





Former Justice Secretary Lord Falconer calls for UK to legalise drugs

- The ex-Lord Chancellor challenged Jeremy Corbyn to live up to his radical image

- Lord Falconer also said Labour should 'legalise and regulate the supply of drugs'

including cocaine and heroin - to undermine gangsters who are killing thousands every year

By [SIMON WALTERS FOR THE DAILY MAIL](#)

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"I want to apologise for supporting the war on drugs. We can see with shocking clarity that it has been a tragic disaster."

Birmingham drug related deaths

- Background/history
- Re-formed DRD local inquiry group Nov 2016
- DRDs 2009-1017
- Threads and patterns
- 8 ways to prevent future deaths

Dr Judith Yates

If you are medical doctor please join (free) now at:

www.idhdp.com

Physicians globally unite for health based drug policy

Birmingham

- **1 million** people. Largest LA in England.
- **11,000** use heroin and/or crack?
- **4,500-5000** people on opiate agonist scripts
(2,400 of these are scripted in primary care)

2013: Naloxone across the city

2015: Drug and alcohol services re-commissioned

46% Funding cuts/savings 2015-2019
(£26million down to £14.5million)

Drug Related Deaths: PHE recommend Local Inquiry Groups



Unless each person's death is noted and investigated locally, lessons cannot be learned and **chances to prevent future deaths will be missed.**



Birmingham :

“Hi, ONS, Is this a “drug misuse death”?”

ONS said “ No. Not a drug misuse death”

1. “Haemato-pericardium, motor vehicle accident, influenced by cannabis”

ONS said “ No. Not a drug misuse death”

2. "Head injury as result of deliberate jump from a roof under influence of MDMA and cannabis”

Are these drug “misuse” deaths?

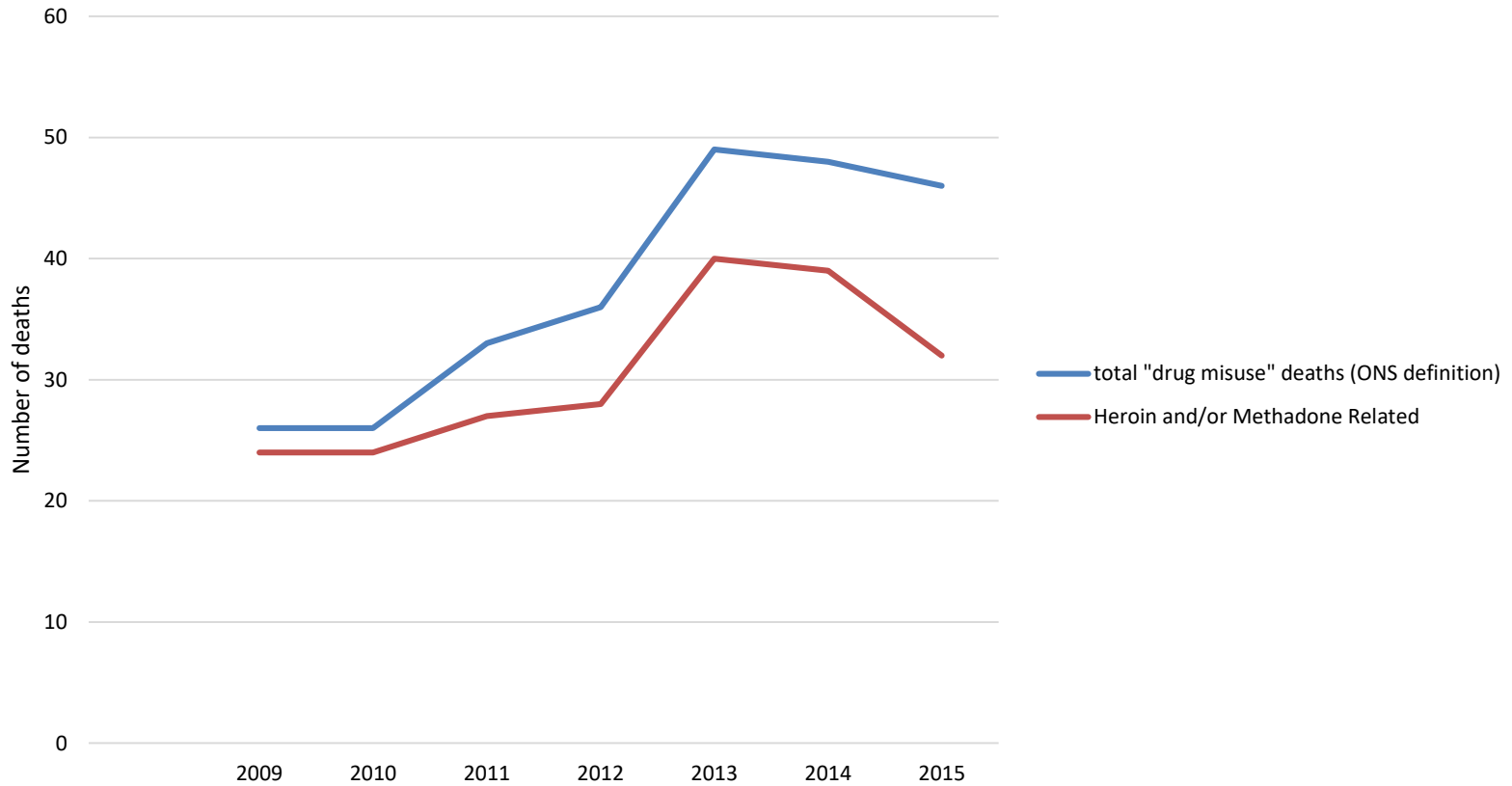
Yes: These examples would be coded as **drug misuse**. We do not take into account whether the controlled drug was prescribed to the individual

ONS

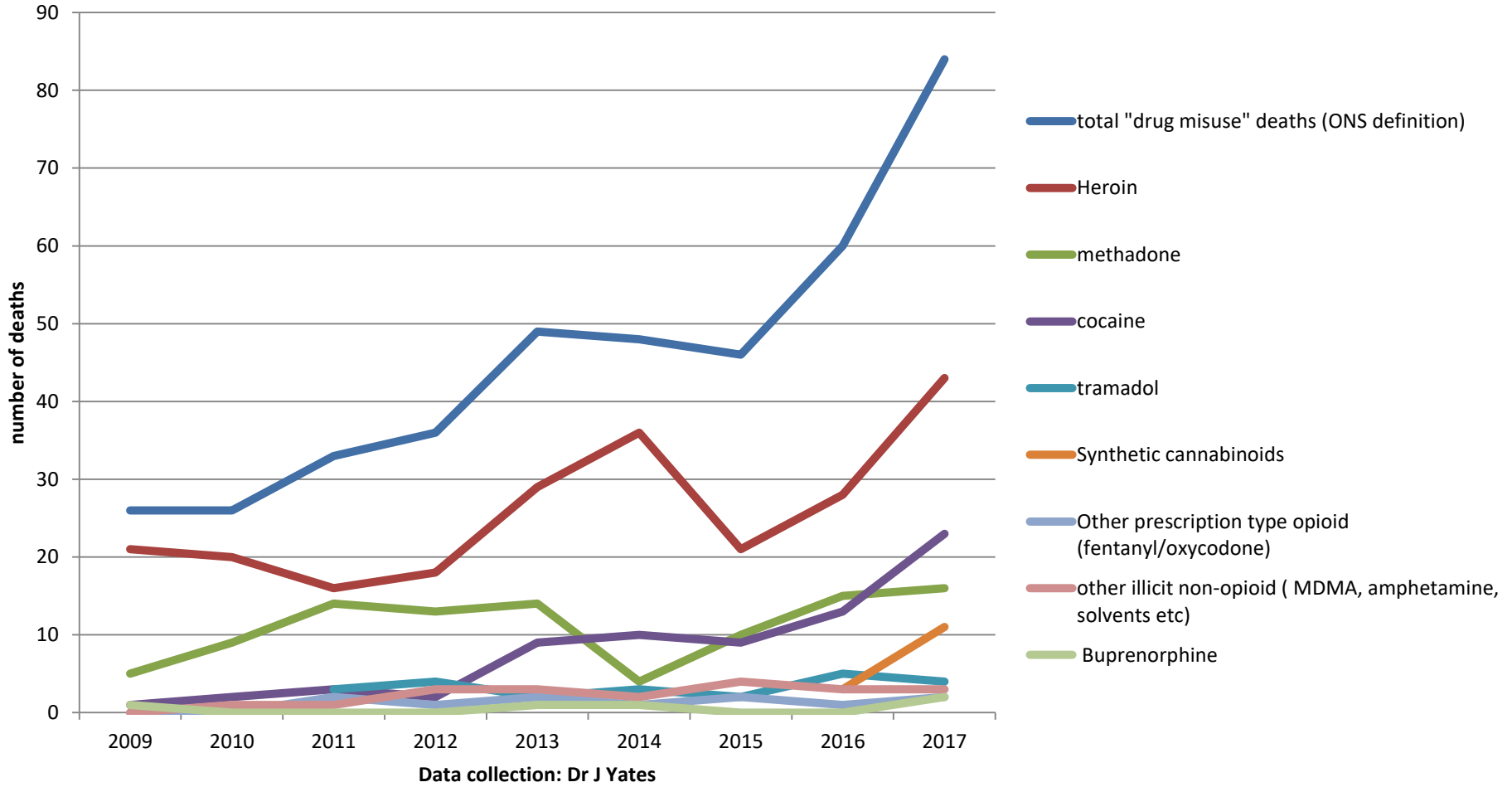
- 1. Aged 51:** Bronchopneumonia,
With alcohol and amitriptyline and **oxycodone** (prescription)
described by coroner as “death by misadventure”
“Yes, a drug misuse death”
- 2. Aged 74:** Cardio-respiratory arrest,
LVF,
Tramadol toxicity
described by coroner as “drug related accident”
“Yes, a drug misuse death”

DRDs in Birmingham 2009-2015

Drug related deaths (ONS definition) 2009-2015 Birmingham



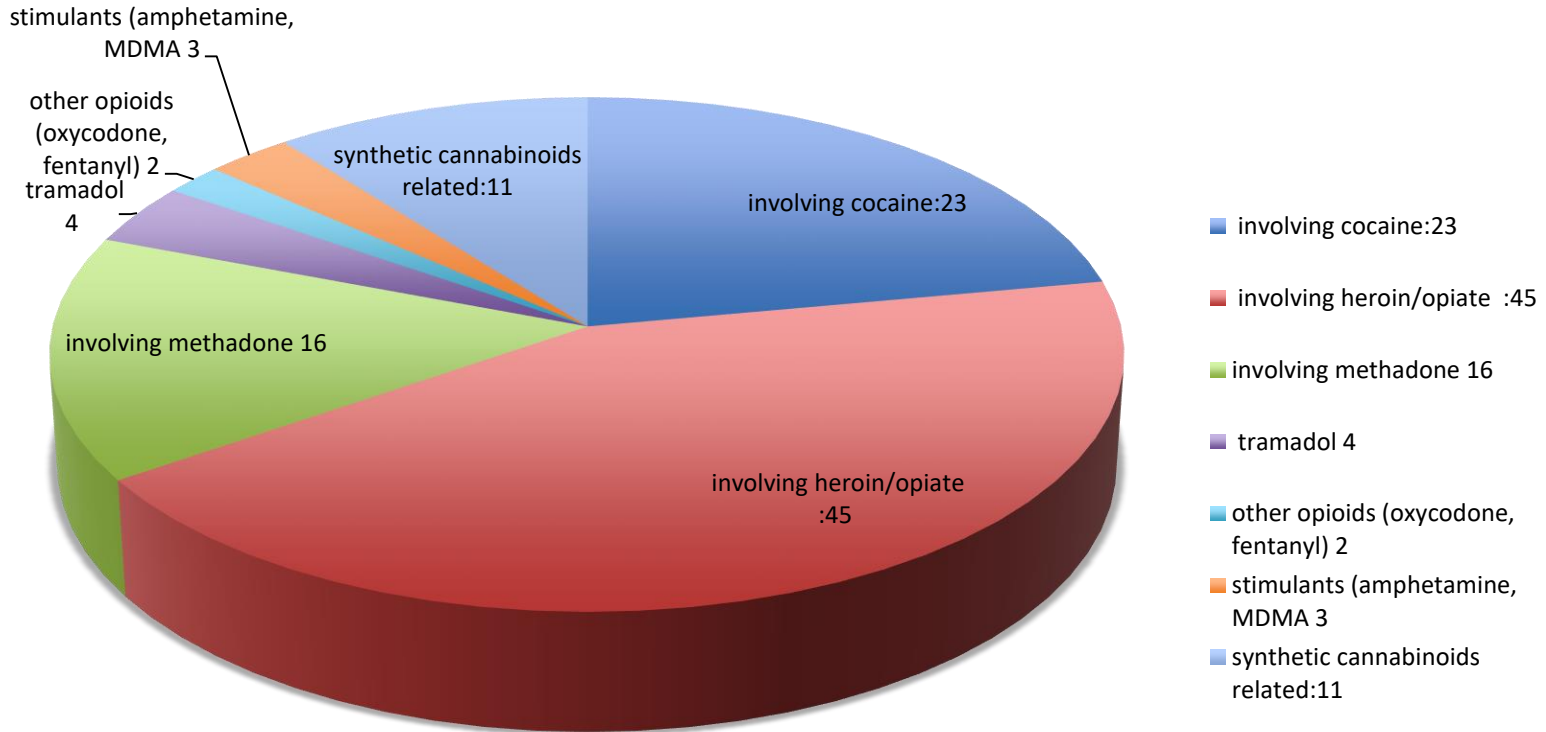
Substances present at time of death Birmingham 2009-2017 (some cases involve more than one substance)



Birmingham drug related deaths 2017 : 84 cases

Highest number since records began

(some cases involve more than one substance)



Birmingham DRD local inquiry group.

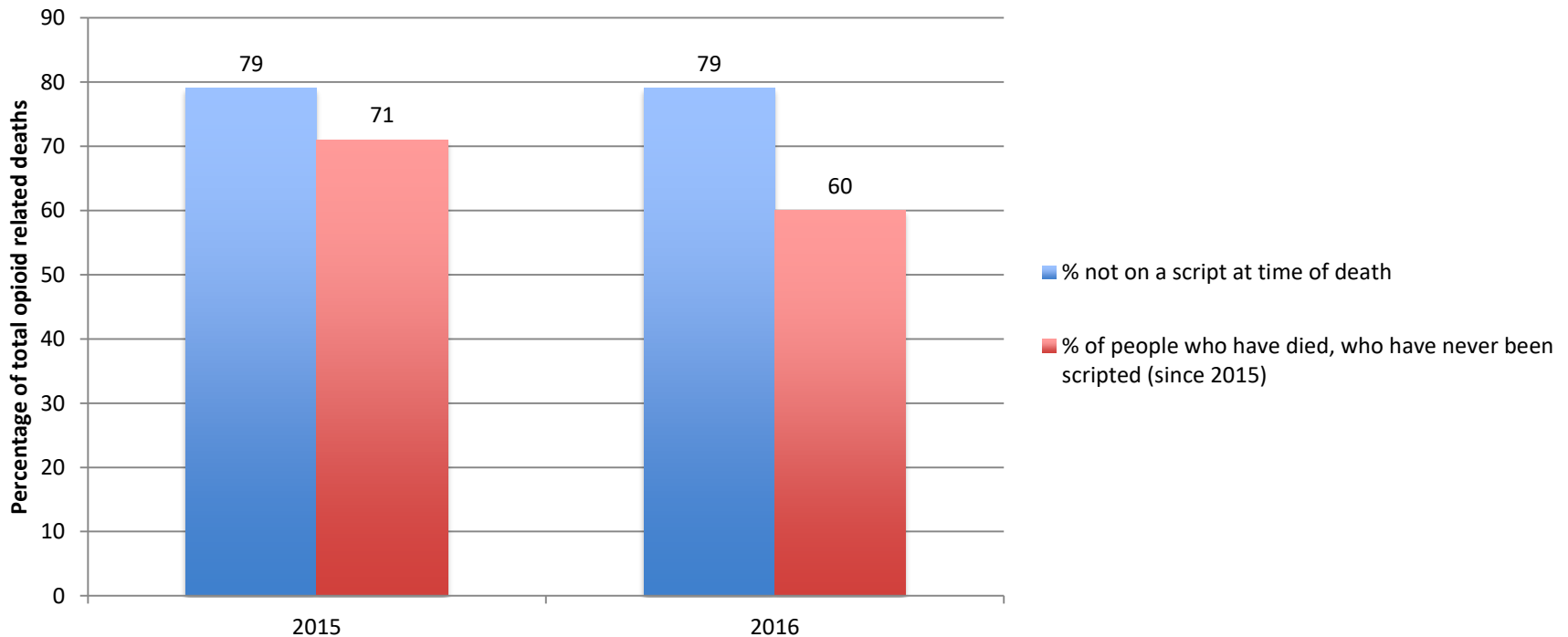
Trends and patterns: To prevent future deaths:

1. ***Is OST (and optimised OST) getting to those who need it*** to prevent future deaths (4 cases considered)
2. Could the coroner help with more precise toxicology in the ***“cause of death”***
3. ***Is naloxone getting to the places where it could be used*** (10 cases considered in more detail)
4. ***Does naloxone training need to include reference to*** the examples we have seen of 3 people who have died in this city within 24 hours of being revived?
5. Other information about chronic ill health could contribute to better care, eg ***Peumonia has been frequently*** mentioned as part of the cause of death . Access to ***“Give up smoking”*** programmes?

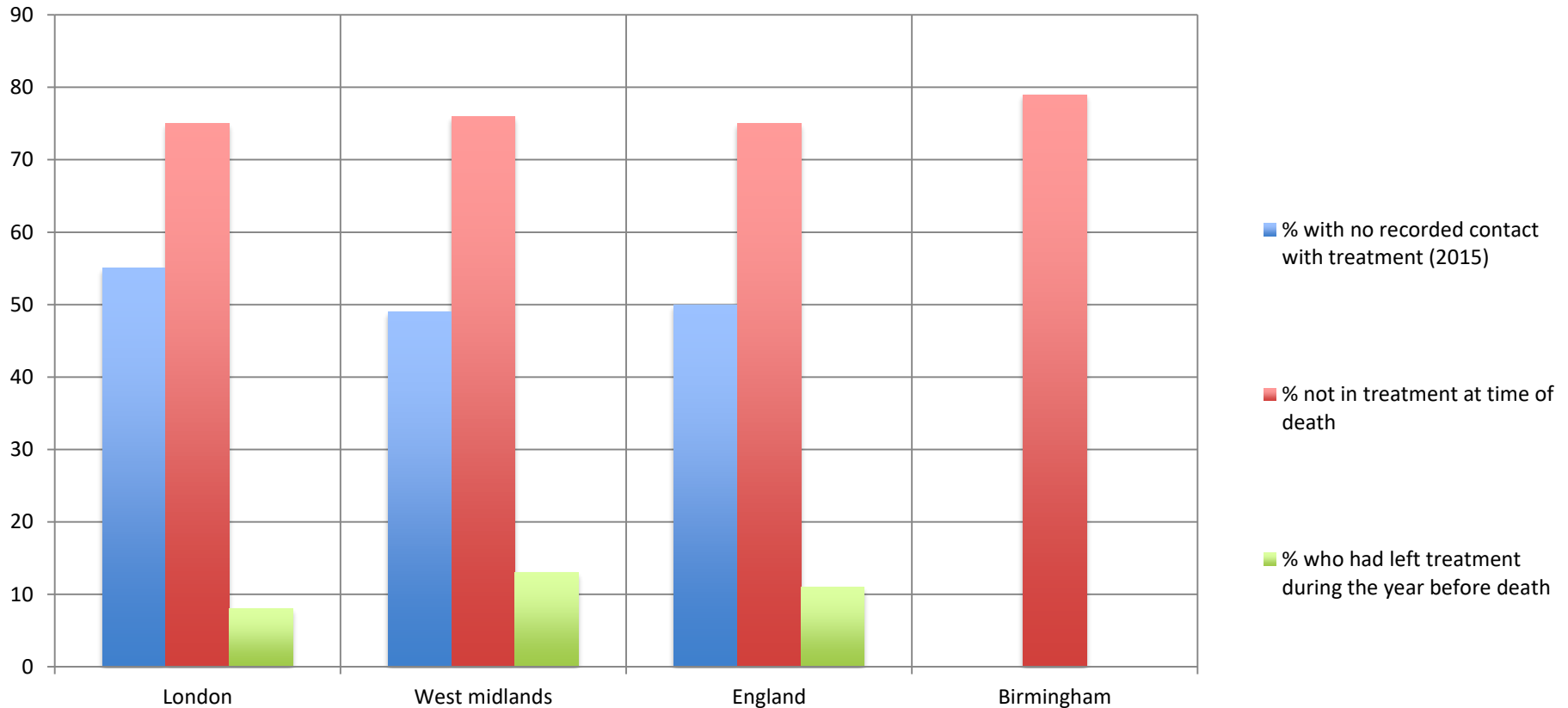
1. Are people engaged with drug treatment when they die?

Birmingham 2015 and 2016:

79% of people who died of opioid overdose in 2015 and 2016 were not on a script when they died
Between 60 and 70% of people had no record having been on a script, at least since January 2015.



Percentage not in treatment at the time of their death: Comparison with PHE figures for London, West midlands, and England



data: PHE FOI January 2018 (and CGL for Birmingham)
Chart: Dr J Yates

2. A Question for the Coroner: in the first three cases Cause of death as found at inquest: exact drug which was part of the cause of death not stated?

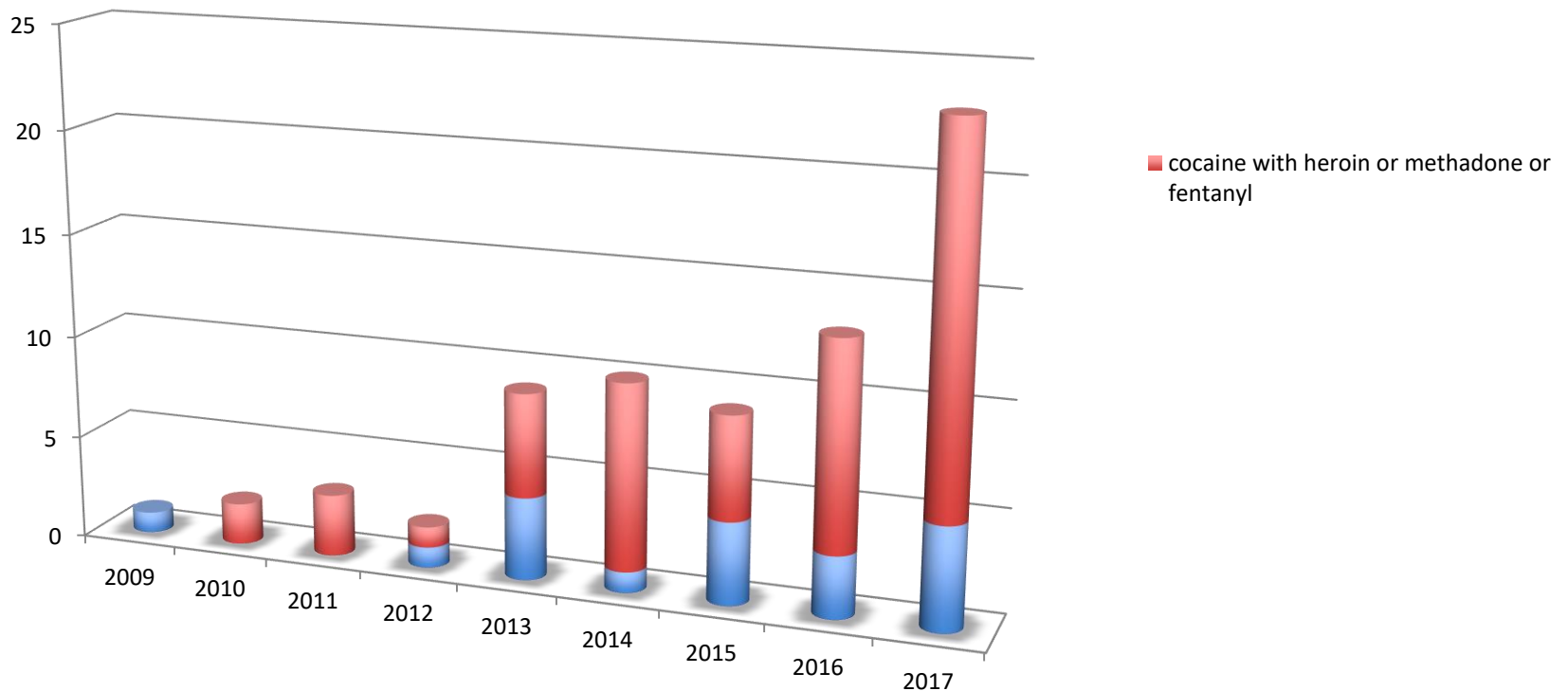
Name	date of death	age	cause of death	circumstances
1	2016	45	1a Hypoxic brain injury, 1b aspiration pneumonia	Found unconscious in his home, after injecting drugs.
2	2016	52	1a Pneumonia, LVF, 1b cocaine and opioid toxicity	Sitting alone in a café, slumped for one hour, then fell to the floor
3	2016	41	1a Acute pneumonitis 1b opioid toxicity, benzodiazepine consumption	Found at home.....Had pregabalin in his pocket

On further investigation of the background inquest files, toxicology showed clearly the drugs which had contributed to death in these three cases.

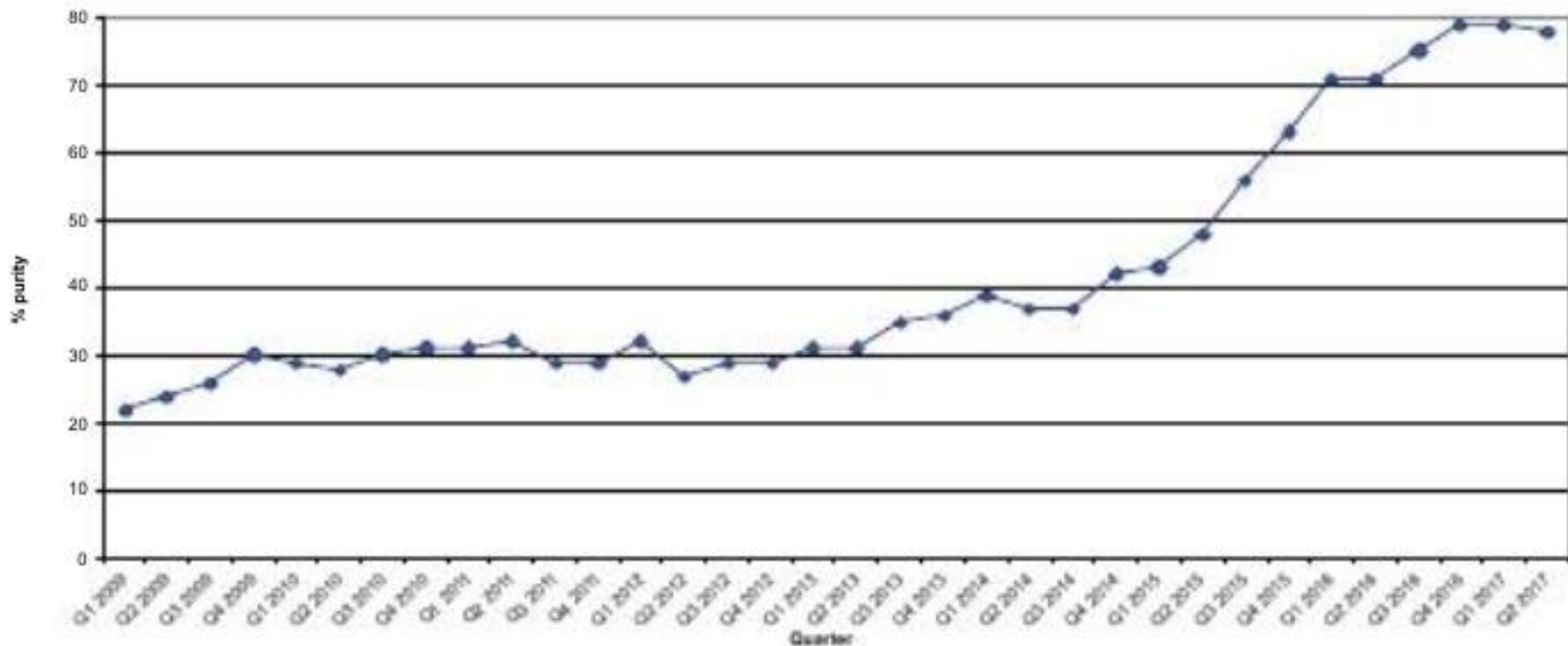
Name	cause of death	Toxicology
1.	Hypoxic brain injury, aspiration pneumonia	cannabis, oxazepam, diazepam, buprenorphine, morphine, cocaine
2.	Pneumonia, LVF, cocaine and opioid toxicity	cocaine , methadone, diazepam
3.	Acute pneumonitis opioid toxicity, benzodiazepine consumption	Methadone, Pregabalin, diazepam

Cocaine: Number of deaths in Birmingham related to use of cocaine has increased since 2013, and especially in 2017 and 2018

Deaths related to cocaine, with or without opioids 2009-2017



National average purity levels of “crack” cocaine (according to police seizures) 2009-17



The graph shows the distribution of average quarterly 'crack' cocaine purities recorded by LGC between 1st January 2009 to 30th June 2017.

DRDs: Prison release: several people had left prison shortly before they died.

Man, aged 32.

cause of death at inquest :

"morphine, methadone, tramadol and diazepam overdose with focal myocarditis" .

Not attended drug treatment service since recently leaving prison.

Ref 1 *"Mortality risk during and after opioid substitution treatment: systematic review and meta-analysis of cohort studies"*

Luis Sordo, Gregorio Barrio, Maria J Bravo, B Iciar Indave, Louisa Degenhardt, Lucas Wiessing, Marica Ferri, Roberto Pastor-Barriuso
BMJ 2017;357:j1550

Ref 2 *"Does exposure to opioid substitution treatment in prison reduce the risk of death after release? A national prospective observational study in England"*

John Marsden , Garry Stillwell , Hayley Jones , Alisha Cooper , Brian Eastwood , Michael Farrell , Tim Lowden , Nino Maddalena ,
Chris Metcalfe , Jenny Shaw & Matthew Hickman

Addiction,2017 112, 1408–1418

Birmingham: 20 sudden deaths caused by Synthetic cannabinoids (mamba/spice) in 22 months.

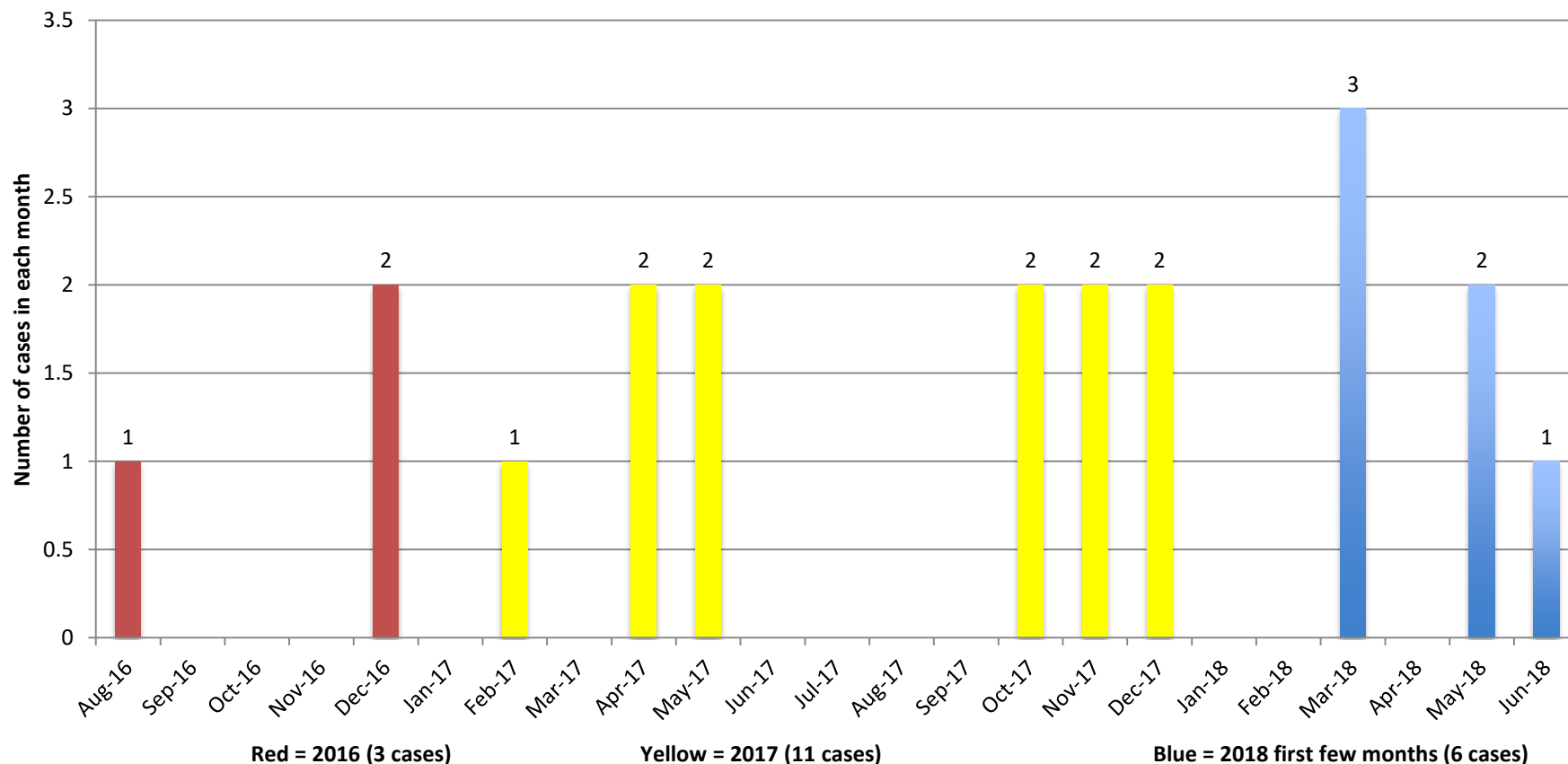
Between August 2016 and June 2018 (several more inquests awaited)

Average age 38yrs

All male.

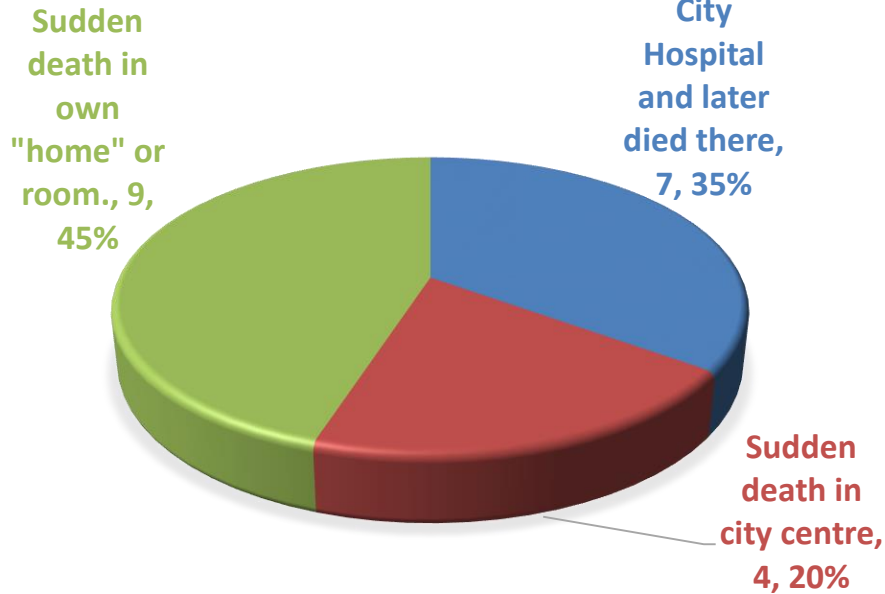


**20 synthetic cannabinoid (SCRA) associated deaths in Birmingham, by month of death, inquests completed by August 2018.
August 2016 - June 2018 (22 month period) .**

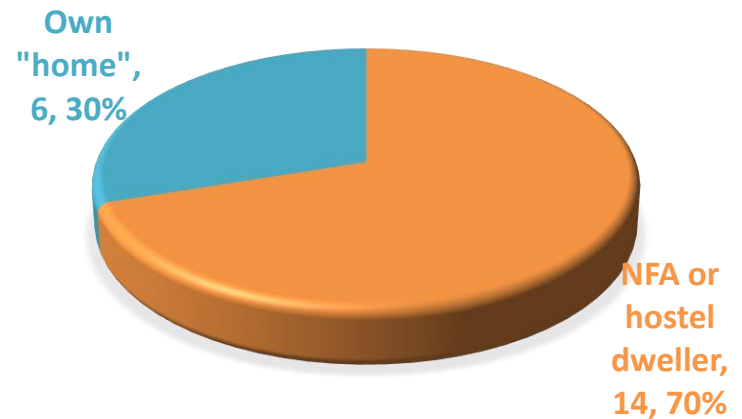


Birmingham: 20 cases of sudden death related to "mamba"

PLACE OF DEATH



70% NFA OR HOSTEL DWELLER AT TIME OF DEATH.



6 examples: cause of death related to synthetic cannabinoids during 2017

1	M	1a: aortic stenosis exacerbated by 1b consumption of black mamba
2	M	1a: inhalation of gastric contents iib) use of synthetic cannabinoid 5F-ADB
3	M	1a: bronchopneumonia exacerbated by 1b excessive ingestion of alcohol and synthetic cannabinoid use.
4	M	1a: synthetic cannabinoid use
5	M	1a: sudden death associated with cannabis use and synthetic cannabinoids.
6	M	1a: aspiration of gastric contents in association with severe alcohol intoxication. And mirtazepine therapy 11: synthetic cannabinoid misuse (5-fluoro-ADB

Examples of free text: synthetic cannabinoid related death certificates

1	Found collapsed in his own room. Paramedics declared deceased. Been smoking cannabis and black mamba earlier that day
2	Found with pipe and lighter in hand
3	Found in cardiac arrest at 4am. Pronounced dead at City Hospital at 5:54 am.
4	Had a seizure after taking mamba. Declined medical treatment. 1am found dead on floor of room. Mamba found in bags in his room. Toxicology detected "mamba"
5	Found in cardiac arrest in doorway to "X" Bank, "Y" St. at 6am. CPR unsuccessful. Known to smoke mamba. Previous day very high on mamba.
6	Found collapsed in car park by off duty paramedic. Naloxone given.

Outcomes: 8 ways to Prevent future deaths:

Cigarette Smoking is the largest global cause of death and disease.

50% of long term smokers will die because of tobacco.

2014: Study of clients and staff in addiction services:
Markedly elevated smoking prevalence was observed amongst:

- substance “misusers” (88%) and
- addictions staff (45%),
- compared to the general population (19%)”



“Smoking and its treatment in addiction services: Clients’ and staff behaviour and attitudes”

[Camilla Cookson](#), [John Strang](#), [Elena Ratschen](#), [Gay Sutherland](#), [Emily Finch](#), and [Ann McNeill](#)

[BMC Health Serv Res](#). 2014; 14: 304.

Published online 2014 Jul 14. doi: [10.1186/1472-6963-14-304](https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6963-14-304)

8 ways to prevent future deaths:

1. Stop Smoking: largest global cause of death and disease.



2. Drop the top three units of alcohol



3. Test Treat Cure: HepC.

Hepatitis C can now be cured.

30% of PWUDs are living with HCV

WHO target to eradicate Hepatitis C (from the world) by 2030



...prevent future deaths:

4. 60% of cases of opioid poisoning death had never been in treatment:

Why no **Safe Drug Consumption Rooms** in the UK?

low threshold simple welcoming services with cups of tea please

Drug consumption rooms : The Geneva Experience

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMTdwF7T0y8>



5. Optimise **OST**.

Heroin assisted treatment (HAT) for those who need it.



6. NSP with **proper safer injecting advice**,

7. **Give everybody a naloxone kit.**

Nasal kits are now here in UK.

Naloxone saves lives



8. **End the War on people who use drugs.**

Work towards proper legal regulation of all "drugs"

Save money and prevent future deaths.





Jasmine Tyler

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Dr. Nadine Johannard

KATIE STONE

[Nameplate partially obscured]



INTERNATIONAL DOCTORS FOR HEALTHIER DRUG POLICIES

Thank you

Dr Judith Yates
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If you are medical doctor please join (free) now at:

www.idhdp.com

Physicians globally unite for health based drug policy