

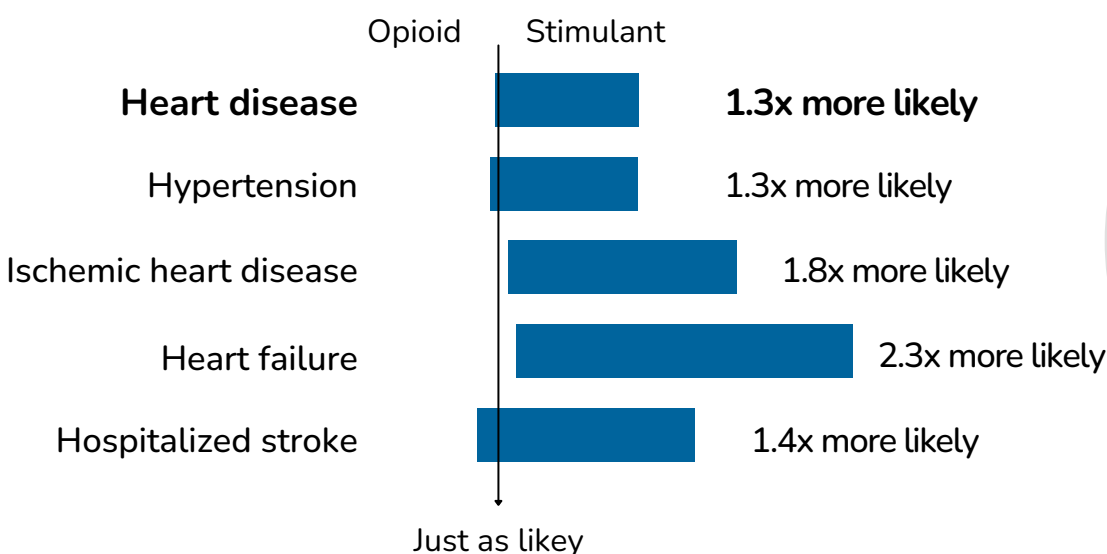
# Possible links between chronic disease, stimulant use, and risk of drug toxicity death

Findings from Palis, H et. al. *Chronic disease diagnoses and health service use among people who died of illicit drug toxicity in British Columbia, Canada.* BMC Medicine, 2024.



This study looked at BC Coroners Service records of 3,788 people who died from drug toxicity between January 2015 and December 2019. The aim of this study was to better understand the differences in chronic disease diagnosis and health service contact between people who died from stimulant toxicity, opioid toxicity, or both.

## People who died of stimulant toxicity had heart disease more often than those who died from opioid toxicity

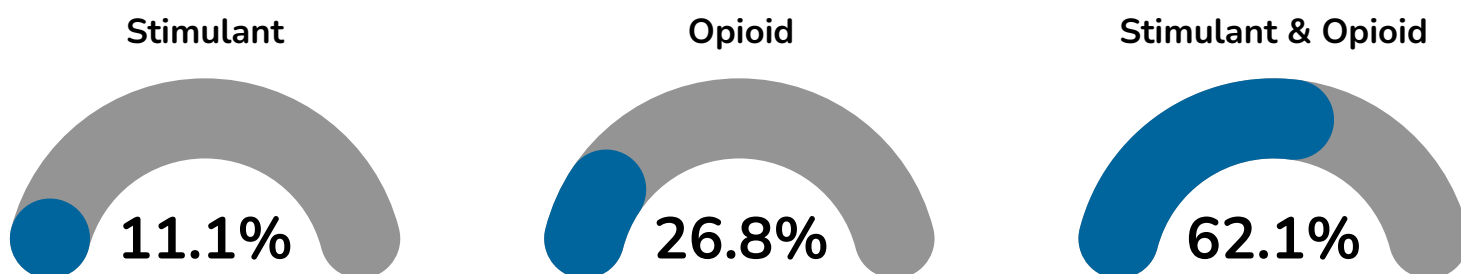


People with these **heart diseases** are at **higher risk of dying of stimulant toxicity** than opioid toxicity.

## Almost 3/4 of drug toxicity deaths involved stimulants



Almost 2/3 of people who died from drug toxicity had **both opioids and stimulants** deemed relevant to their death.

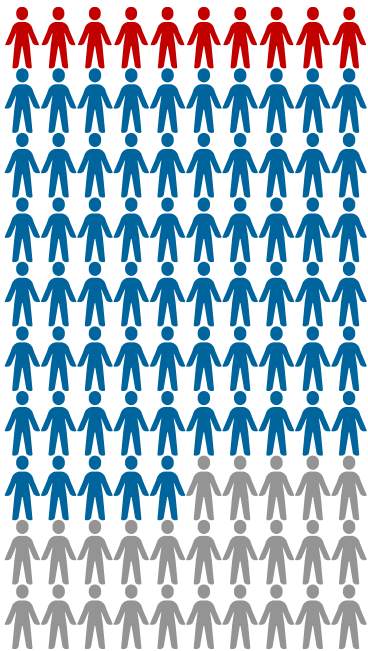
Substance deemed relevant to death



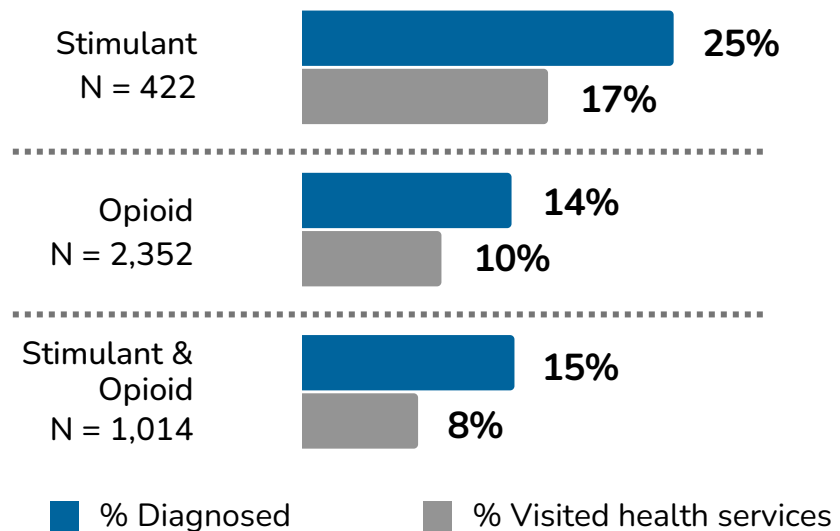
## Many people who died of drug toxicity had contact with health services prior to death

% people who died of drug toxicity and visited health services 1 year prior to death:

-  For any reason **65%**
-  For heart disease **10%**



People who died from **stimulant** toxicity **visited health care more frequently for heart disease** than people who died from opioid toxicity.



## Health care visits for chronic diseases are opportunities to reduce drug toxicity deaths

Health care providers can:

- Increase screening for substance use in people with co-morbidities and offer care to reduce the risk of experiencing a drug poisoning event.
- Increase screening for stimulant use in people with heart disease.
- Expand treatment for co-morbidities among people who use substances

Further research is needed to study the association between chronic diseases and drug toxicity deaths among people who use substances.