



Franklin County Forensic Science Center Office of the Coroner

2090 Frank Road Columbus, Ohio 43223
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Franklin County Ohio 2021 Drug Overdose Fatalities Data Brief

COLUMBUS, Ohio (August 8, 2022) - Franklin County experienced a significant number of overdose deaths for yet another year. During the past few years, the county has seen a dramatic increase in overdose deaths, which mirrors what is seen in several other counties across the United States. Our data brief is a short summary of the overdose deaths in Franklin County in 2021. Only cases with a precipitating incident occurring inside Franklin County are considered within this report. The statistics reported here do not necessarily agree with numbers reported within the data management system or local police agencies.

825 cases of overdose deaths were reported to the Franklin County Coroner's Office in 2021, a 4% decrease in the number of cases observed in 2020 (859) yet a 48% increase compared to 2019 (556). Franklin County observed an increase in overdose deaths from 2017 to 2020 which peaked in Q2 2020. Franklin County observed a decrease in overdose deaths from Q2 2020 to Q4 2020.

This report was funded through a grant received by Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Overdose Prevention (DOP), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC).

Source: Justice Trax 2020-2021 and MDILog 2021

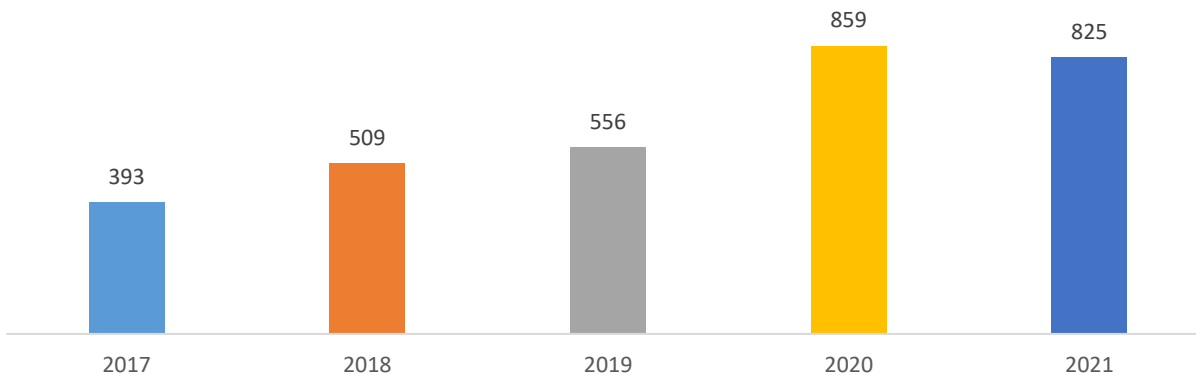




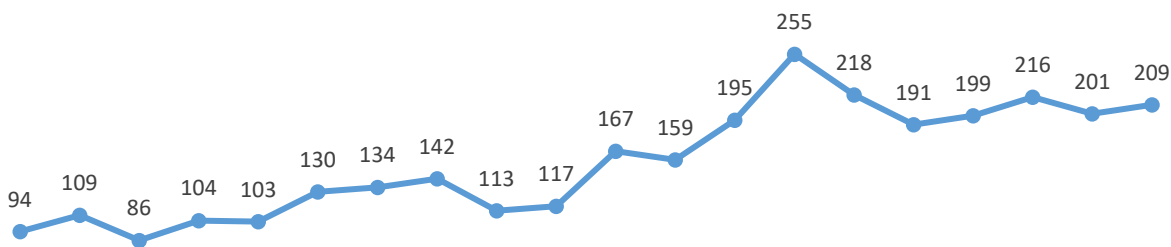
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Overdose Deaths by Years



Overdose Deaths by Quarters



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2017				2018				2019				2020				2021			

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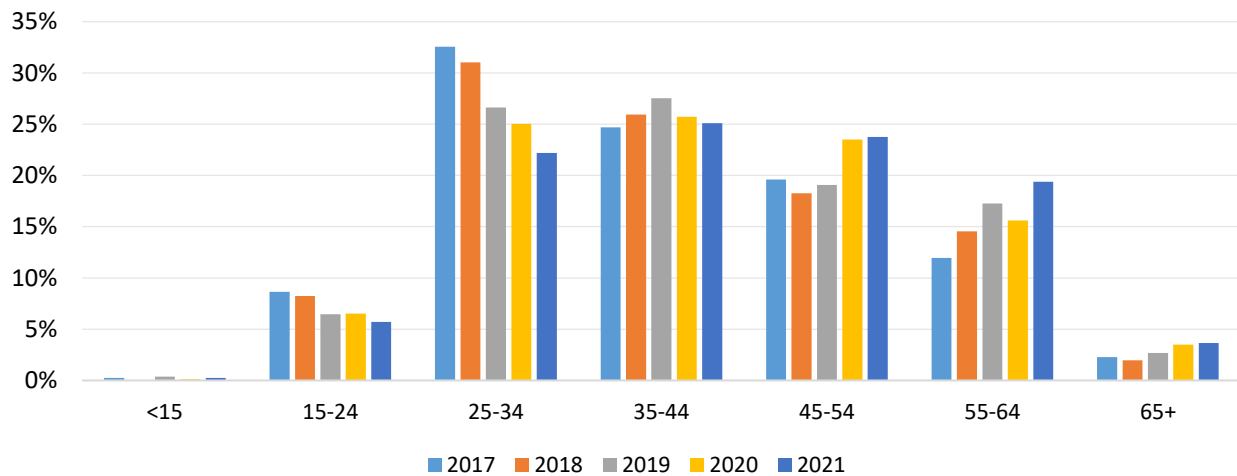
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Age and Gender

In 2021, Franklin County observed the most overdose deaths in the 35-44 age group, accounting for 25% of (207) overdose deaths, followed closely by the 45-54 and 25-34 age group, accounting for 24% (196) and 22% (183) of overdose deaths respectively.

From 2017 to 2021, Franklin County observed a decrease in overdose deaths among the 25-34 age group (33% to 22%) and the 15-24 age group (9% to 6%). Franklin County observed an increase in overdose deaths among the 45-54 age group (20% to 24%) and the 55-64 age group (12% to 19%).

Overdose Deaths by Age



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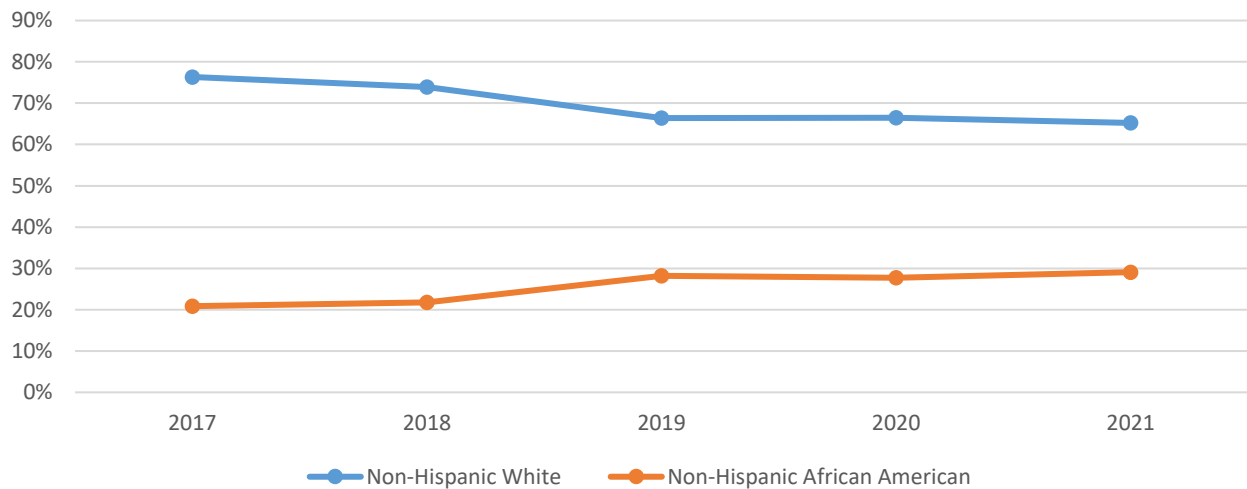
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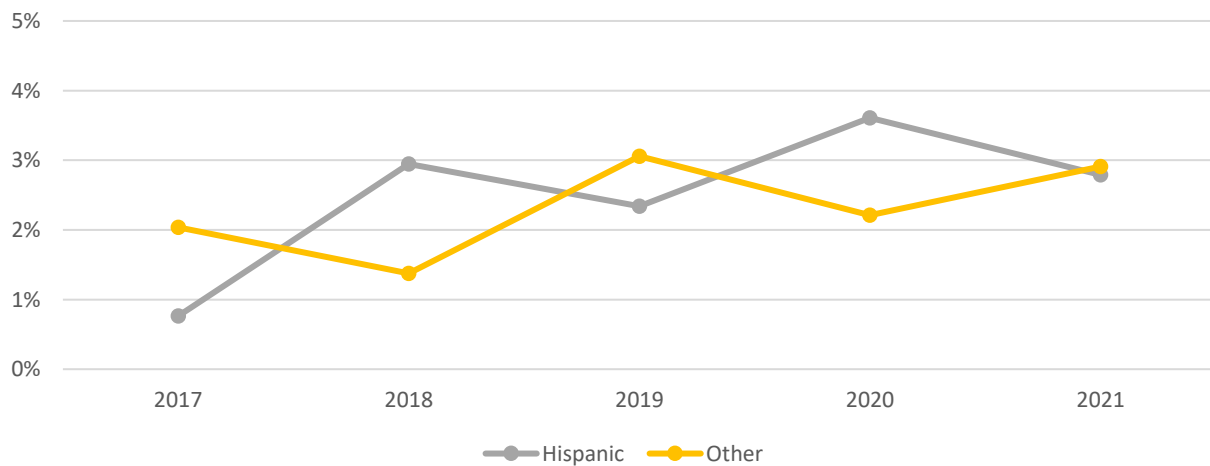
Race and Ethnicity

From 2017 to 2021, Franklin County overdose deaths were reported predominantly in decedents identified as male, about 70% were identified as male and 30% were identified as female. Franklin County observed the majority of overdose deaths in decedents identified as non-Hispanic White. However from 2017 to 2021 this population saw a decrease from 76% to 65%. Those who identified as non-Hispanic African American, increased from 21% to 29% from 2017 to 2021. A combination of those identified as Asian, Native American, or other communities falls under the “Other” category, accounting for 1% to 3% of the overdose deaths.

Overdose Deaths by Race



Overdose Deaths by Ethnicity



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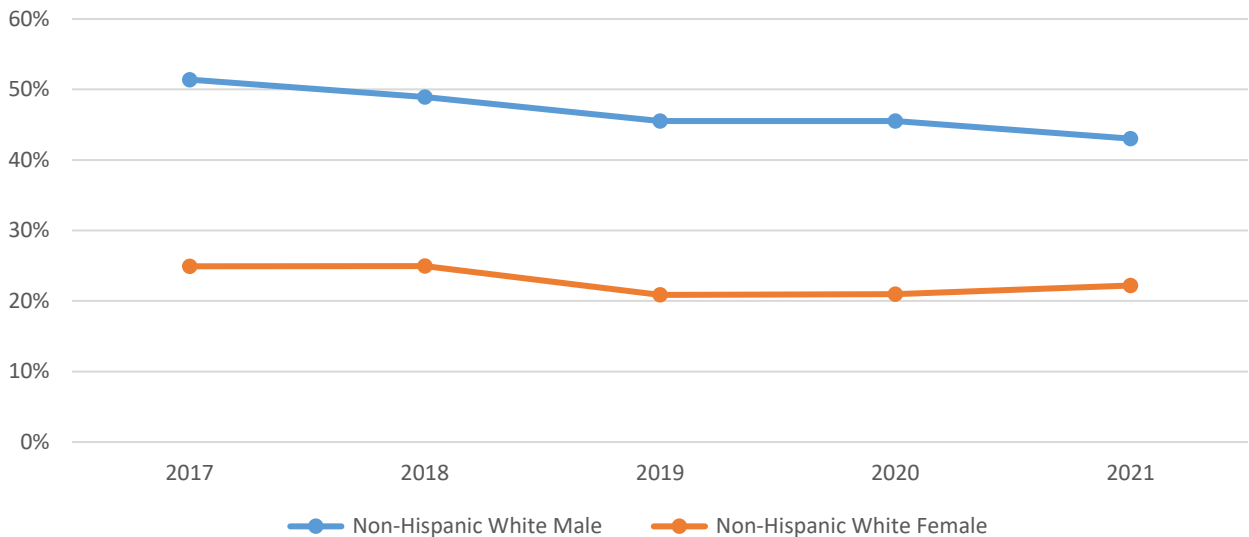
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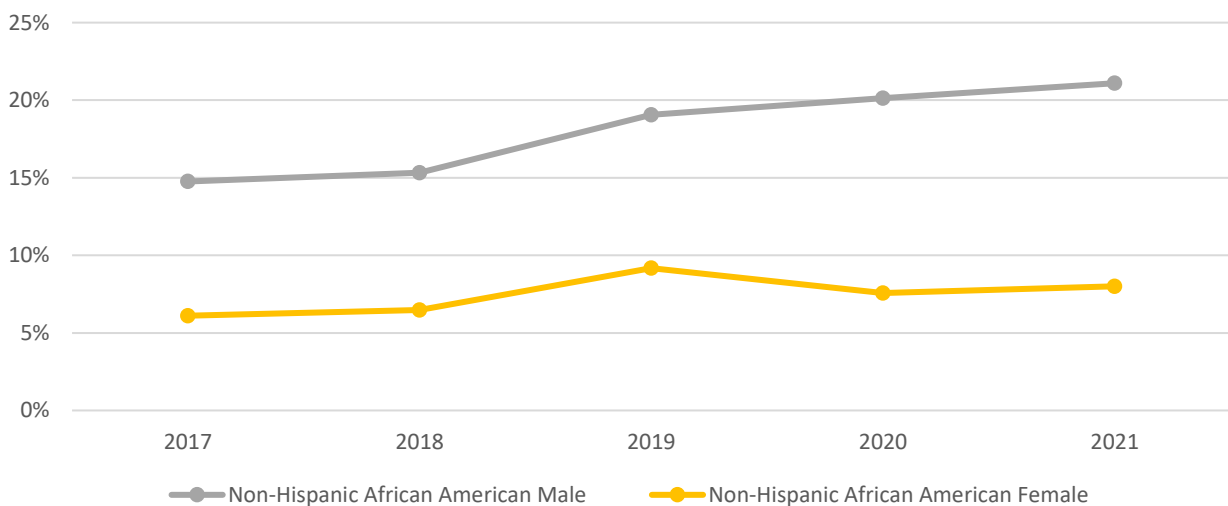
Race and Ethnicity – Cont.

Franklin County observed a decrease in overdose deaths among both non-Hispanic White males (51% to 43%) and in overdose deaths among non-Hispanic White females (25% to 22%). Franklin County observed an increase in non-Hispanic African American males (15% to 21%) and among non-Hispanic African American females (6% to 8%).

Overdose Deaths by Selected Race and Gender



Overdose Deaths by Selected Race and Gender



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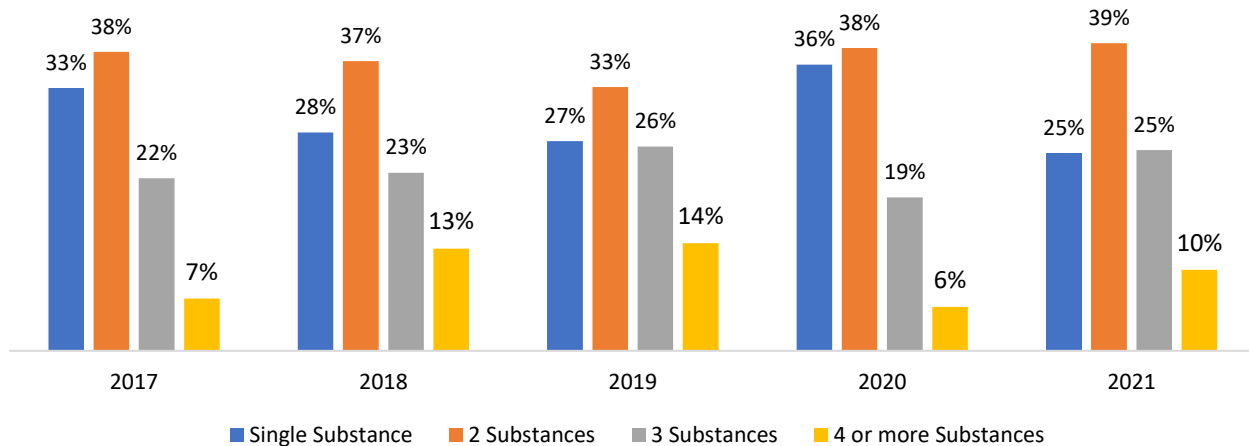
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Toxicology

From 2017 to 2021, Franklin County observed a decrease in single substance use among decedents (33% to 25%), followed by an increase in polysubstance use among decedents, with most overdose deaths involving 2 different substances, followed by overdose deaths involving 3 different substances. However from 2019 to 2020, Franklin County observed an increase in single substance use (27% to 36%) and decrease in use of 3 substances (26% to 19%) and 4 or more substances (14% to 6%) compared to previous years and 2021.

Overdose Deaths by Number of Substances Involved



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Source: Justice Trax 2020-2021 and MDILog 2021, Multiple drugs are usually involved in overdose deaths. Individual deaths may be reported in more than one category.





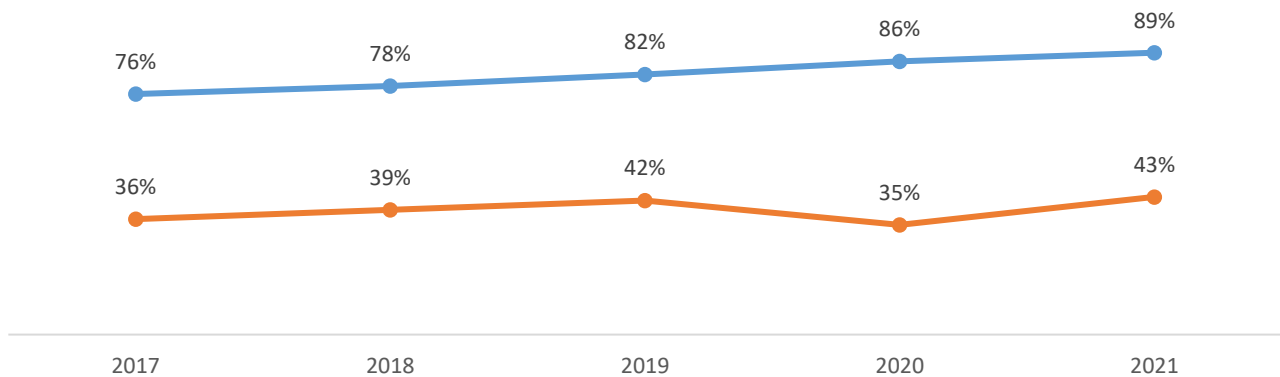
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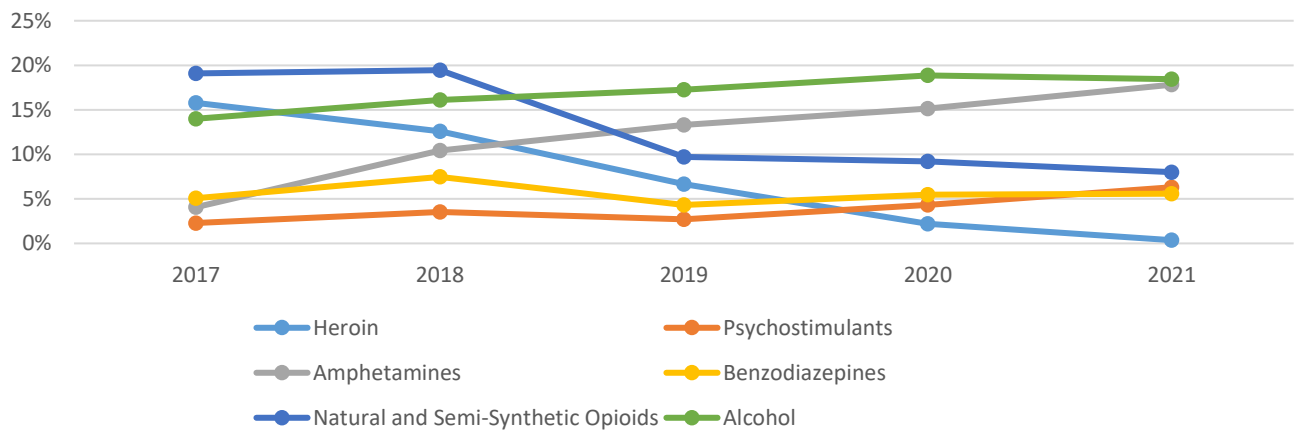
Toxicology – Cont.

From 2017 to 2021, Franklin County continues to observe an increase in overdose deaths involving fentanyl (76% to 89%), cocaine (36% to 43%), amphetamines (4% to 18%), and alcohol (14% to 18%). During this period Franklin County observed a decrease in overdose deaths involving both heroin (16% to 0%) and natural and semi-synthetic opioids (19% to 8%) (these include oxycodone, methadone, morphine, and other opioids excluding fentanyl and fentanyl derivatives). In Q2, Q3, and Q4 2021, Franklin County observed 0 overdose deaths involving heroin.

Overdose Deaths Involving Fentanyl



Overdose Deaths Involving Selected Substances Other than Fentanyl



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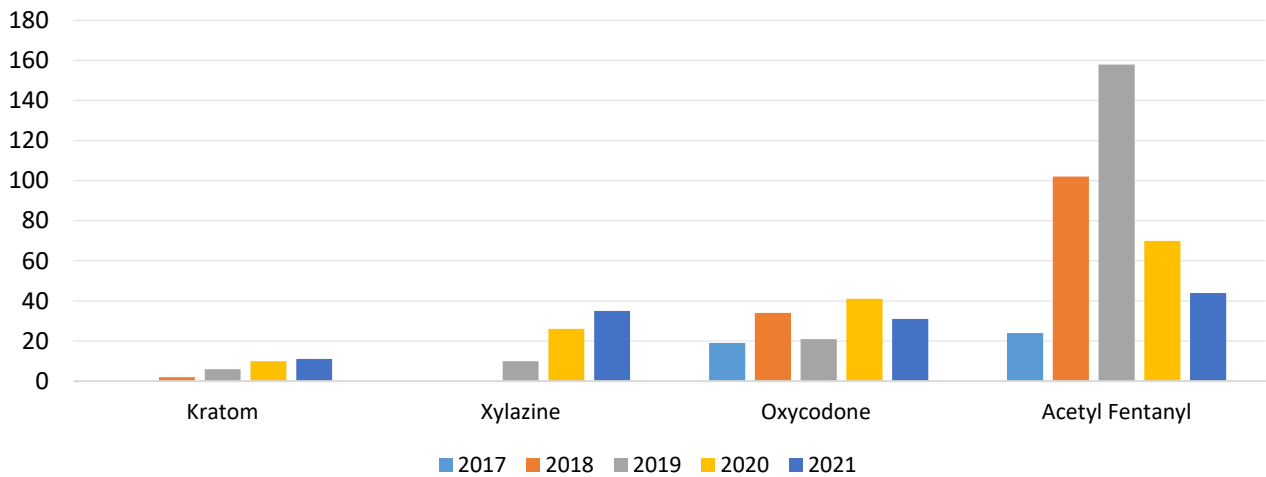
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Toxicology – Cont.

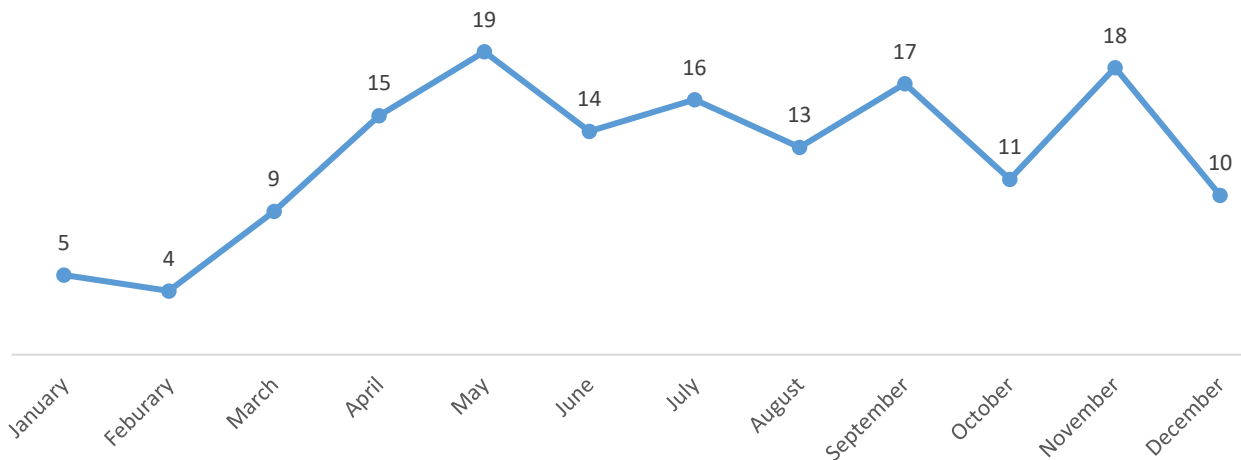
From 2017 to 2021, Franklin County continued to observe the involvement of kratom in overdose deaths. As of 2021, kratom is an unregulated substance within the state of Ohio. Franklin County also continued to observe an increase in involvement of xylazine (0 to 35) in Franklin County.

In 2021, Franklin County observed two derivatives of fentanyl involved in overdose deaths, acetyl fentanyl and fluorofentanyl. Franklin County observed continuous decreases in involvement of acetyl fentanyl from 2019 to 2021 (158 to 44). Franklin County observed an increase in overdose deaths involving fluorofentanyl in 2021. The first overdose death involving fluorofentanyl in our county was observed in late 2020, peaked in May 2021.

Overdose Deaths Involving Selected Substances



2021 Overdose Deaths Involving Fluorofentanyl



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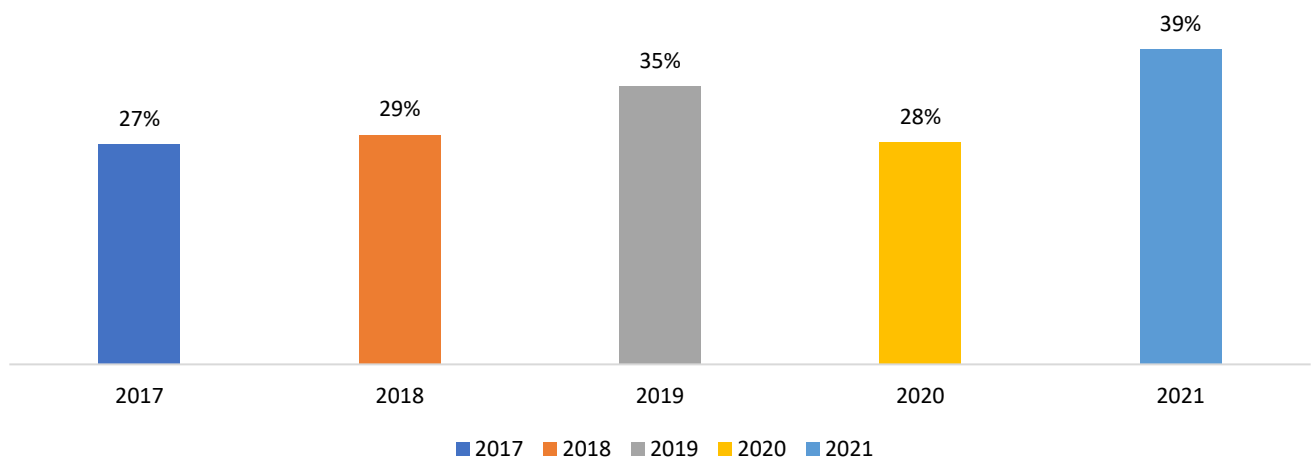
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Toxicology – Cont.

From 2017 to 2021, Franklin County observed an increase in overdose deaths involving both fentanyl and cocaine (27% to 39%) with a decrease from 2019 to 2020 (35% to 28%). Franklin County continues to observe increases in overdose deaths involving fentanyl and amphetamine (3% to 16%), overdose deaths involving fentanyl and alcohol (8% to 16%), overdose deaths involving cocaine and alcohol (5% to 11%), and overdose deaths involving cocaine, fentanyl, and alcohol (4% to 11%). Franklin County observed a decrease in overdose deaths involving fentanyl and natural and synthetic opioids (10% to 5%) and cocaine and natural and synthetic opioids (6% to 2%).

Overdose Deaths by Combine Usage of Cocaine and Fentanyl



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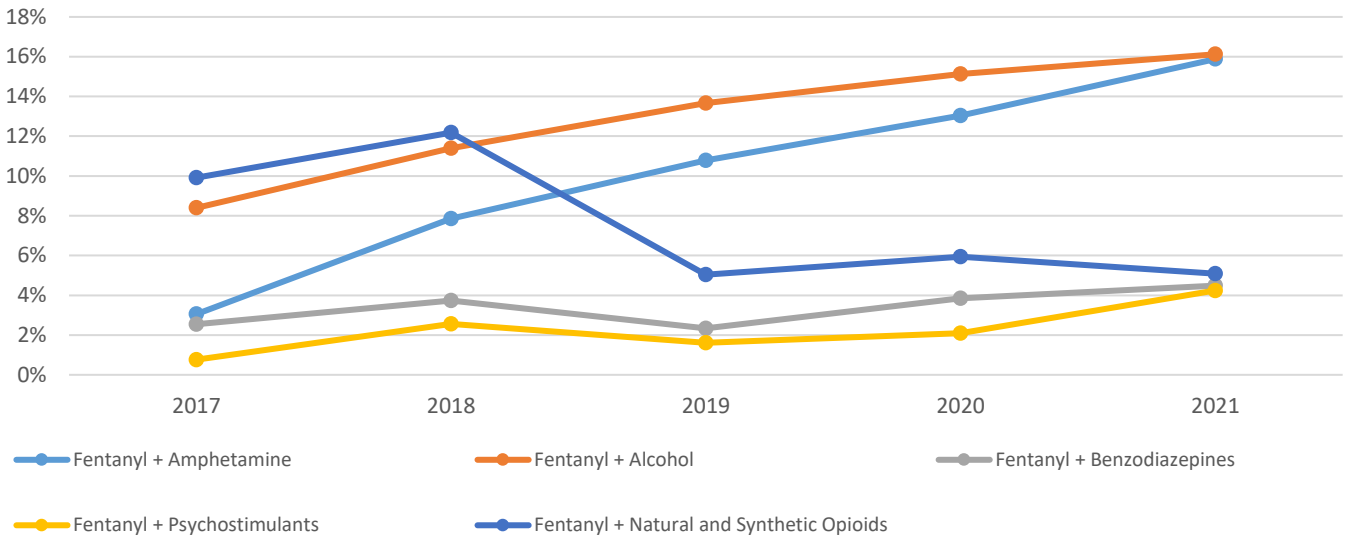


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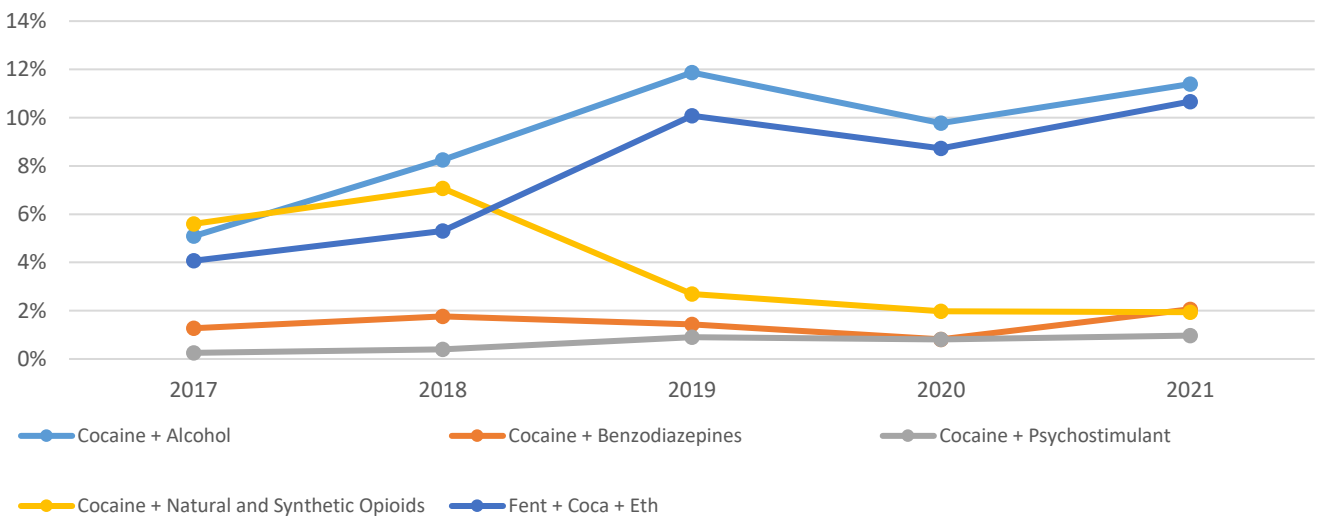
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Toxicology – Cont.

Overdose Deaths by Selected Combinations



Overdose Deaths by Selected Combinations



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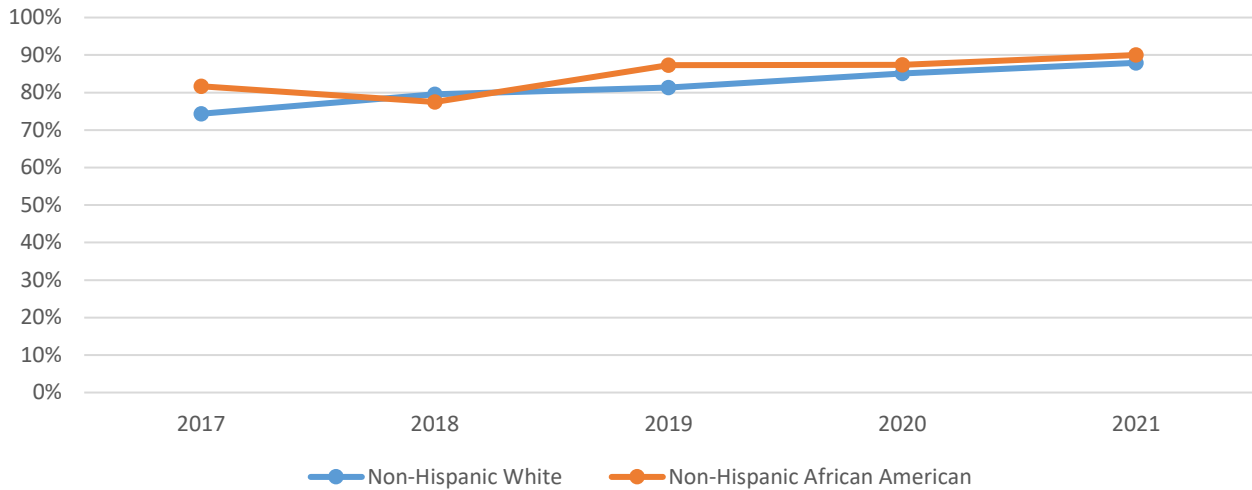
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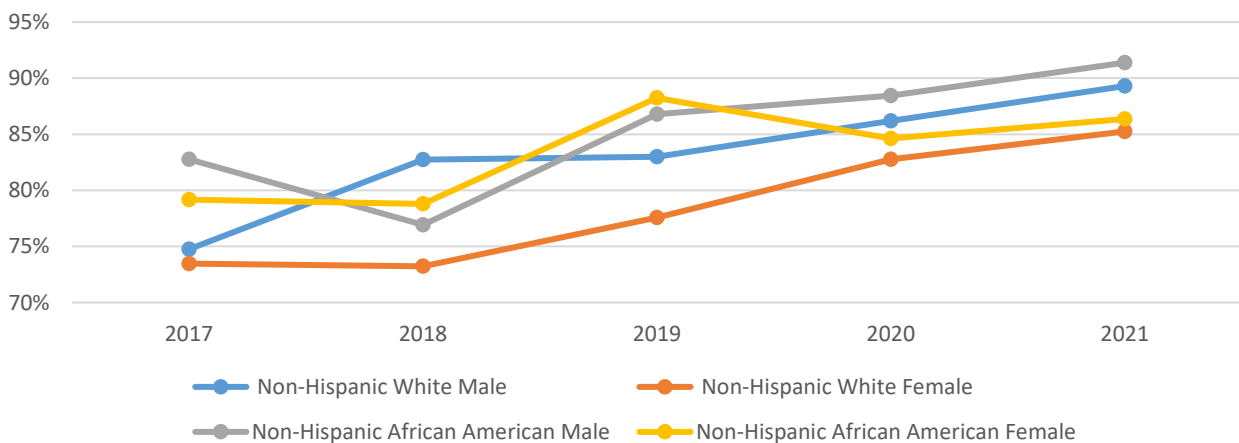
Toxicology and Demographic

From 2017 to 2021, Franklin County observed an increase in percentage of overdose deaths involving fentanyl among non-Hispanic Whites (74% to 88%) and among non-Hispanic African Americans (82% to 90%). Franklin County observed an increase in percentage of overdose deaths among non-Hispanic White males (83% to 89%), among non-Hispanic White females (78% to 85%), and among non-Hispanic African American males (87% to 91%). From 2017 to 2019, Franklin County observed an increase in percentage of overdose deaths among non-Hispanic African American females (79% to 88%), followed by a decrease in percentage of overdose deaths from 2019 to 2021 (88% to 86%).

Overdose Deaths Involving Fentanyl by Selected Race



Overdose Deaths Involving Fentanyl by Selected Race and Gender



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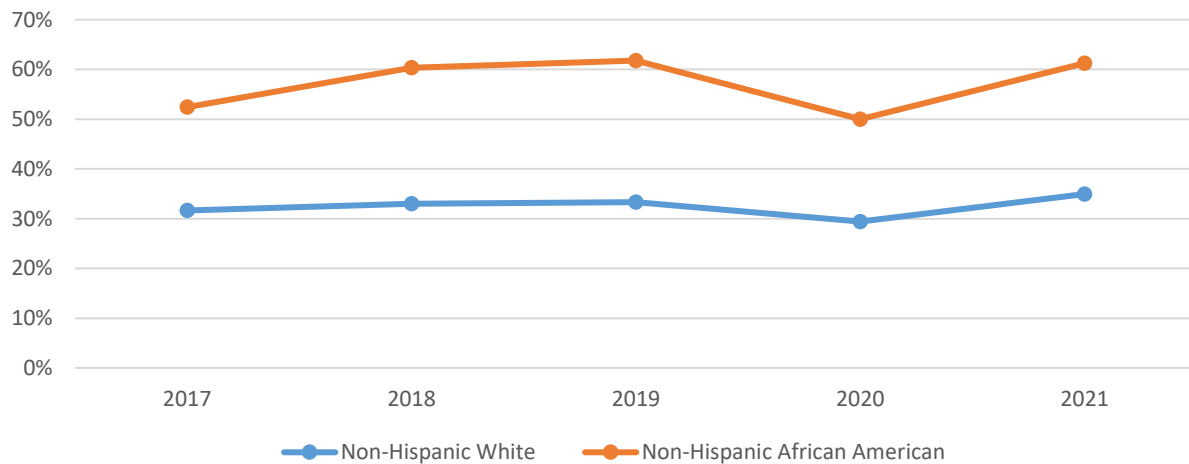
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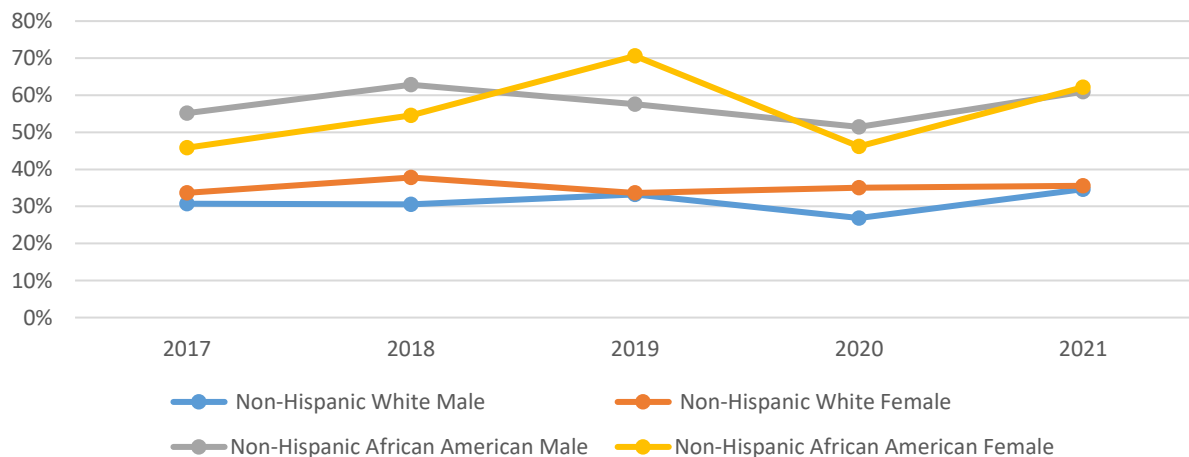
Toxicology and Demographic

From 2019 to 2021, Franklin County observed a higher percentage of overdose deaths involving cocaine among non-Hispanic African Americans compared to non-Hispanic Whites. Between 2017 and 2021, Franklin County observed a similar percentage of overdose deaths involving cocaine among both non-Hispanic White males and females. Franklin County observed an increase in percentage of overdose deaths involving cocaine among non-Hispanic African American males (55% to 61%). From 2017 to 2019, Franklin County observed an increase in percentage of overdose death among non-Hispanic African American females (46% to 71%), followed by a decrease from 2019 to 2020 (71% to 46%) and an increase from 2020 to 2021 (46% to 62%).

Overdose Deaths Involving Cocaine by Selected Race



Overdose Deaths Involving Cocaine by Selected Race and Gender



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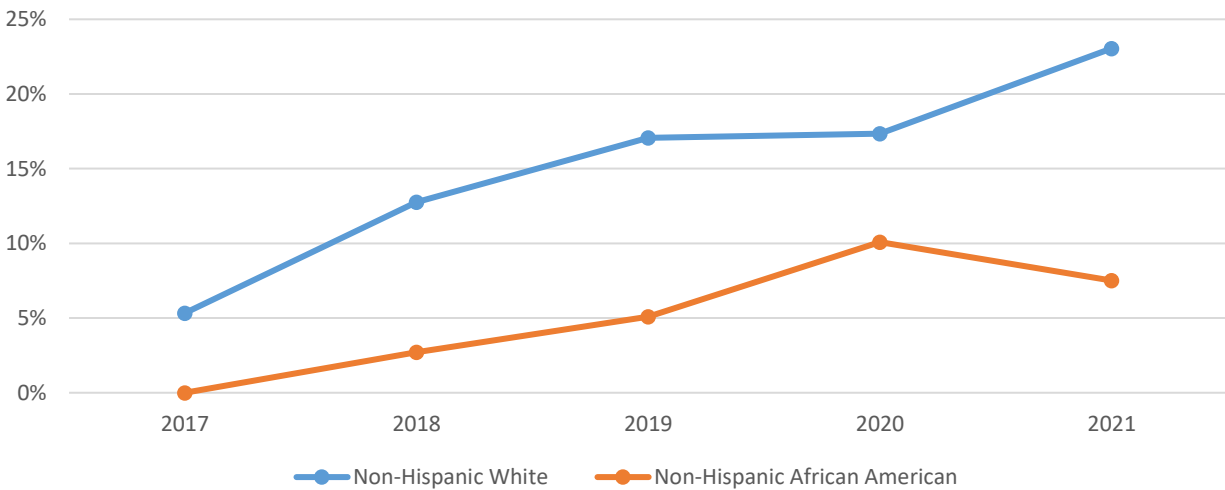
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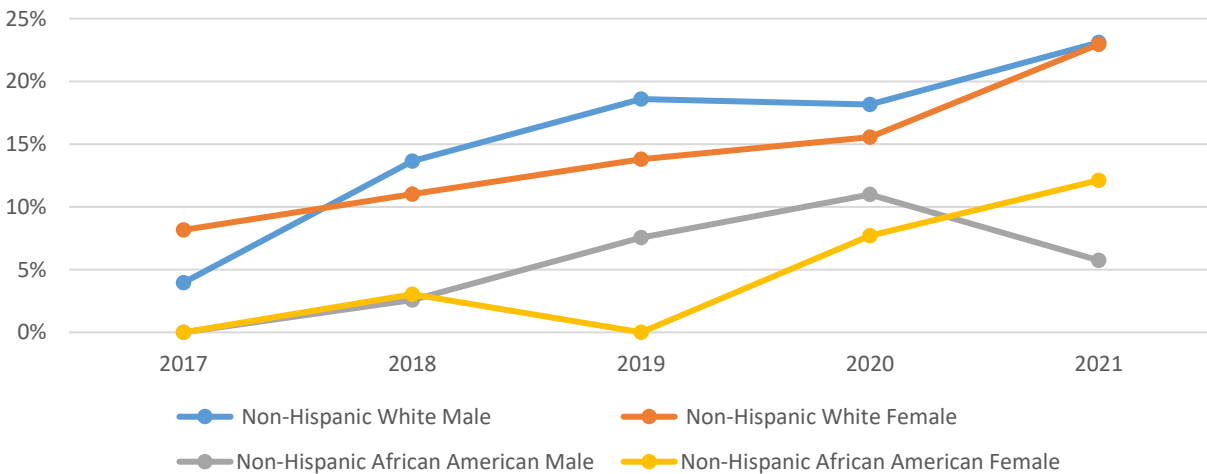
Toxicology and Demographic

From 2017 to 2021, Franklin County observed an increase in percentage of overdose deaths involving amphetamine among non-Hispanic Whites (5% to 23%) and among non-Hispanic African Americans (0% to 8%). Franklin County observed an increase in percentage of overdose deaths involving amphetamine among non-Hispanic White males (8% to 23%), non-Hispanic White females (4% to 23%), and non-Hispanic African American females (0% to 12%). Franklin County observed an increase in percentage of overdose deaths among non-Hispanic African American males from 2017 to 2020 (0% to 11%) and a decrease from 2020 to 2021 (11% to 6%).

Overdose Deaths Involving Amphetamine by Selected Race



Overdose Deaths Involving Amphetamine by Selected Race and Gender



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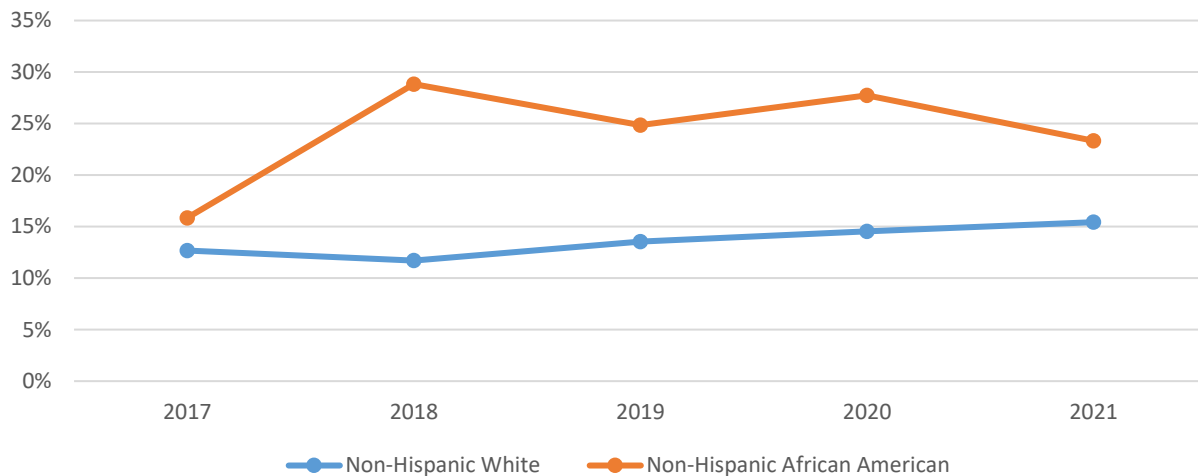
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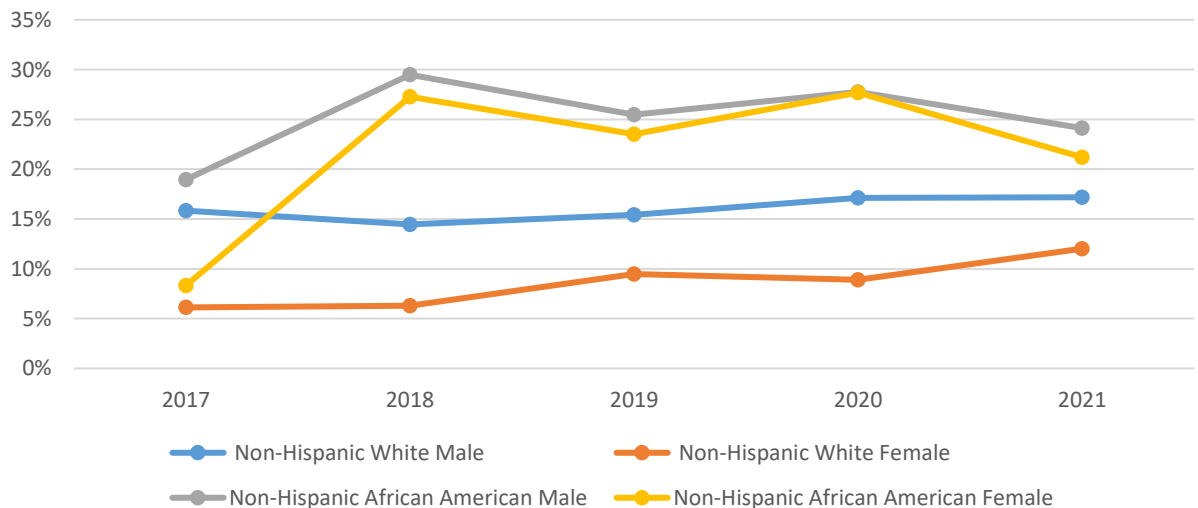
Toxicology and Demographic

From 2017 to 2021, Franklin County observed a higher percentage of overdose deaths involving alcohol among non-Hispanic African Americans compared to non-Hispanic Whites. Franklin County observed an increase in percentage of overdose deaths involving alcohol among non-Hispanic White females (6% to 12%). Franklin County observed an increase in percentage of overdose deaths involving alcohol among both non-Hispanic African American males (19% to 24%) and females (8% to 21%), with the highest increase in percentage observed in the 2017 to 2018 period for both males (19% to 29%) and females (8% to 27%).

Overdose Deaths Involving Alcohol by Selected Race



Overdose Deaths Involving Alcohol by Selected Race and Gender



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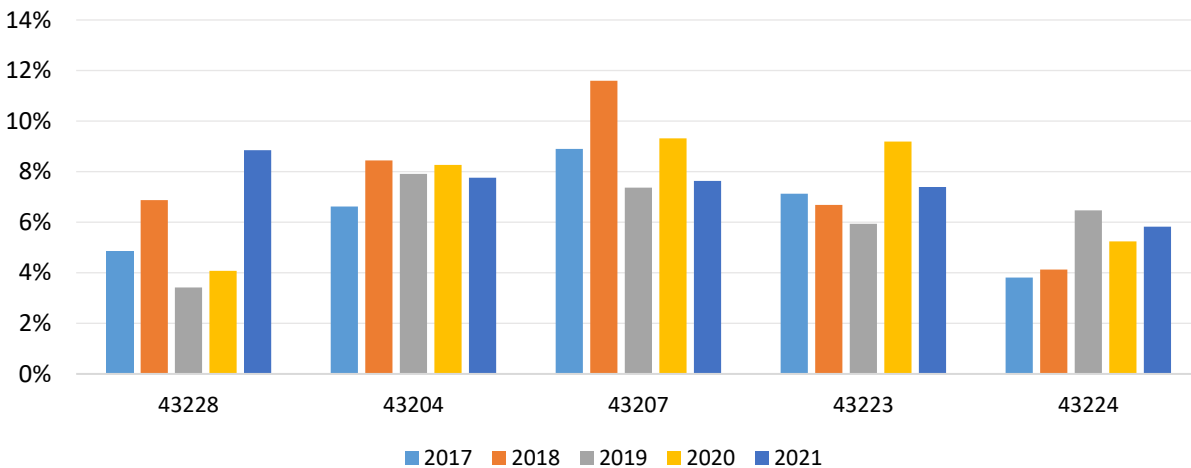
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Location and Homelessness

Between 2017 to 2021, Franklin County observed an increase in percentage of overdose deaths in the 43228 area (5% to 9%), with a decrease in percentage of overdose deaths from 2018 to 2019 (7% to 3%). Franklin County observed an increase in percentage of overdose deaths in the 43224 area (4% to 6%) with an increase in overdose deaths in 43207 area from 2017 to 2018 (9% to 12%) followed by a decrease from 2018 to 2019 (12% to 7%).

Between 2017 and 2021, Franklin County observed a continuous increase in overdose deaths among decedents identified as homeless, accounting for 2% of overdose deaths in 2017, 4% of overdose deaths in 2018, 2019, and 2020, and 5% overdose deaths in 2021. From 2019 to 2021, Franklin County observed a 76% (25 to 44) increase in overdose deaths among decedents identified as homeless, 44% increase from 2019 to 2020 (25 to 36), and 22% increase from 2020 to 2021 (36 to 44).

Overdose Deaths by Top 5 Locations



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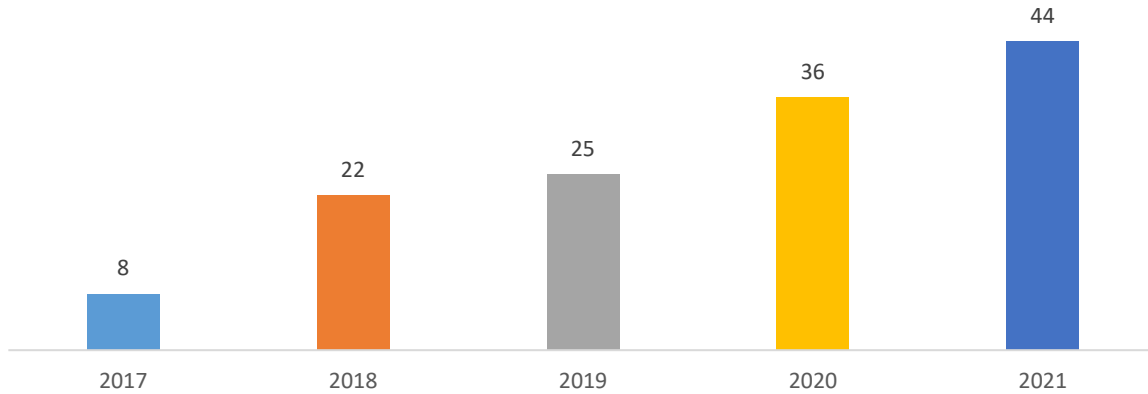




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Overdose Deaths By Homelessness



2020 Franklin County Overdose Heatmap

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