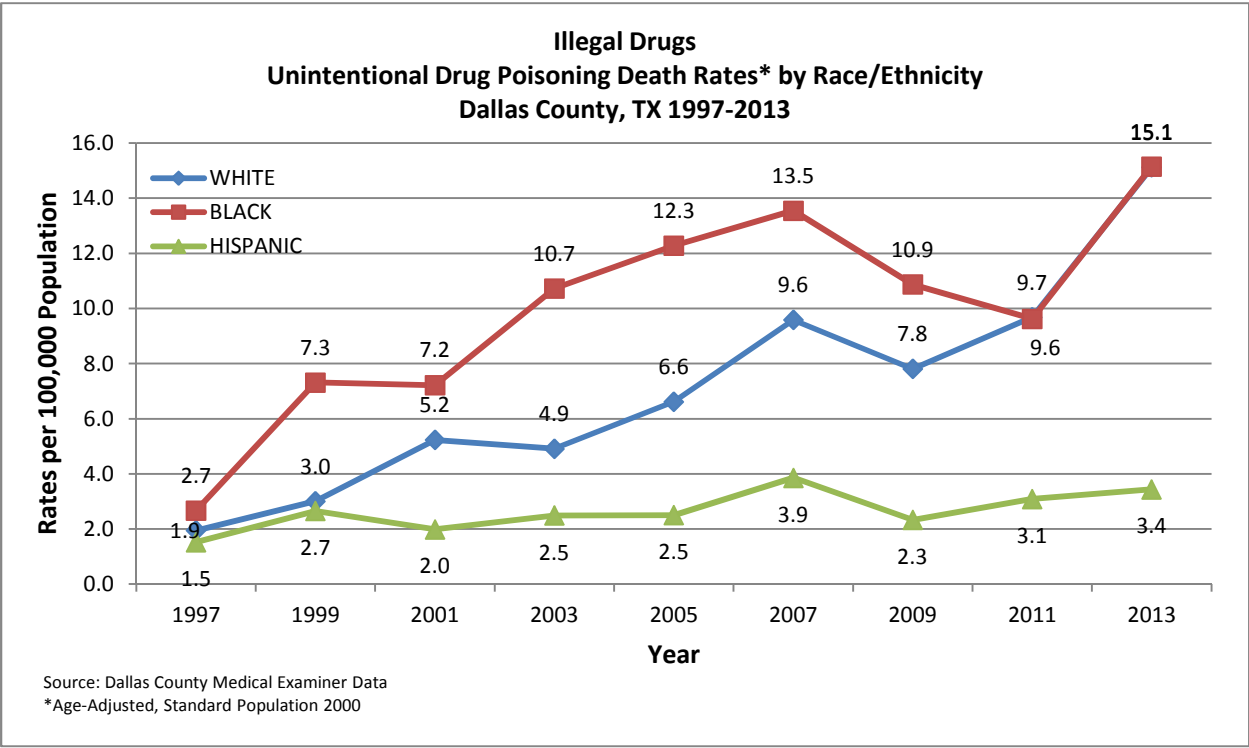
Illegal drugs were defined as Heroin, Cocaine, Methamphetamines, Phencyclidine (pcp) and MDMA (ecstasy). The number of deaths has increased more than 5-fold during this time period.



Seventy-five percent of the illegal drug related deaths were male. The death rate for males has increased almost 4-fold, and for females, the death rate has increased over 7-fold during the same time period.

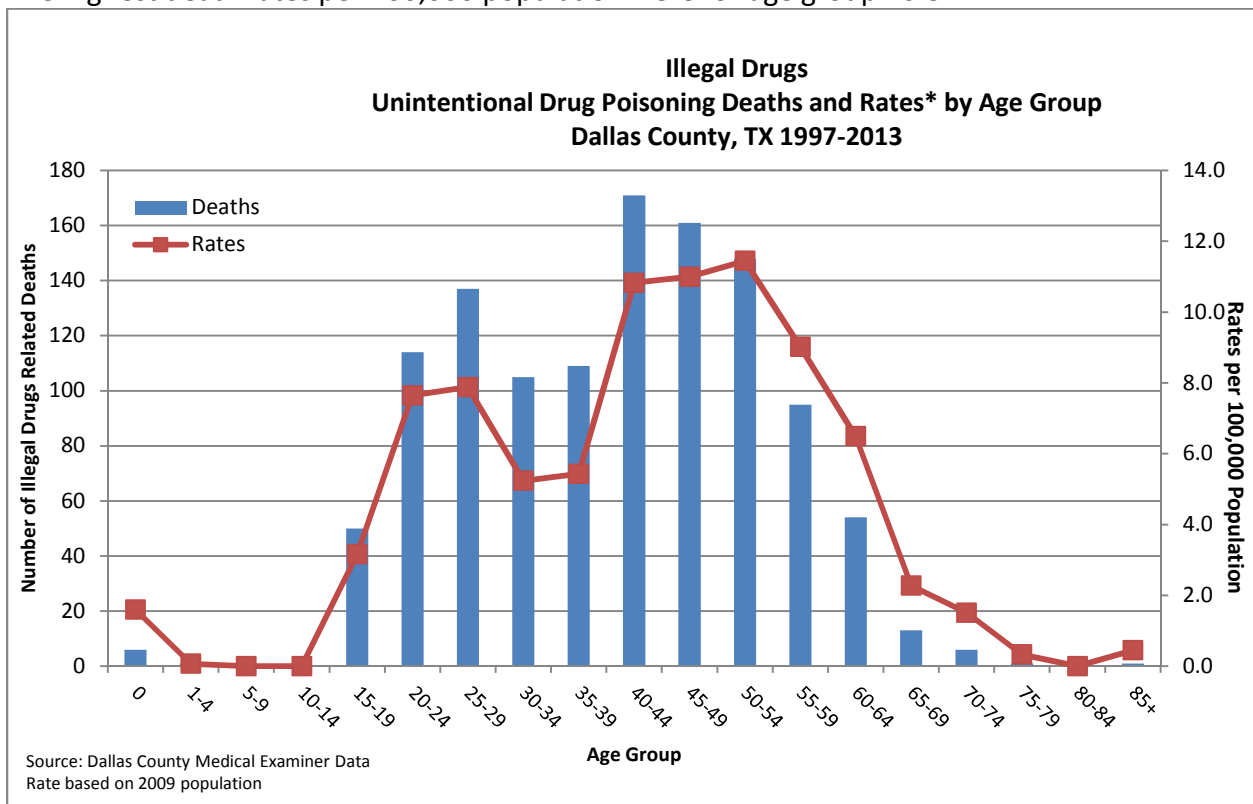
Deaths involving Illegal Drugs by Race/Ethnicity

Forty-five percent of the deaths were White, followed by Blacks, and Hispanics. The Black population had the highest death rate, which has increased by 5-fold between 1997-2013. In the White population the death rate has increased almost 8-fold. In 2013 the rates were the same for the White and Black populations.

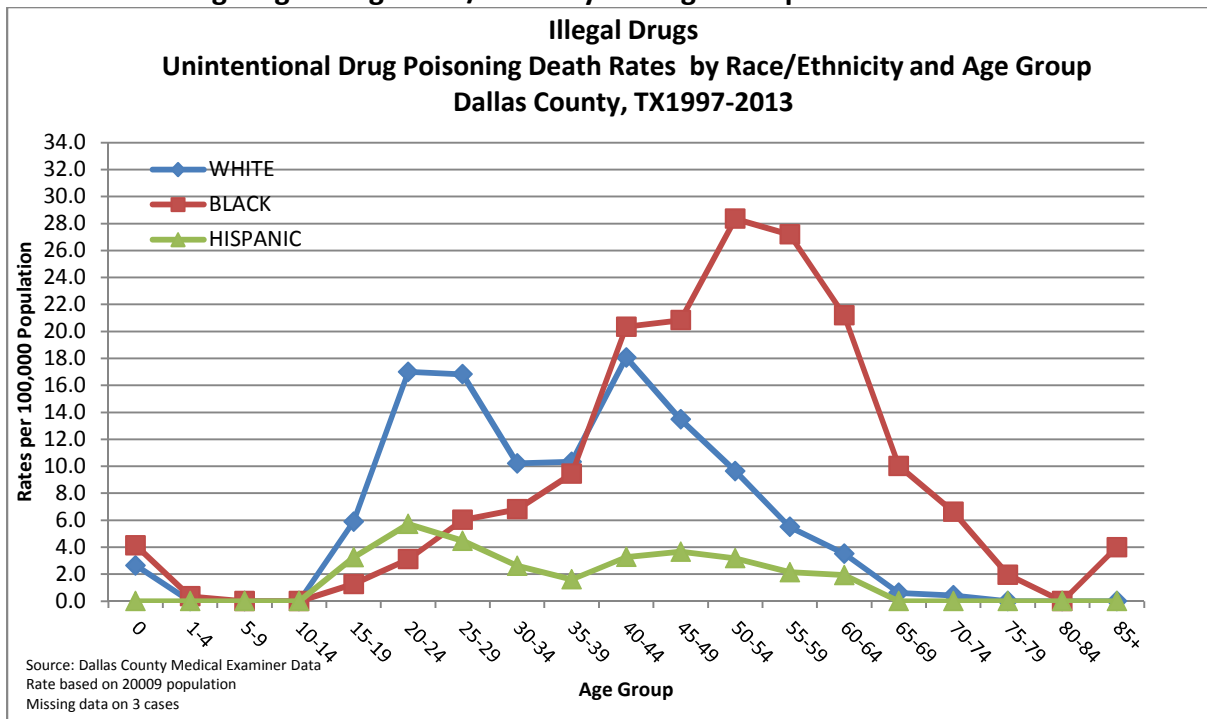


Deaths involving Illegal Drugs by Age Group

The average age of illegal drug poisoning victim was 40 years old, and the age ranged was from 0 years to 87 years. Poisoning deaths had 2 peaks that occurred between ages 20-29 and 40-54. The highest death rates per 100,000 population were for age group 40-54.



Deaths involving Illegal Drugs Race/Ethnicity and Age Group

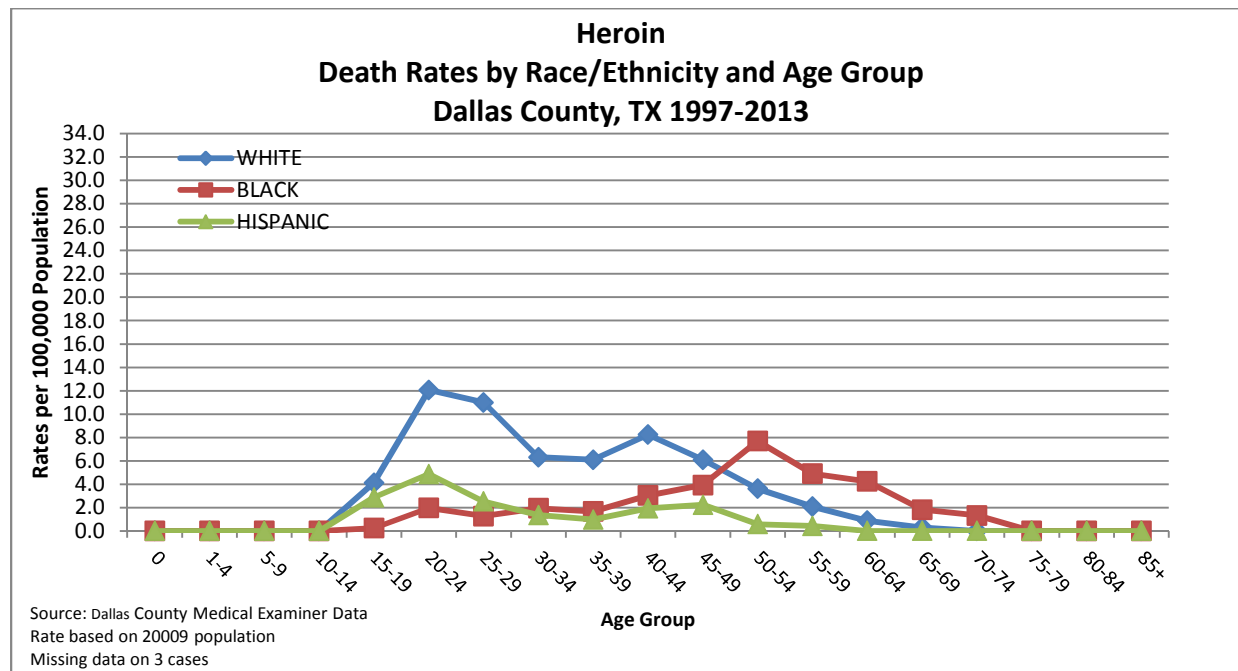


There is a different age profile of unintentional illegal drug death rates by race. For the white population, there are two peaks: the highest death rate was in the 20 to 29, with another peak among ages 40-44. In the Black population, the highest death rate was in ages 50-59. Among the Hispanic population, death rate peaks at ages 20-24.

Specific Drugs

When we analyzed the different Illegal Drugs deaths we found that there were different profiles by race/ethnicity and age group

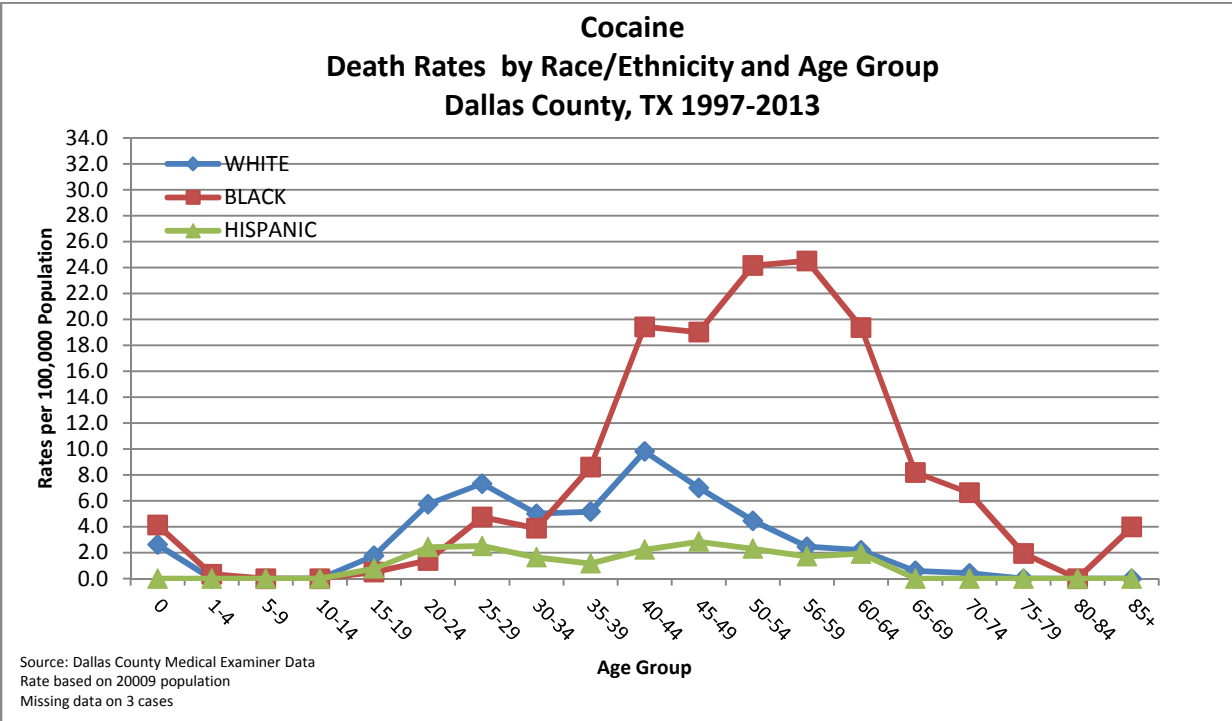
Heroin by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group



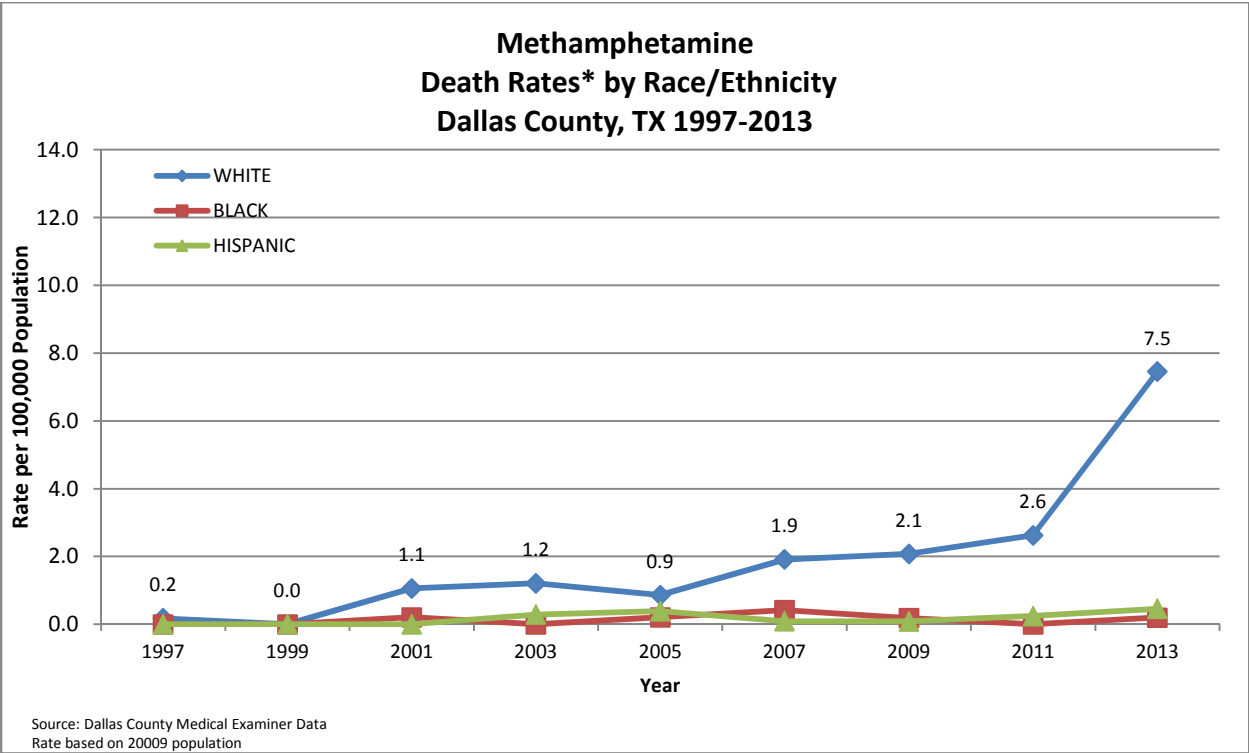
In the White population, the highest death rate was between 20 to 29 and peaks again in ages 40-44. In the Black population, highest death rate was in ages 50-64 and in Hispanic population death rate peaked at ages 20-24

Cocaine by Race/Ethnicity and Age Group

Cocaine related death rated were highest in the Black population, where cocaine deaths peak in the 50-59 age group.



Methamphetamines by Race/Ethnicity



The highest methamphetamine death rate was in the White population. In 2013, there were more deaths among Whites from methamphetamine than from either Heroin or Cocaine.