

Drug Related Deaths in Germany 2022

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DBDD

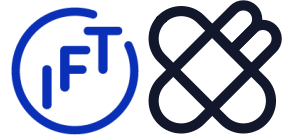
Tuesday, 10 October 2023

EMCDDA, Expert meeting on Drug-Related Deaths



- ▶ Background: What is a drug related death?
- ▶ Results 2022: Involved substances und group differences
- ▶ The issue with trend observations in Germany...

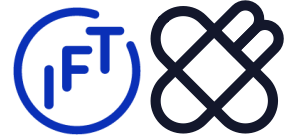
What is a DRD (according to SR / federal police)?



All deaths with a causal relationship with the abuse of illicit drugs, nps, or substitute medication need to be reported. This includes:

- DRD as a result of overdosing
 - Long-term effects of drug abuse: DRD due to health damage (physical decline, HIV, Hepatitis C, Organ failure) as a result of long-term drug abuse
 - Suicide out of despair over own life circumstances or due to withdrawal symptoms
 - Fatal accidents of people under the influence of drugs
- includes only cases, that came to the attention of the police

Drug related deaths 2022

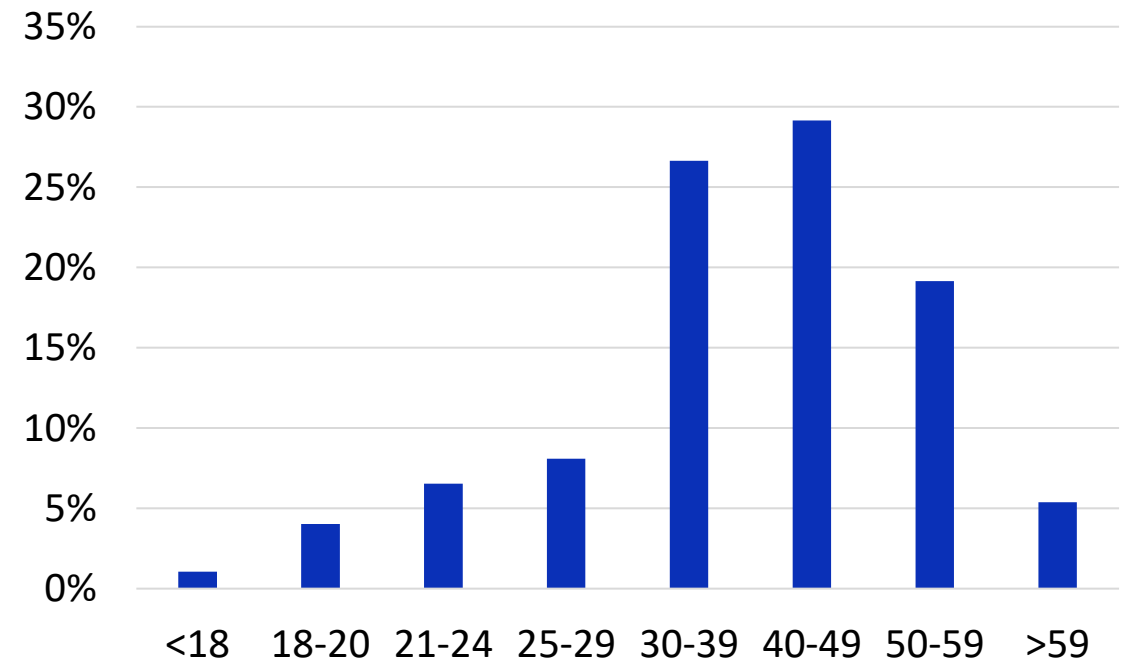
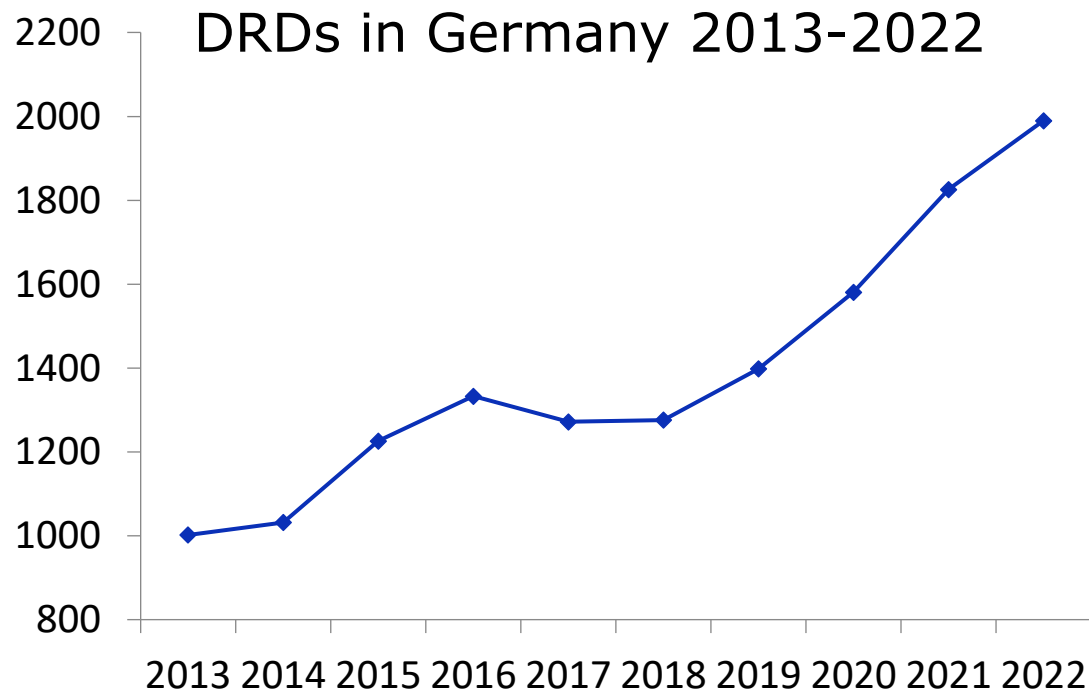


1.990 deaths

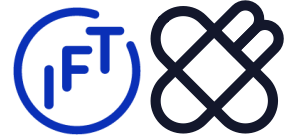
82.8 % (1.648) male

Mean age 40.5 yrs (14 – 87 yrs)

No sig. age differences between sexes



Causes of death 2022



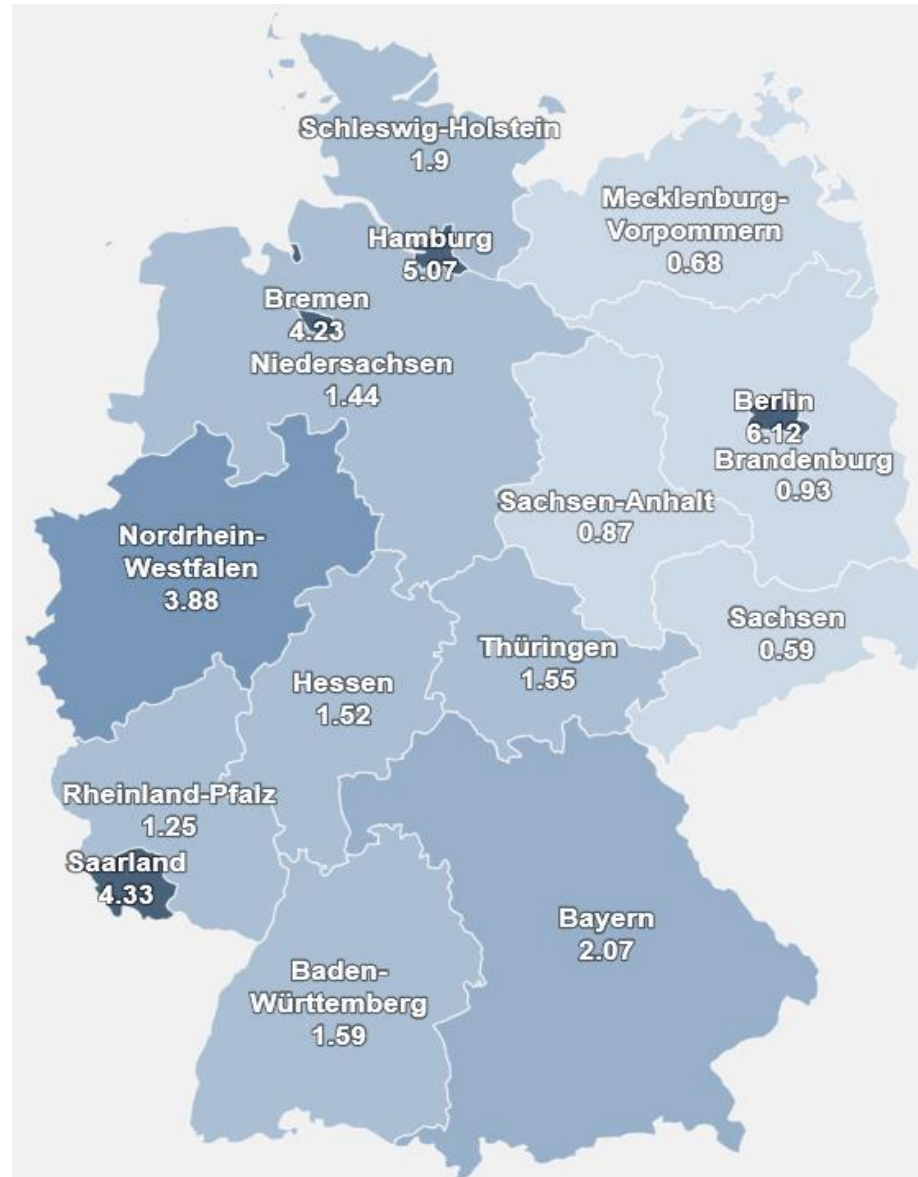
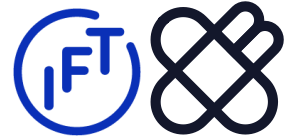
Total

- Polydrug use: 55% vs. monovalent: 33%
- One or more opioid: 60%
- One or more non-Opioid: 65.2%
- Long-term damage: 33%
- Rate of autopsies 53.1%
- Rate of tox. reports 39.4%

Subgroups

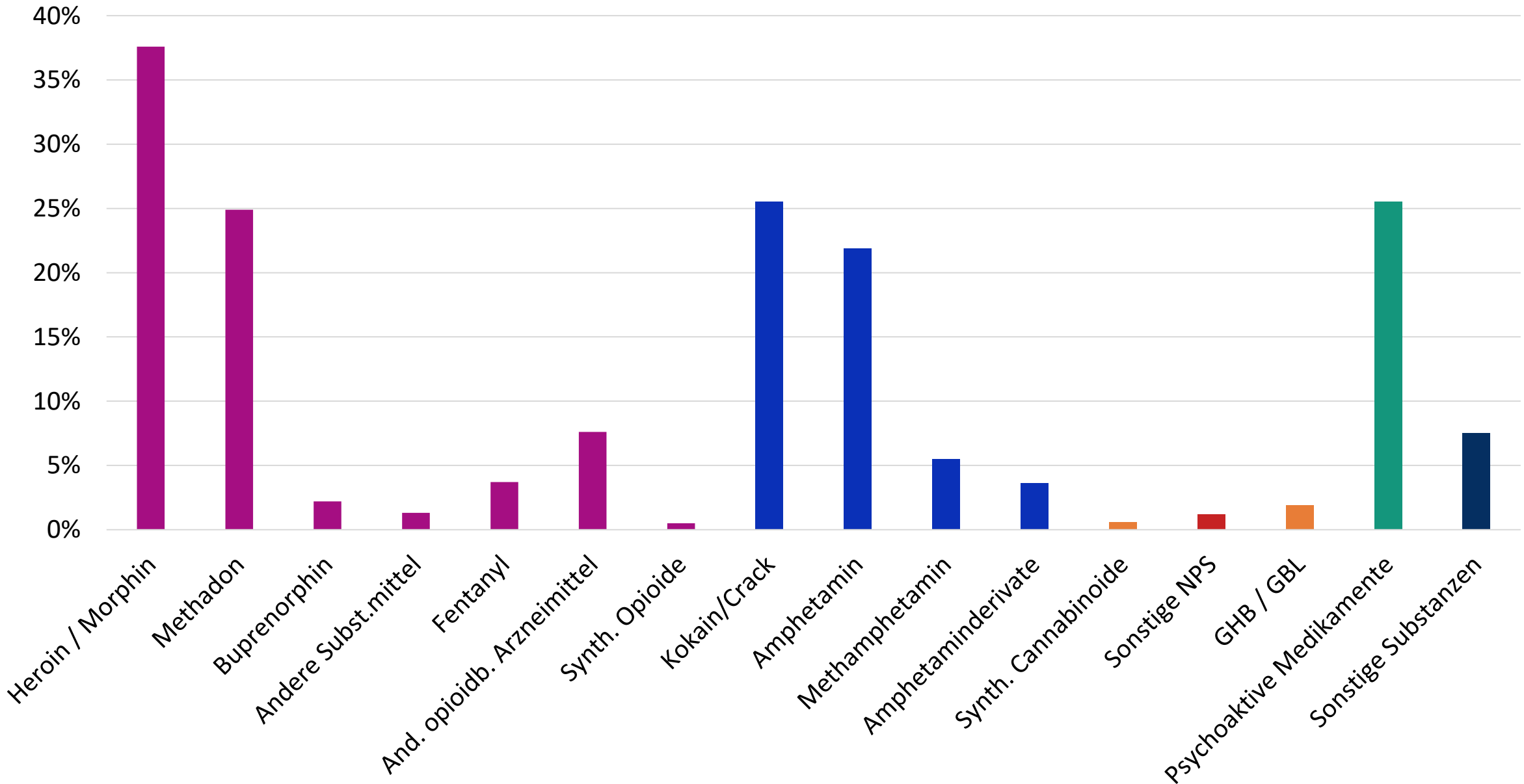
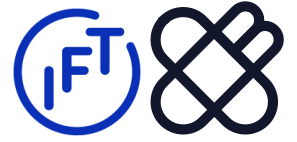
- No sex differences
- Age Differences
- Differences with respect to tox. report (yes/no): more & other substances
- Large regional differences (Länder)
 - Tox. Report: 6 - 100%
 - Mean age: 32.4 – 43.8 yrs
 - One or more opioid: 15 – 77 %
 - One or more non-opioid: 44 – 98 %

Per capita deaths (per 100.000 people): Drug overdose deaths 2022 by state (Länder)



Mean: 2.36

Involved substances

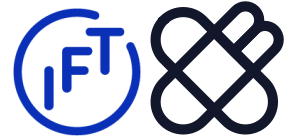


Problems with long-term comparisons...



- Since 2021: new methodology of data processing and analyses. **All** involved substances are now being considered, irrespective of presence of other substances
- Consequence: seemingly huge rise in the involvement of non-opioids in poly-drug intoxications in 2021/2022; pure methodological artifact!
- New data analysis: We considered open text fields for the first time → Number of poly drug cases increase, since more substance are being coded
- **Far more information, but makes long-term comparisons difficult: only possible for total numbers and long-term damage**
- **Impossible: Comparisons of involved substances across years**

Comparison of old and new method: poly drug cases 2022



Substances (in poly drug cases)	According to old documentation	New documentation	Absolute change (cases)	Relative change (percent)
Cocaine / Crack	107	417	310	+ 290%
Amphetamine	153	313	160	+ 105%
Meth	50	93	43	+ 86%
Amph.derivates	35	64	29	+ 83%
Synth. Cannab.	5	11	6	+ 120%
Other NPS	11	19	8	+ 73%
GHB/GBL	20	28	8	+ 40%
Psychoactive Medication	79	483	404	+ 511%

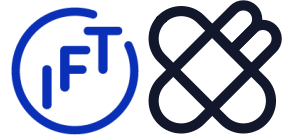
Comparison of old and new method: poly drug cases 20



Substances (in poly drug cases)	According to old documentation	New documentation	% change
Cocaine / Crack	107		
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Other		6	+ 120%
GHB		8	+ 73%
Psych	28	8	+ 40%
Medication	79	483	+ 511%

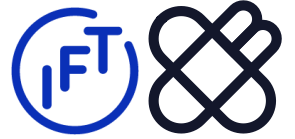
Comparison of substance involvement of non-opioids with previous years is **not** possible.
 → Huge underestimation of the involvement of stimulants and psychoactive medication in poly drug cases in previous years.

What you should remember...



- Increase in DRD
- Most likely: Huge underestimation of involvement of psychoactive medication and stimulants
- Likely: Still underestimation of number of involved substances due to a lack of toxicological examinations and reports
- No substance comparisons with previous data (i.e., before 2022)!

What we need...



- More toxicological reports, less regional differences on tox. to better interpret regional differences in DRD and to develop regional (prevention) strategies
- Further improvement of data collection (with newest data: registration of alcohol, improvement for psychoactive medication)
- Work in progress: in-depth analyses for 2021 and 2022 data with only tox. reports
- **Many thanks to the federal police (BKA)!**

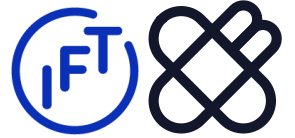
Gefördert durch:



Bundesministerium
für Gesundheit



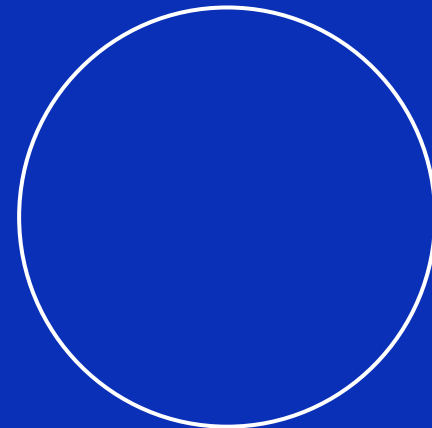
European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction



aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages

Any questions?

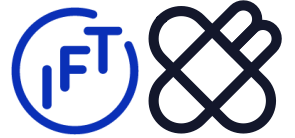
Thank you for your attention!



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Age differences



- Heroin / morphine & methadone: higher props among the elderly
- Opioid medication: higher proportions among younger people (>20% share among 18–29-year-olds)
- Psychoactive medication: higher proportions among younger people (up to > 50% among 18-20- & up to > 40% among 20-29-year-olds)