Patient Characteristics and Treatment Utilization in Fatal Stimulant-Involved Overdoses in the United States Veterans Health Administration

A retrospective cohort study of patients who died from stimulant-involved overdose between 2012 and 2018.

Stimulant overdose deaths more than **tripled** from 2012 to 2018.

- 2/3rds involved cocaine and 1/3rd involved methamphetamine.
- 46% overdosed on stimulants alone, 54% involved an additional substance and 48% co-involved opioids.

Of all who died, only **29.9%** were seen in specialty substance use settings in the past year.

62% of stimulant overdoses were among veterans aged 45-64.

Compared with cocaine-involved overdoses, methamphetamine-involved overdoses were:

- More likely in those living in rural areas
- Less likely in older people

Conclusions:
- An increased focus on polysubstance use treatment is necessary, including improvements in access and reach.
- Key differences in characteristics of patients suggest unique treatment needs based on type of stimulant used.