

2024 Drug-related Death Data

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Introduction and Methodology

In 2024, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) examined 26 deaths where drugs were suspected to have been involved. Socio-demographic and relevant medical information, including cause of death, toxicology results, and history of past substance use were collected and tabulated into Excel. The de-identified data were then provided to GBHWC/SEOW for data cleaning and analysis. Frequency counts and descriptive statistics were performed; the results are described in this report.

Findings

The OCME recorded 26 drug-related deaths in 2024.

Socio-demographic profile

- Of the 26 deaths, three were females and the rest were males, for a sex ratio of 1:7.6.
- The mean age was 47 years, with a range from 26 to 66 years. Drug-related deaths peaked at the age range 50-59 years (Figure 1).
- Nearly three-quarters (73%) identified as Guamanian/Chamorro (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Drug-related deaths by age, Guam, 2024

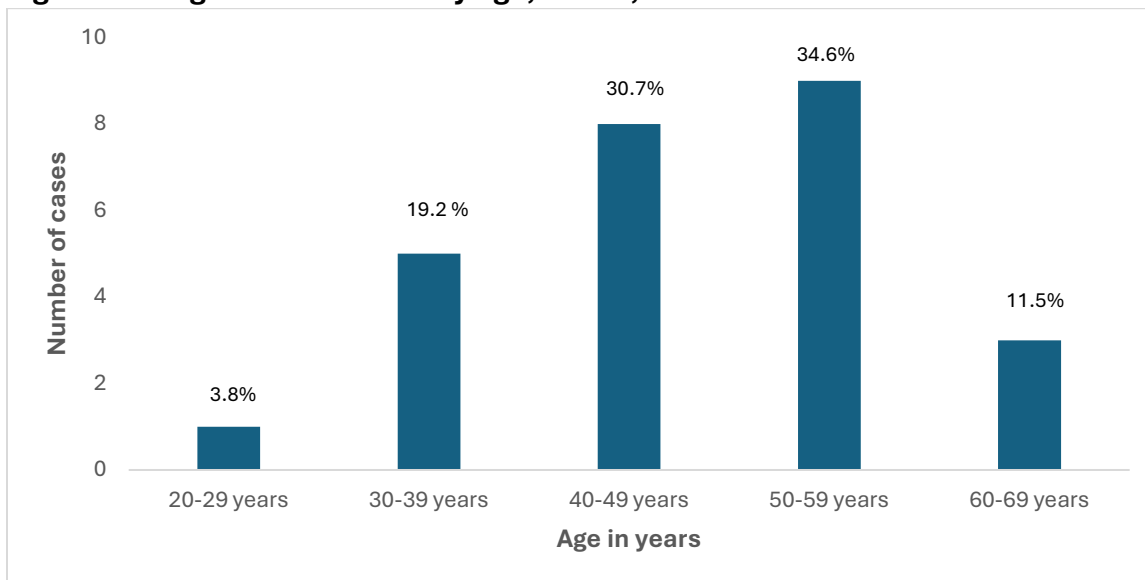
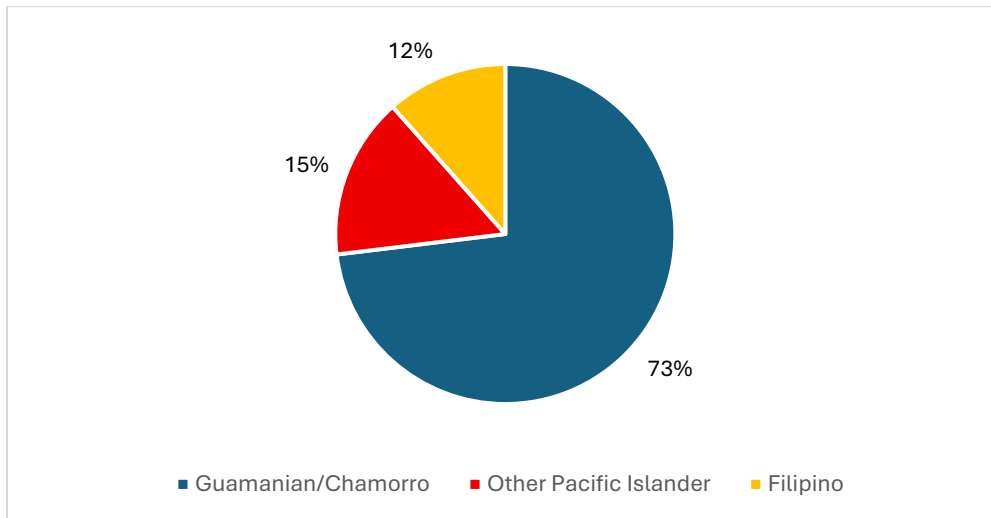


Figure 2. Ethnicity breakdown of drug-related deaths in Guam, 2024



- Half (50%) were never-married; 15% were divorced; 11.5% were widowed.
- Only 1 of the 26 (3.8%) was a military veteran.
- Majority (62%) were unemployed at the time of death; 27% were employed. The employment status for 3 individuals was unknown.
- More than one in three (38.5%) had a high school diploma or GED. The educational level for 10 individuals was unknown.
- Only 1 (3.8%) out of the 26 was homeless at the time of death.

Circumstances surrounding death

- In 27% of the cases, death occurred at the decedents' homes. Death occurred in another residence in 7.7% of cases, and in jail for 1 case (3.8%). The location of death was unknown or missing for the rest of the cases.
- The manner of death was determined to be:
 - Accidental – 73%
 - Suicide – 3.8%
 - Natural – 23%
- The cause of death was acute intoxication in 77% of the cases (Figure 3).

Substance use

- Toxicology testing was performed on 21 of the cases. Methamphetamine was the predominant substance detected and was found in 19 (90%) of the 21 cases who underwent toxicologic analysis. The substances detected are listed in the following graph. (Figure 4)
(Note: Multiple substances were detected in most of the cases; thus, the total of the substances detected exceeds 21).
- A history of substance use was noted in the medical records of 62% of the cases.

- Other concomitant substance use included: marijuana (19%), tobacco use (7.7%), alcohol use (7.7%), pain medication (3.8%).

Figure 3. Cause of death, drug-related deaths in Guam, 2024

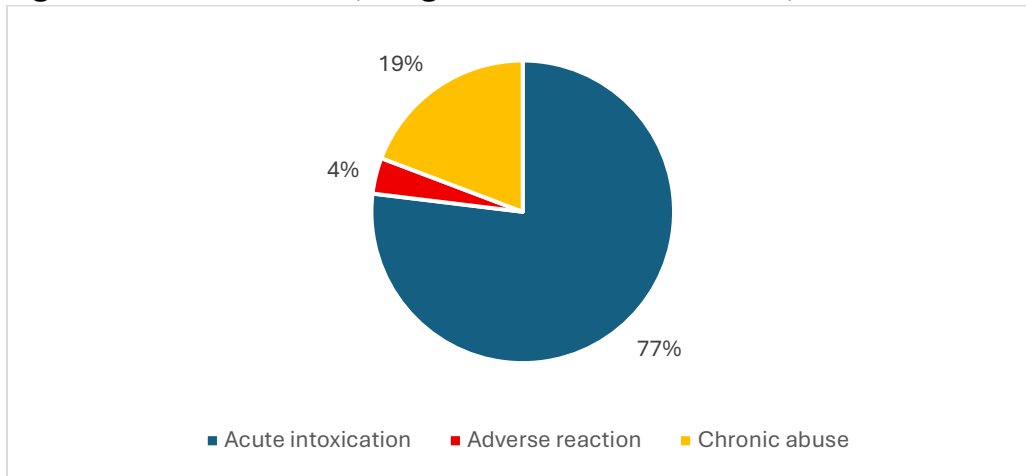
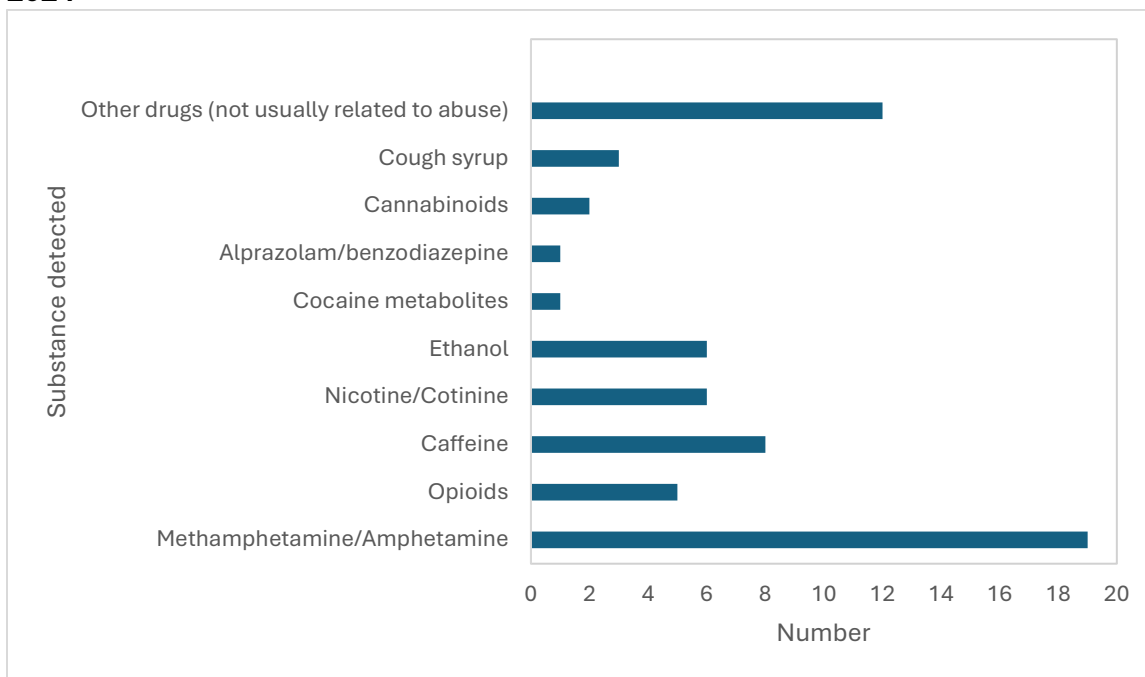


Figure 4. Substances detected in toxicologic testing of drug-related deaths, Guam, 2024



What the data tell us:

- Socio-demographic risk factors for drug-related deaths include:
 - Male sex
 - Older age, between 50-59 years
 - Unemployed status

- Educational attainment of a high school/GED diploma or less
- Without a stable life partner
- Identifying ethnically as Guamanian/Chamorro
- The predominant drug of use is methamphetamine.
- The predominant cause of death is accidental acute intoxication/overdose. More than one quarter of the deaths occur at home.

Note: These data are solely focused on drug-related deaths, and do not inform us about the greater issue of substance use prevalence.