

Additional notes on the new baseline definition

The new baseline covers the following cause of death categories (the relevant codes from the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD10), are given in brackets):

A

deaths where the underlying cause of death has been coded to the following sub-categories of 'mental and behavioural disorders due to psychoactive substance use':

- i opioids (F11);
- ii cannabinoids (F12);
- iii sedatives or hypnotics (F13);
- iv cocaine (F14);
- v other stimulants, including caffeine (F15);
- vi hallucinogens (F16); and
- vii multiple drug use and use of other psychoactive substances (F19).

B

deaths coded to the following categories **and** where a drug listed under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) was known to be present in the body at the time of death:

- i accidental poisoning (X40 – X44);
- ii intentional self-poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances (X60 – X64);
- iii assault by drugs, medicaments and biological substances (X85); and
- iv event of undetermined intent, poisoning (Y10 – Y14).

Categories of death excluded:

- a deaths coded to mental and behavioural disorders due to the use of alcohol (F10), tobacco (F17) and volatile substances (F18);
- b deaths coded to drug abuse which were caused by secondary infections and related complications (for example the 20 or so deaths in 2000 caused by *clostridium novyi* infection);
- c deaths from AIDS where the risk factor was believed to be the sharing of needles;
- d deaths from road traffic and other accidents which occurred under the influence of drugs; and
- e deaths where a drug listed under the Misuse of Drugs Act was present because it was part of a compound analgesic or cold remedy: specific examples are:
 - Co-proxamol: paracetamol, dextropropoxyphene
 - Co-dydramol: paracetamol, dihydrocodeine
 - Co-codamol: paracetamol, codeine sulphate

All three of these compound analgesics, but particularly co-proxamol, are commonly used in suicidal overdoses.

Note: As it is believed that dextropropoxyphene is rarely if ever available other than as a constituent of a paracetamol compound, it has been ignored on all occasions (even if there is no mention of a compound analgesic or paracetamol). However, deaths involving codeine or dihydrocodeine without mention of paracetamol have been included in the baseline as these drugs are routinely available on their own and known to be abused in this form.