

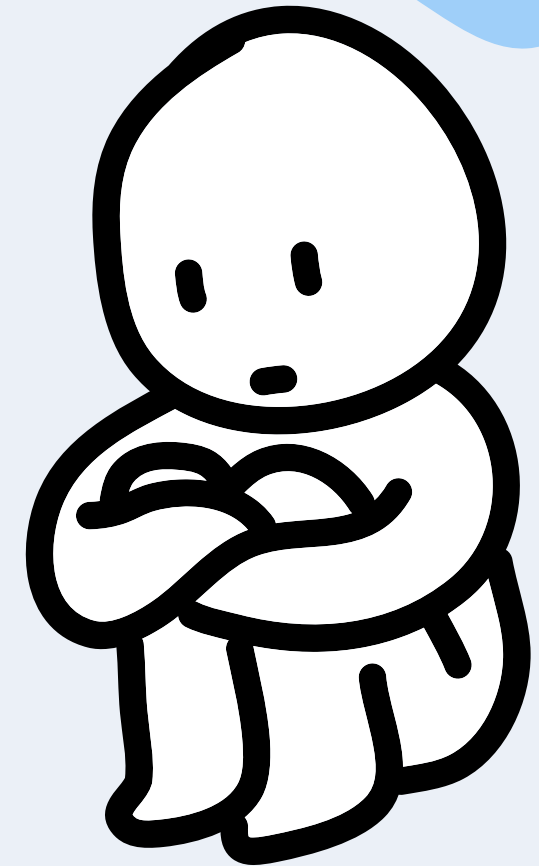


**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

# NON-FATAL OVERDOSE

## Scientific Evidence

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Engagement for Societal Impact  
Trinity College Dublin**





# OVERDOSE IN IRELAND

WHAT

HOW

WHY

WHO

PREVENTION

RESPONSE

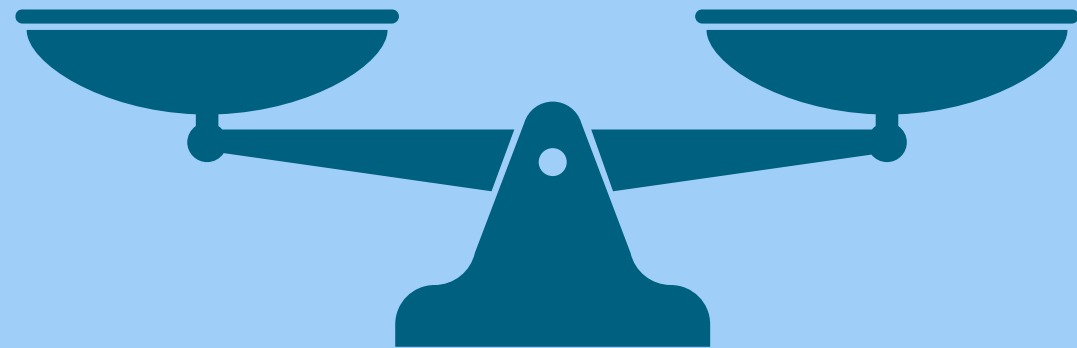


# WHAT IS AN OVERDOSE?

An overdose occurs when a person takes more of a substance than their body is used to (tolerance).

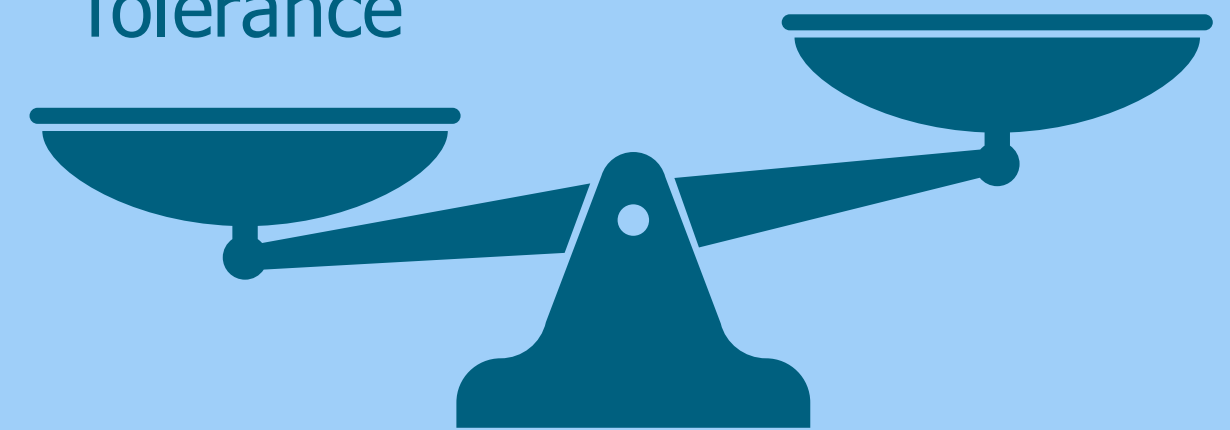
## TYPICAL EXPERIENCE

Tolerance = Dose taken



## OVERDOSE

Tolerance < Dose taken



# HOW DOES OVERDOSE OCCUR

The substances that are most commonly seen in overdoses can be broadly separated into 3 categories:

## STIMULANTS

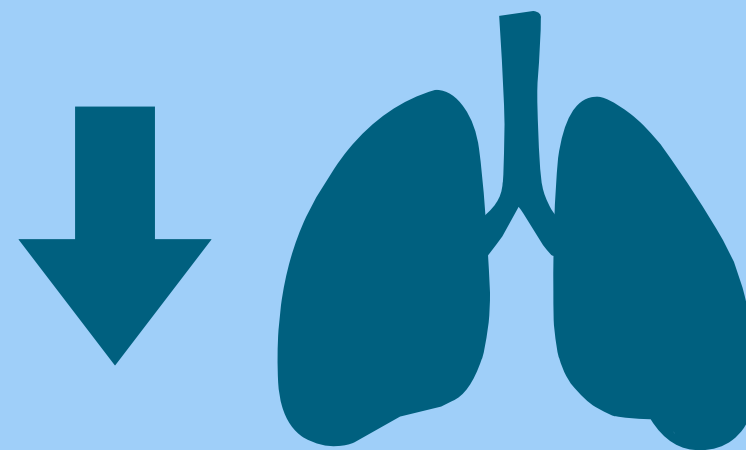
Overdose is dangerous due to:  
a high heartrate, seizure, and  
overheating



Examples: Cocaine,  
Methamphetamine, Adderall.

## DEPRESSANTS

Overdose is dangerous due to:  
slow breathing and  
unconsciousness



Examples: opioids (heroin),  
benzodiazepines, sleeping tablets,  
alcohol, GHB.

## DISSOCIATIVES

Overdose is dangerous due to:  
confusion, lack of motor control,  
and unconsciousness

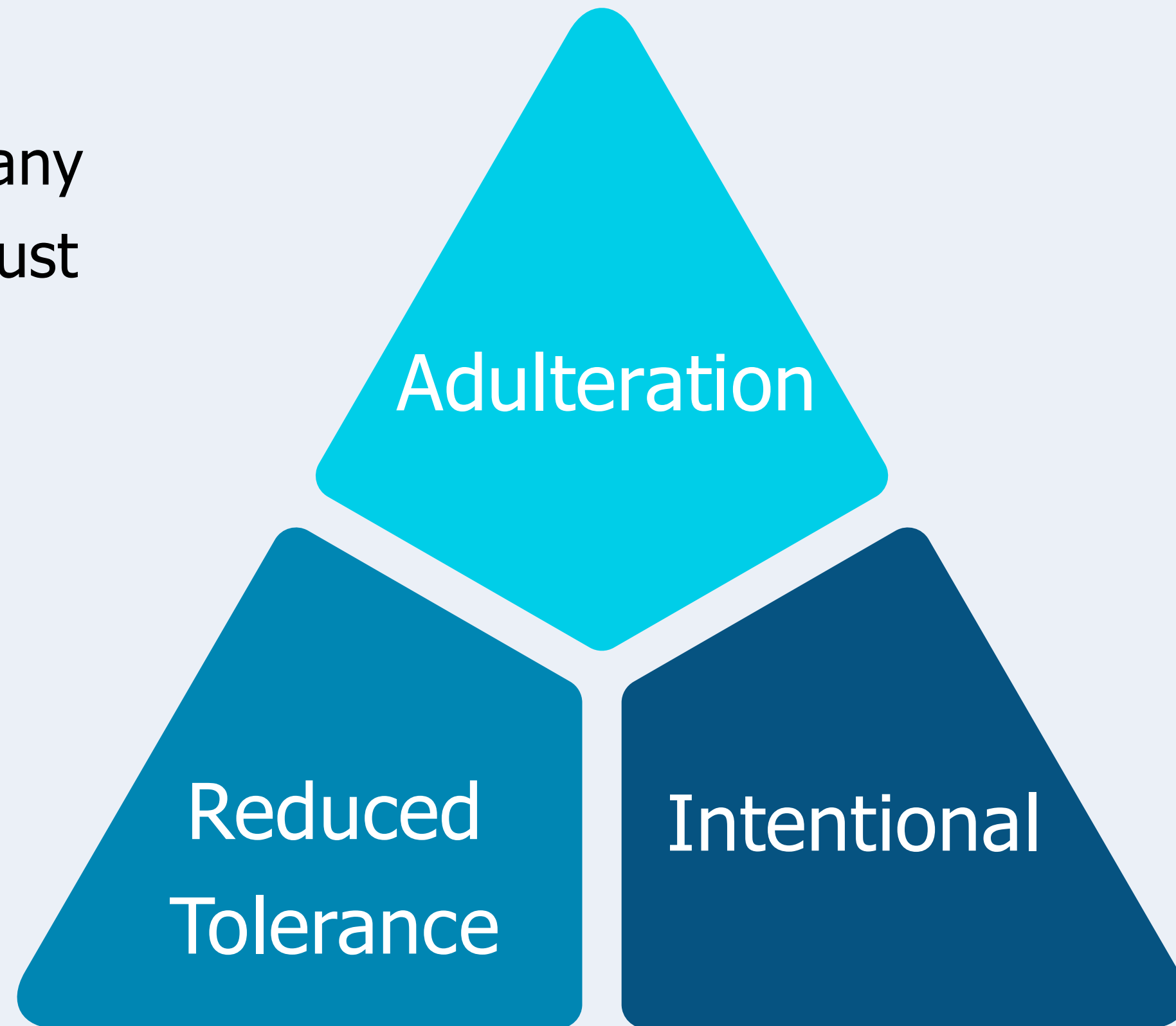


Examples: ketamine, PCP, Nitrous  
Oxide, DXM (Cough Syrup)

Other much less common substances in overdose are Hallucinogens, Cannabinoids, and other medications or substances

# WHY DOES OVERDOSE OCCUR?

Overdose can occur due to many other reasons than a person just taking more than usual:



# WARNING!!!!



**Non-Fatal Overdoses (NFOs) serve as an important early indicator of the risk of future DRDs, is highlighted strongly in international literature.**

# RISK FACTORS FOR NON-FATAL OVERDOSE

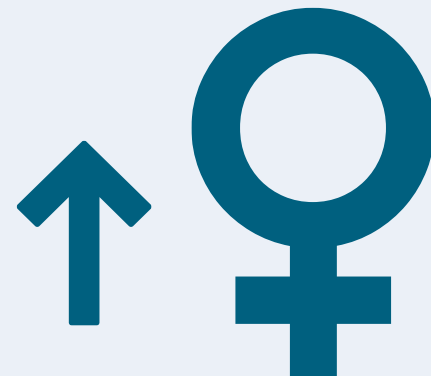
## AGE

Younger people are more likely to overdose.



## GENDER

Males are more likely to overdose, but female overdose is rising.



## DRUG TYPE

Opioids and benzodiazepines have the highest risk of overdose

Current OAT treatment can reduce risk.



- Depression
- Suicidal Behaviour
- PTSD and Bipolar Disorder

- Former OAT Treatment
- Multiple Treatment
- Episodes

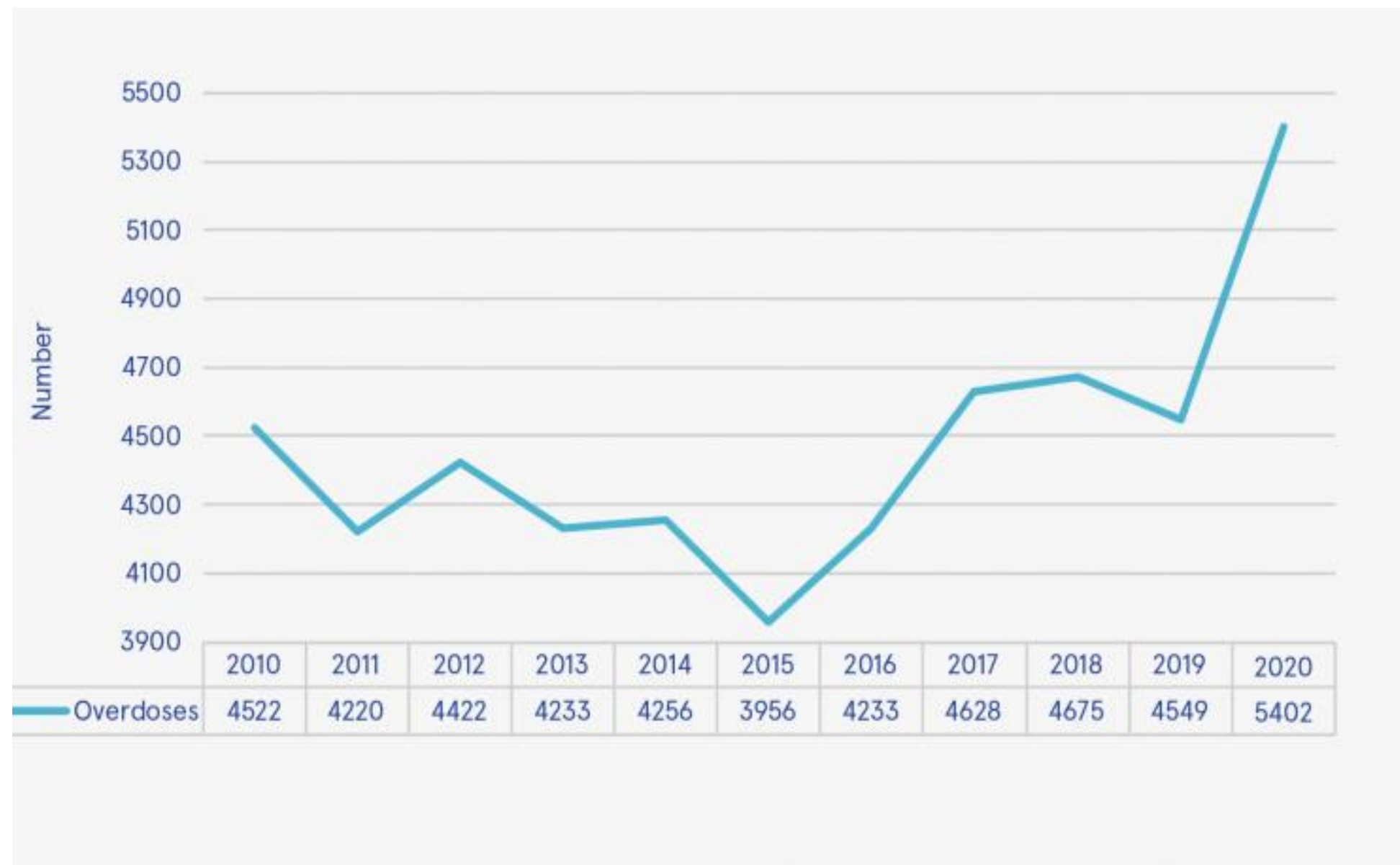
International  
Research

- Lower Education
- Previous Incarceration
- Experiencing Homelessness

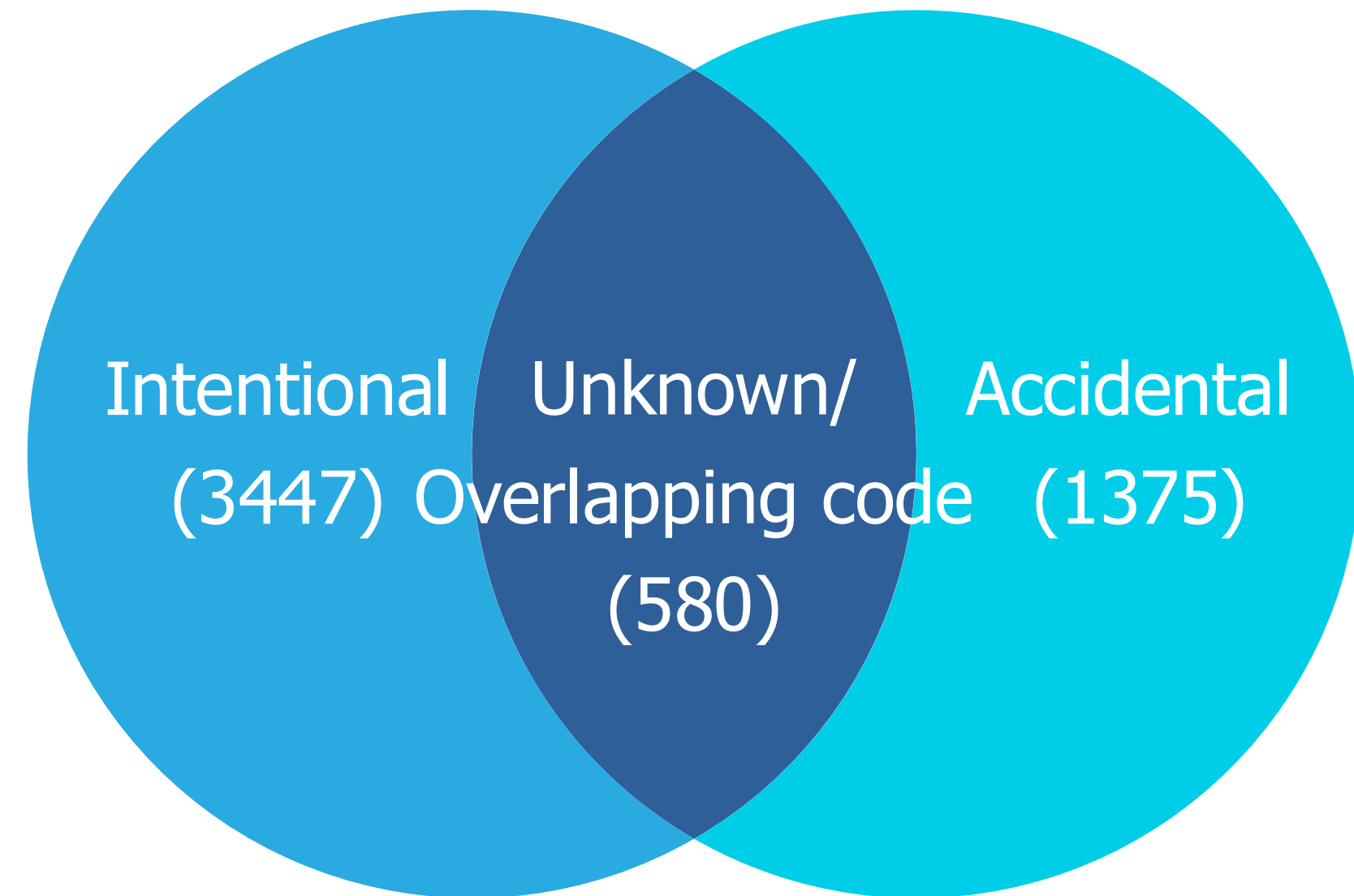
- Polysubstance Use
- Problematic Alcohol Use
- Needing Help Injecting

# NON-FATAL OVERDOSE IN IRELAND

There has been a rise in non-fatal overdoses in Ireland, peaking at 5402 in 2020.



Reason for overdose



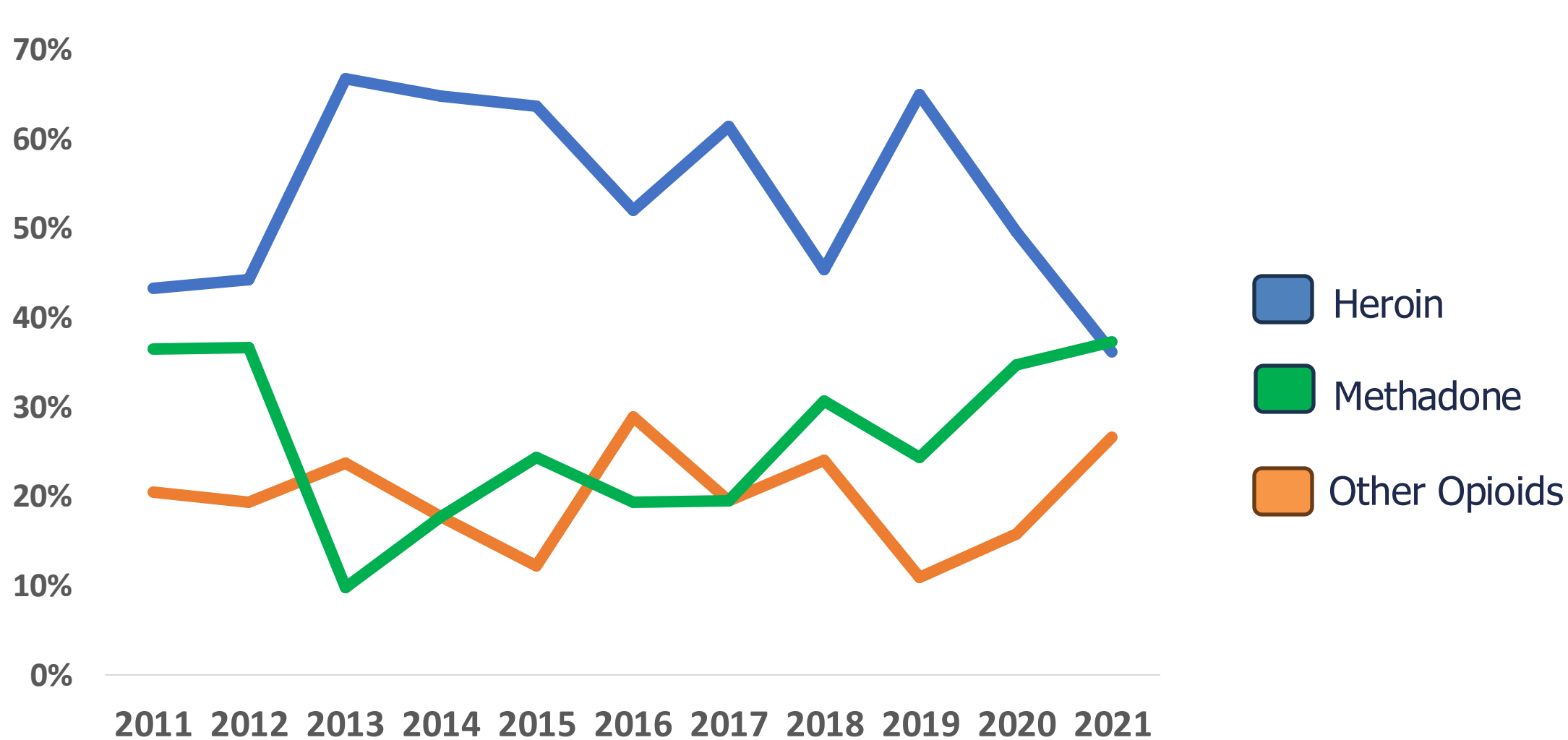


# NON-FATAL OVERDOSE IN IRELAND



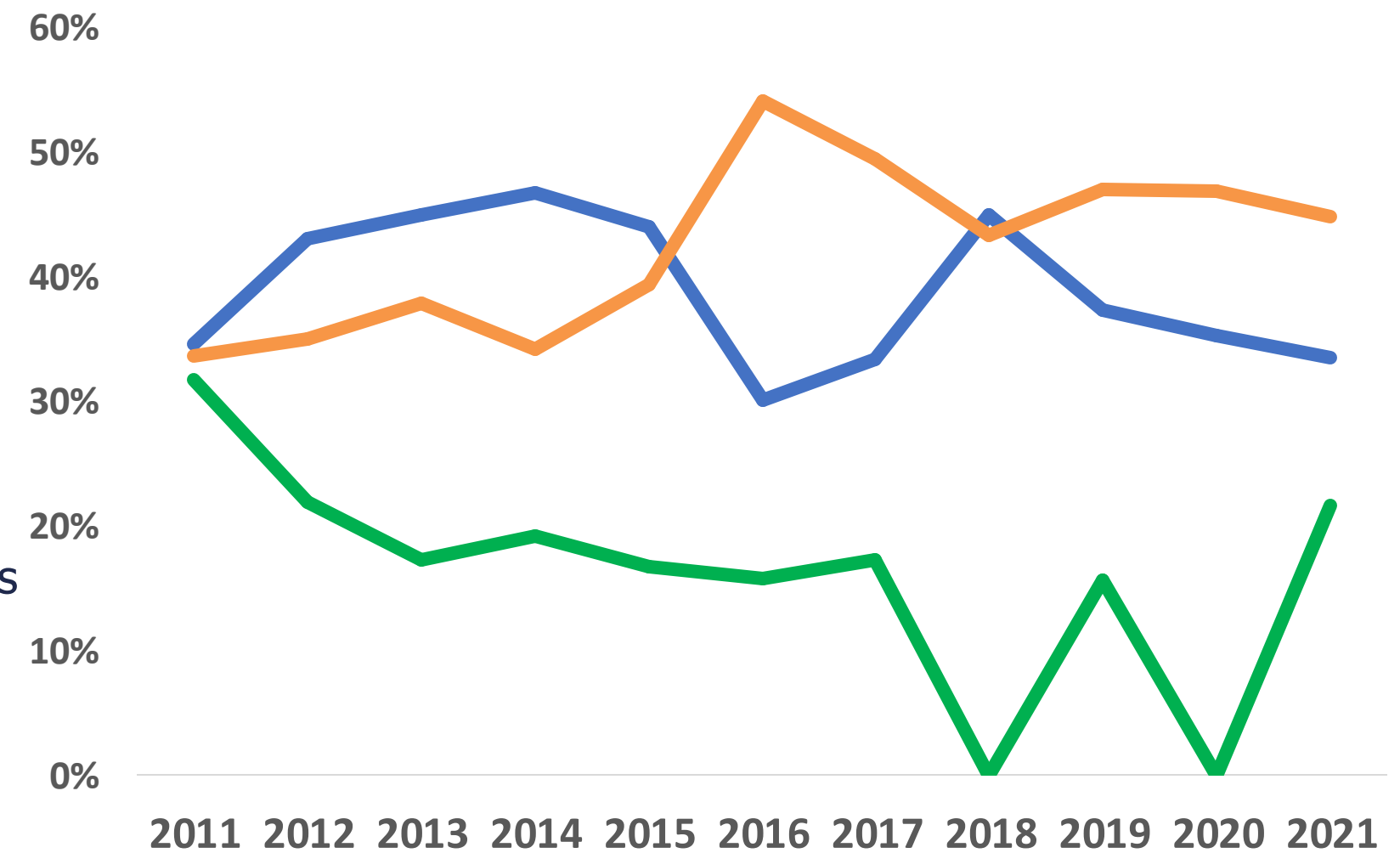
While heroin was usually the most commonly involved opioid in an overdose, it has been overtaken by others.

## Non-fatal Overdose in Inner-City Dublin



In inner-city Dublin, **methadone** (marginally) is now the most implicated.

## Non-fatal Overdose in Other Hospital



Outside of inner-city Dublin, "other opioids" are the highest cause of overdose.



# LONG-TERM NEUROLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

The most concerning long-term neurological consequence of opioid overdose comes from the brain not receiving oxygen (hypoxia).

If a person's breathing is reduced for more than 4 minutes, brain damage may occur.



## COGNITIVE

- Memory issues
- Impulse Control
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making

## BEHAVIOURAL

- Depression
- Confusion
- Apathy
- Irritability

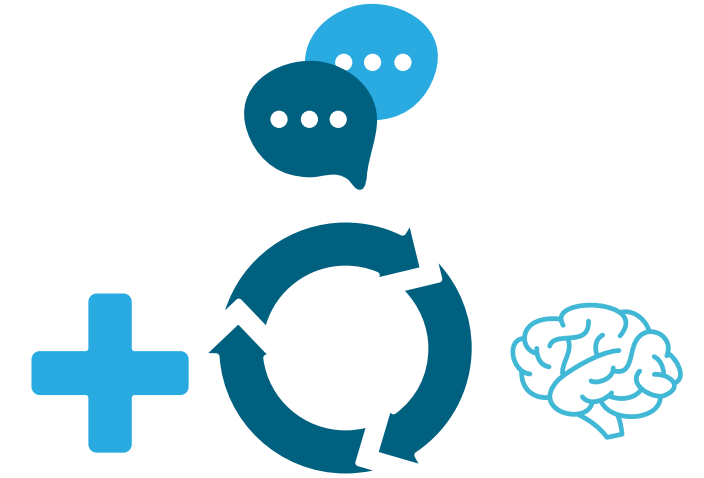
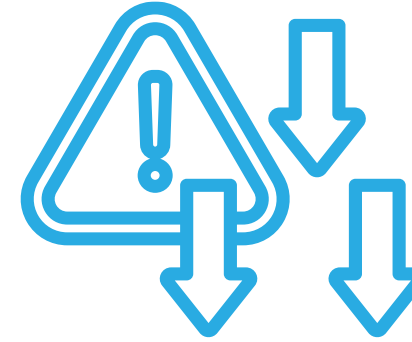
## OTHERS

- Motor Control
- Speech issues  
(Dysarthria, Aphasia)
- Sensory Issues

## THERAPIES

- Psychological
- Speech
- Physical
- Occupational

# EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS POST NON-FATAL OVERDOSE



- Post-Overdose Outreach
- Brief Interventions and Motivational Interviewing
- Linkage to Substance use Treatment
- Explaining harm-reduction strategies
- Mental Health Support and Integrated Care

## KEY INTERVENTIONS TO BE FURTHER DEVELOPED

Peer-Support and  
Recovery Coaching

Experienced peers guide others

- Goal-orientated
- Personal Support
- Resource Navigation



Emergency Department  
Interventions

Intervention at the point of contact

- Resource Linking
- Psychological Treatment
- Enabling Further Contact



Social Support and  
Housing Assistance

Based on the Recovery Capital Concept

Giving the person as many  
resources as possible to  
enable personal development





# SUMMARY OF KEY LEARNINGS

## Summary of overdose in Ireland

### TOPICS DISCUSSED:

Causes of Overdose

Consequences of Overdose

Peer Intervention

### AREAS TO FOCUS ON:

Prevention

Clinical and Psychological

Accessible Peer Support

### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Education

Treatment Equity

Increased Funding



# THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

## Reach out for any questions.

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