

Overdose Deaths Triple Among Latinos

Experts attribute the increase in Latino overdose deaths to the rise of fentanyl in the United States.

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Since 2011, overdose deaths among Latinos have increased nearly threefold, according to a report published in the [American Journal of Epidemiology](#).

The rise of fentanyl, especially when mixed with drugs such as cocaine or methamphetamine, could be contributing to this increase in Latino [overdose](#) deaths, experts suggest. Study coauthor Magdalena Cerdá, DrPH, director of the Center for Opioid Epidemiology and Policy at NYU Langone, [told NBC News](#) that drugs like cocaine and methamphetamine are more prevalent among Latinos than heroin or prescription painkillers.

The [opioid crisis](#) has predominantly impacted people living in rural areas. According to data from the Department of Agriculture, Latinos account for only 8.6% of the population in rural areas, compared with 19.8% of the population in urban areas. Experts believe that Latinos are experiencing higher rates of overdose deaths because fentanyl is more widely distributed and mixed with other drugs in urban centers such as New York, Miami, San Diego and Los Angeles.

According to the [study](#), overdose deaths from opioids mixed with cocaine among Latinos increased by 729% between 2007 and 2019. During that same period, Latino overdose deaths from opioids mixed with methamphetamines increased by a staggering 4,600%.

Cerdá said it's unclear whether opioids (often containing fentanyl) are being mixed with other drugs intentionally, but some experts believe that dealers may mix fentanyl into other drugs in order to hook their clients on the product. What's more, some individuals knowingly consume fentanyl because they have built up a tolerance to opioids and need higher doses.

This increase concerns Cerdá since Latinos have historically had lower overdose rates than white people.

Researchers emphasize the need for such drug studies to focus on Latinos as subgroups and to consider factors such as level of education attained and whether individuals were born in the United States or abroad, among others.
