

# Black People Most Affected by Rise in Drug Overdose Deaths

Drug overdose deaths have increased by 44% among Black individuals since 2020.

September 1, 2022 By Laura Schmidt

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In 2020, the United States saw a [30% increase](#) in drug [overdose](#) deaths—92,000 lives lost.

A recent study published in [JAMA Network](#) found that communities of color were particularly impacted by drugs, including fentanyl. The relative overdose death rate rose by 44% among Black people and 39% among American Indians and Alaska Natives. White people saw a 22% increase.

Some age and sex groups saw larger increases than others. For example, overdose rates among Black men 65 years or older were seven times higher than among their white counterparts.

“Overdose deaths are preventable, and we must redouble our efforts to make overdose prevention a priority,” said Debra Houry, MD, MPH, acting principal deputy director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [in a statement](#).

Most of those who died had a history of substance use, yet only about 8% of Black people and about 10% of American Indian and Alaska Native people received substance use treatment, compared with 16% of white people.

The authors of the study recommend improving access to substance use treatment, ensuring culturally tailored treatment is available for all who need it, expanding harm reduction services, including access to the overdose-reversing medication naloxone, and reducing the stigma associated with drug use.

[International Overdose Awareness Day](#), observed on August 31, is the world’s largest annual campaign to end overdose, reduce stigma, provide emotional support and acknowledge the grief that loved ones experience as a result of overdose deaths. The organization provides resources for those seeking help, such as overdose basics, opioid fact sheets, videos and web links.

To learn more, read “[What’s Driving the Spike in Overdose Deaths Among Black Americans?](#)”

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