

# Lethal overdoses caused by psychoactive substances use in France



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The use of some drugs at certain doses can cause immediate or imminent death: this is what we call drug overdose death (see box below), which tends to affect relatively young people. A major objective of the policy of drug authorities in France and elsewhere is to reduce the number of these drug-related accidents that have dramatic consequences. This is why the data on drug overdose deaths constitute one of the five key indicators adopted by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

The question thus arises of how to define these overdoses and which causes of death to consider. In France, there are currently several sources of data that are built upon varying definitions. This issue also exists on a European level, since each country has adopted their own, specific modalities for registering these deaths. Therefore, the EMCDDA has committed itself to establishing a common protocol to be used by all members of the European Union (see box on the following page).

It seems necessary to describe these different sources in order to understand their scope and limitations, as well as to formulate the clearest view possible of the trends observed in drug overdose deaths according to these different information systems. Studying these data will also help

suggest steps to take towards improving the situation in the future.

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