

# DRUG WAR FACTS

## Annual Causes of Death in the United States

<a href="#">Tobacco</a>	435,000 <sup>1</sup>
<a href="#">Poor Diet and Physical Inactivity</a>	365,000 <sup>1</sup>
<a href="#">Alcohol</a>	85,000 <sup>1</sup>
<a href="#">Microbial Agents</a>	75,000 <sup>1</sup>
<a href="#">Toxic Agents</a>	55,000 <sup>1</sup>
<a href="#">Motor Vehicle Crashes</a>	26,347 <sup>1</sup>
<a href="#">Adverse Reactions to Prescription Drugs</a>	32,000 <sup>2</sup>
<a href="#">Suicide</a>	30,622 <sup>3</sup>
<a href="#">Incidents Involving Firearms</a>	29,000 <sup>1</sup>
<a href="#">Homicide</a>	20,308 <sup>4</sup>
<a href="#">Sexual Behaviors</a>	20,000 <sup>1</sup>
<a href="#">All Illicit Drug Use, Direct and Indirect</a>	17,000 <sup>1,5</sup>
<a href="#">Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs Such As Aspirin</a>	7,600 <sup>6</sup>
<a href="#">Marijuana</a>	0 <sup>7</sup>

1. (2000): "The leading causes of death in 2000 were tobacco (435,000 deaths; 18.1% of total US deaths), poor diet and physical inactivity (400,000 deaths; 16.6%), and alcohol consumption (85,000 deaths; 3.5%). Other actual causes of death were microbial agents (75,000), toxic agents (55,000), motor vehicle crashes (43,000), incidents involving firearms (29,000), sexual behaviors (20,000), and illicit use of drugs (17,000)."

(Note: According to a correction published by the Journal on Jan. 19, 2005, "On page 1240, in Table 2, '400,000 (16.6)' deaths for 'poor diet and physical inactivity' in 2000 should be '365,000 (15.2)'. A dagger symbol should be added to 'alcohol consumption' in the body of the table and a dagger footnote should be added with 'in 1990 data, deaths from alcohol-related crashes are included in alcohol consumption deaths, but not in motor vehicle deaths. In 2000 data, 16,653 deaths from alcohol-related crashes are included in both alcohol consumption and motor vehicle death categories.'" Source: Journal of the American Medical Association, Jan. 19, 2005, Vol. 293, No. 3, p. 298.)

*Source: Mokdad, Ali H., PhD, James S. Marks, MD, MPH, Donna F. Stroup, PhD, MSc, Julie L. Gerberding, MD, MPH, "Actual Causes of Death in the United States, 2000," Journal of the American Medical Association, March 10, 2004, Vol. 291, No. 10, pp. 1238, 1241.*

2. (2000): "Illicit drug use is associated with suicide, homicide, motor-vehicle injury, HIV infection, pneumonia, violence, mental illness, and hepatitis. An estimated 3 million individuals in the United States have serious drug problems. Several studies have reported an undercount of the number of deaths attributed to drugs by vital statistics; however, improved medical treatments have reduced mortality from many diseases associated with illicit drug use. In keeping with the report by McGinnis and Foege, we included deaths caused indirectly by illicit drug use in this category. We used attributable fractions to compute the number of deaths due to illicit drug use. Overall, we estimate that illicit drug use resulted in approximately 17000 deaths in 2000, a reduction of 3000 deaths from the 1990 report."

*Source: Mokdad, Ali H., PhD, James S. Marks, MD, MPH, Donna F. Stroup, PhD, MSc, Julie L. Gerberding, MD, MPH, "Actual Causes of Death in the United States, 2000," Journal of the American Medical Association, March 10, 2004, Vol. 291, No. 10, p. 1242.*

3. (2003): The US Centers for Disease Control reports that in 2003, there were a total of 31,484 deaths from suicide in the US.

*Source: Hoyert, Donna L., PhD, Heron, Melonie P., PhD, Murphy, Sherry L., BS, Kung, Hsiang-Ching, PhD; Division of Vital Statistics, "Deaths: Final Data for 2003," National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 54, No. 13 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, April 19, 2006), p. 5, Table C.*

4. (2003): The US Centers for Disease Control reports that in 2003, there were a total of 17,732 deaths from homicide in the US.

*Source: Hoyert, Donna L., PhD, Heron, Melonie P., PhD, Murphy, Sherry L., BS, Kung, Hsiang-Ching, PhD; Division of Vital Statistics, "Deaths: Final Data for 2003," National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 54, No. 13 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, April 19, 2006), p. 5, Table C.*

5. (2003): "In 2003, a total of 28,723 persons died of drug-induced causes in the United States (Tables 21 and 22). The category 'drug-induced causes' includes not only deaths from dependent and nondependent use of drugs (legal and illegal use), but also poisoning from medically prescribed and other drugs. It excludes unintentional injuries, homicides, and other causes indirectly related to drug use. Also excluded are newborn deaths due to mother's drug use."

*Source: Hoyert, Donna L., PhD, Heron, Melonie P., PhD, Murphy, Sherry L., BS, Kung, Hsiang-Ching, PhD; Division of Vital Statistics, "Deaths: Final Data for 2003," National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 54, No. 13 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, April 19, 2006), p. 10.*

6. (2003): "In 2003, a total of 20,687 persons died of alcohol-induced causes in the United States (Tables 23 and 24). The category 'alcohol-induced causes' includes not only deaths from dependent and nondependent use of alcohol, but also accidental poisoning by alcohol. It excludes unintentional injuries, homicides, and other causes indirectly related to alcohol use as well as deaths due to fetal alcohol syndrome."

*Source: Hoyert, Donna L., PhD, Heron, Melonie P., PhD, Murphy, Sherry L., BS, Kung, Hsiang-Ching, PhD; Division of Vital Statistics, "Deaths: Final Data for 2003," National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 54, No. 13 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, April 19, 2006), p. 10.*

7. (1996): "Each year, use of NSAIDs (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs) accounts for an estimated 7,600 deaths and 76,000 hospitalizations in the United States." (NSAIDs include aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, diclofenac, ketoprofen, and tiaprofenic acid.)

*Source: Robyn Tamblyn, PhD; Laeora Berkson, MD, MHPE, FRCPC; W. Dale Jauphinee, MD, FRCPC; David Gayton, MD, PhD, FRCPC; Roland Grad, MD, MSc; Allen Huang, MD, FRCPC; Lisa Isaac, PhD; Peter McLeod, MD, FRCPC; and Linda Snell, MD, MHPE, FRCPC, "Unnecessary Prescribing of NSAIDs and the Management of NSAID-Related Gastropathy in Medical Practice," Annals of Internal Medicine (Washington, DC: American College of Physicians, 1997), September 15, 1997, 127:429-438, from the web at <http://www.acponline.org/journals/annals/15sep97/nsaid.htm>, last accessed Feb. 14, 2001, citing Fries, JF, "Assessing and understanding patient risk," Scandinavian Journal of Rheumatology Supplement, 1992;92:21-4.*

8. (Average 1982-1998): According to Canadian researchers, approximately 32,000 hospitalized patients (and possibly as many as 106,000) in the USA die each year because of adverse reactions to their prescribed medications.

*Source: Lazarou, J, Pomeranz, BH, Corey, PN, "Incidence of adverse drug reactions in hospitalized patients: a meta-analysis of prospective studies," Journal of the American Medical Association (Chicago, IL: American Medical Association, 1998), 1998;279:1200-1205, also letters column, "Adverse Drug Reactions in Hospitalized Patients," JAMA (Chicago, IL: AMA, 1998), Nov. 25, 1998,*

Vol. 280, No. 20, from the web at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v280n20/full/jlt1125-1.html>, last accessed Feb. 12, 2001.

9. An exhaustive search of the literature finds no credible reports of deaths induced by marijuana. The US Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) records instances of drug mentions in medical examiners' reports, and though marijuana is mentioned, it is usually in combination with alcohol or other drugs. Marijuana alone has not been shown to cause an overdose death.

Source: Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), available on the web at <http://www.samhsa.gov/>; also see Janet E. Joy, Stanley J. Watson, Jr., and John A. Benson, Jr., "Marijuana and Medicine: Assessing the Science Base," Division of Neuroscience and Behavioral Research, Institute of Medicine (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1999), available on the web at <http://www.nap.edu/html/marimed/>; and US Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, "In the Matter of Marijuana Rescheduling Petition" (Docket #86-22), September 6, 1988, p. 57.

*Your email address*

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