



Xylazine-Involved Drug Overdose Deaths Georgia, 2020-2022

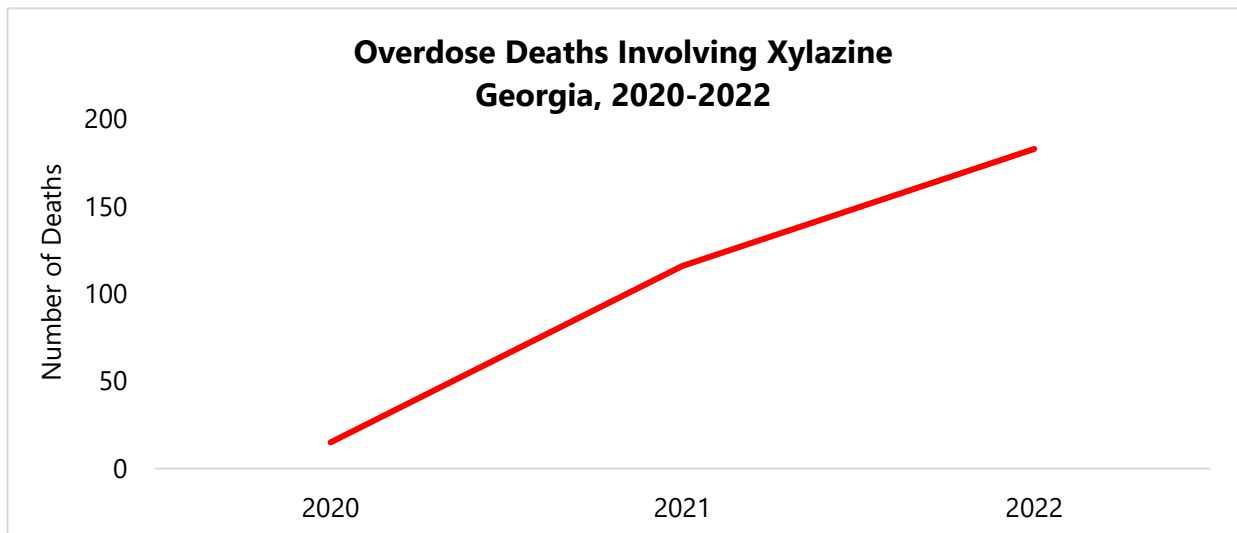
In November of 2022, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a nationwide [alert](#) to stakeholders warning them about the risk of xylazine exposure. Xylazine, a non-opioid tranquilizer used in veterinary medicine and not approved for use in humans, has been increasingly detected in the illicit drug supply and in drug overdoses around the nation. Many states have seen a dramatic increase in drug overdose deaths involving xylazine, and Georgia is experiencing the same trends. From 2020 to 2022, the percentage of all reported drug overdose deaths involving xylazine increased from 0.8% (15/1888 deaths) to 9% (183/2115 deaths), and 100% of all reported suspected xylazine-involved deaths in 2022 also involved fentanyl.

Persons who use drugs, clinicians, and the general public should be aware of the risks associated with xylazine use. A xylazine overdose may mimic the symptoms of an opioid overdose, but since xylazine is not an opioid, naloxone is not known to be effective in reversing xylazine overdoses. Repeated injection of xylazine is also associated with severe, necrotic skin ulcerations. Persons who use drugs may not be aware of the presence of xylazine in their drug supply, so it is critical for them to understand these risks and remain vigilant.

From 2020 to 2022 in Georgia:

- Deaths involving any drug increased 12%
- Deaths involving xylazine increased **1120%**
- The proportion of overdose deaths involving xylazine increased from 0.8% to **9%**

Drug Overdose Deaths by Drug Type, Georgia, 2020 – 2022							
Drug Type	2020		2021		2022*		% Change 2020-2022
	N	Rate	N	Rate	N	Rate	
Any Drug	1888	17.63	2417	22.38	2115	19.58	12%
Xylazine	15	0.14	116	1.07	183	1.69	1120%



Xylazine-Involved Overdose Deaths by Sex, Race, Ethnicity, and Age Group

- From 2020 to 2022, overdose deaths involving xylazine increased at a faster pace among females (1275%) than among males (1064%)
- A greater proportion of overdose deaths involving xylazine occurred among males (70%) in 2022 compared to females (30%)
- Xylazine-involved overdose mortality rates among Blacks were 131% lower than rates for Whites in 2022

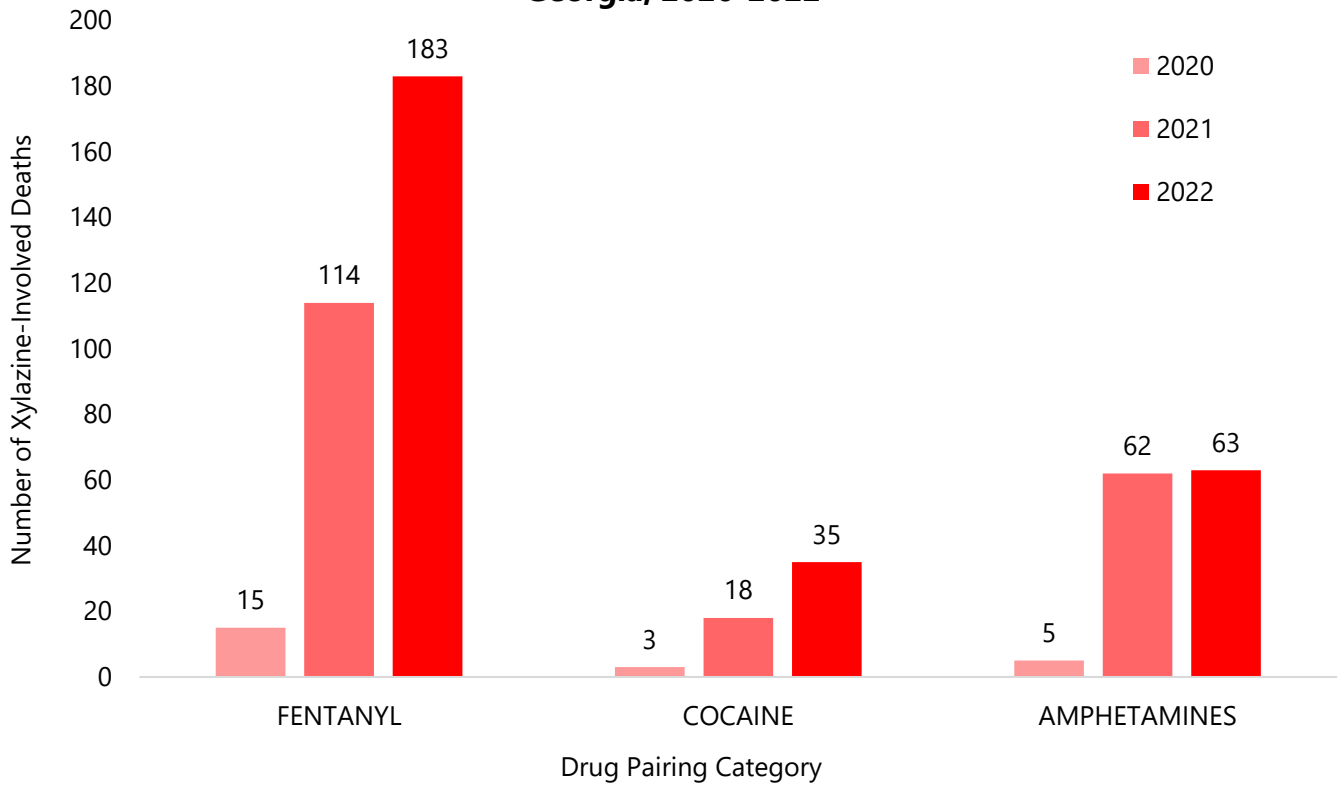
Drug Overdose Deaths Involving Xylazine, by Sex, Race, Ethnicity, and Age Group, Georgia, 2020 – 2022							
Characteristic	2020		2021		2022*		% Change 2020-2022
	N	Rate	N	Rate	N	Rate	
Sex							
Female	4	--	32	0.58	55	0.99	1275%
Male	11	0.21	84	1.59	128	2.43	1064%
Race							
Black or African American	4	--	21	0.59	35	0.98	775%
White	11	0.17	92	1.43	145	2.26	1218%
Other Race	0	--	3	--	3	--	N/A
Ethnicity							
Hispanic or Latino	1	--	5	0.45	9	0.81	800%
Non-Hispanic or non-Latino	14	0.15	111	1.14	174	1.79	1143%
Age Group							
<15	0	--	0	--	1	--	N/A
15-24	2	--	7	0.47	13	0.88	550%
25-34	4	--	40	2.68	56	3.75	1300%
35-44	3	--	40	2.80	64	4.48	2033%
45-54	2	--	19	1.33	26	1.82	1200%
55-64	2	--	10	0.70	19	1.33	850%
65+	2	--	0	--	4	--	100%

Xylazine-Involved Overdose Deaths & Opioid/Non-Opioid Pairings

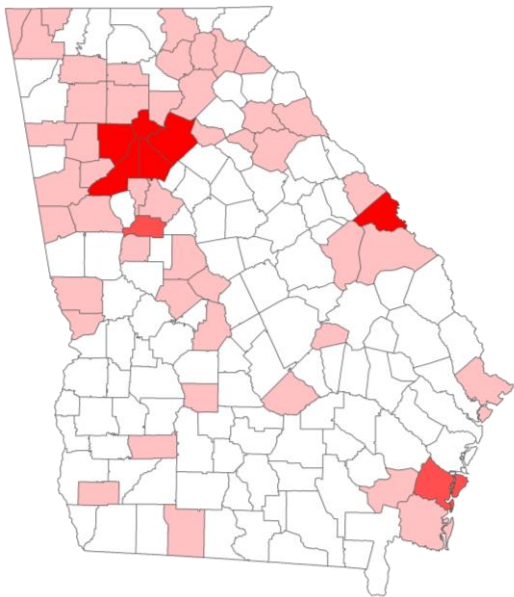
All xylazine-involved overdose deaths involved at least one other drug. In 2022 in Georgia:

- **100%** of all suspected xylazine-involved deaths also involved fentanyl
- 19% of all suspected xylazine-involved deaths also involved cocaine
- 34% of all suspected xylazine-involved deaths also involved amphetamines

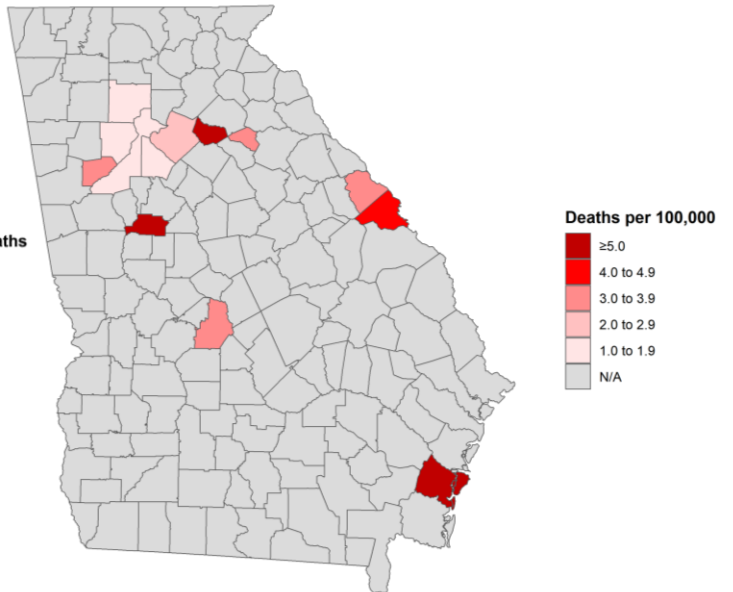
Xylazine-Involved Deaths & Opioid/Non-Opioid Pairings Georgia, 2020-2022



Xylazine-Involved Overdose Deaths
by Decedent Residence Location, Georgia, 2022



Xylazine-Involved Overdose Mortality Rates
by Decedent Residence Location, Georgia, 2022



About Fatal Drug Overdose (Mortality) Data

Data Source

Overdose-involved deaths were derived from DPH Vital Records death certificates. The following data include all deaths that occurred in Georgia among Georgia residents and deaths that occurred outside of Georgia among Georgia residents, unless otherwise specified.

Case Definitions

(Note: categories are not mutually exclusive, includes only drug overdose deaths caused by acute poisoning)

Any drug overdose death

May involve any over-the-counter, prescription, or illicit drug

- Deaths with any of the following ICD-10 codes as any underlying cause of death: X40-44, X60-64, X85, Y10-14

Drug overdose death involving xylazine

- Any cause of death text field contains the word "TOXIC"

AND

- At least one of the following terms: xylazine

Drug overdose death involving fentanyl

Note: polysubstance abuse deaths may also involve other opioids

- Any cause of death text field contains the word "TOXIC"

AND

- At least one of the following terms (or common misspelling): fentanyl (and fentanyl analogs)

Drug overdose death involving cocaine

Involves heroin. Note: polysubstance abuse deaths may also involve other opioids

- Deaths with any of the following ICD-10 codes as any underlying cause of death: X40-44, X60-64, X85, Y10-14

AND

- The following ICD-10 code as any other listed cause of death: T40.5

OR

- Any cause of death text field contains the word "TOXIC"

AND

- At least one of the following terms: coca, cocaine, crack

Drug overdose death involving amphetamines

- Deaths with any of the following ICD-10 codes as any underlying cause of death: X40-44, X60-64, X85, Y10-14

AND

- The following ICD-10 code as any other listed cause of death: T43.6

OR

- Any cause of death text field contains the word "TOXIC"

AND

- Any cause of death text field contains at least one of the following terms: amfet, amphet, bifet, biphet, dexedrine, ephedrine, meth

Other Definitions or Limitations

Deaths represent individual people who died in Georgia and deaths among Georgia residents outside of Georgia.

Overdose death county represents the county of residence; when the county of residence field was blank, the county of the death certifier was used.

Rate indicates the number of deaths among Georgia residents per 100,000 population using 2020, 2020, or 2021 Census data as the denominator.

2022 rates were calculated using 2021 Census data as the denominator as 2022 Census data is not yet available.

Rates for categories with fewer than 5 deaths may not be accurate and are not presented in this report.

2022 death data are considered preliminary and are likely underreported.

ICD-10 Code Description

X40-X44 (accidental poisonings by drugs), X60-X64 (intentional self-poisoning by drugs), X85 (assault by drug poisoning), Y10-Y14 (drug poisoning of undetermined intent), T40.5 (cocaine), T43.6 (psychostimulants with abuse potential)

Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), Epidemiology Section, Drug Surveillance Unit
<https://dph.georgia.gov/drug-surveillance-unit>