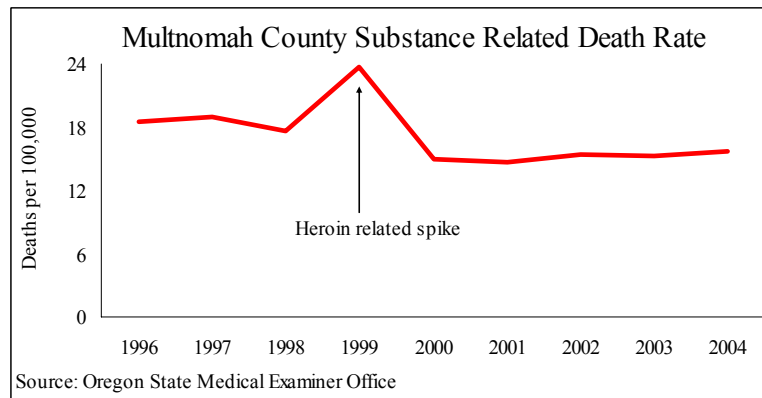
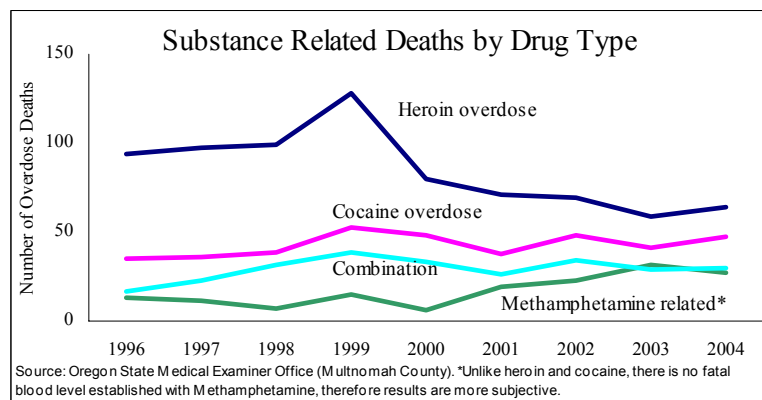


OVERDOSE TRENDS IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY—UPDATE

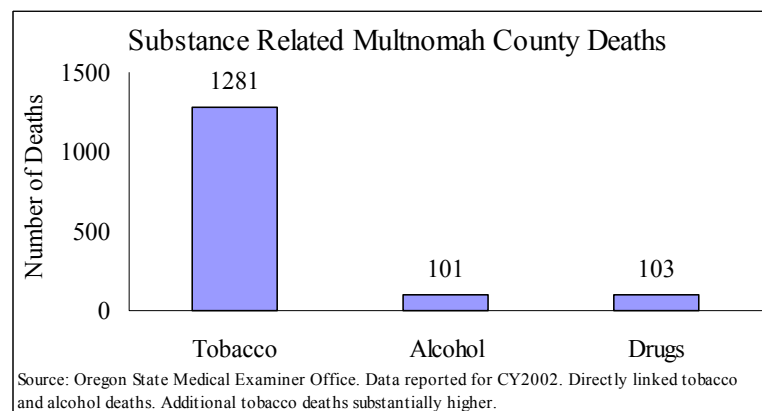
The following brief identifies the substance related overdoses in Multnomah County over the past decade. The data reported herein was made available by the State Medical Examiner's Office.¹ Results showed that overall overdose rates and totals have declined since 1996. However, the rate since 2000 increased slightly. Multnomah County had 108 reported overdose deaths in 2004, five more than in 2003.



Similar to a recent report, the type of substance related to overdoses has changed over the last few years.² While heroin was still the leading substance related to overdose deaths, it has been on the decline since 2000. All substances increased in 2004, except methamphetamines. Unlike heroin and cocaine, there is no fatal blood level established for methamphetamine, therefore results are more subjective.



To lend perspective to the number of drug deaths, the following chart shows the number of deaths directly due to tobacco and alcohol. Consistent with the recent Robert Wood Johnson report, the number of deaths due directly to tobacco were substantially higher than either drug or alcohol deaths.³ The number of alcohol related deaths was consistent with all drug overdose death combined.



¹ Source: Eugene Gray, Oregon State Medical Examiner Office (Multnomah County site).

² Caubet, S. & Nice, M. L. (2004). *Local Trends in Illicit Substance Use*. Budget Office

³ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2001). *Substance Abuse: The Nation's Number One Health Problem*. pg. 6.

The proportion of alcohol related deaths compared to drugs in Multnomah County was considerably lower than what was reported nationally in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation report.