

SOUTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

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# Drug Overdose Deaths South Carolina

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2021

*Updated as of 3/15/2023*





## INTRODUCTION

This report describes fatal drug overdose deaths that occurred in South Carolina in 2021. Data were derived from death certificates registered with the Department of Health and Environmental Control Vital Statistics and represent deaths that occurred in the state of South Carolina regardless of the residence of the decedent.

Drug overdose deaths are identified using underlying cause-of-death codes from the tenth revision of ICD (ICD–10): X40–X44 (unintentional), X60–X64 (suicide), X85 (homicide), and Y10–Y14 (undetermined). Drug overdose deaths involving selected drug categories are identified by additional multiple cause-of-death codes. The current "prescription drugs" category includes both opioid and non-opioid prescription drugs. The category "opioids" includes both legal and illegal opioids. Prescription drugs are identified by the following ICD-10 codes: T36.0--T39.9, T40.2--T40.4, T41.0--T43.5 and T43.7--T50.8. Opioids are identified by codes T40.0--T40.4, T40.6. Other codes used are: heroin T40.1, methadone T40.3, cocaine T40.5. Fentanyl is identified through a search of the literal cause of death. Psychostimulants with abuse potential, which include such drugs as methamphetamine, amphetamine, methylphenidate (Ritalin), and 3,4-methylenedioxy-methamphetamine (MDMA, Ecstasy) are identified by the code T43.6.

Drug overdose deaths may involve multiple drugs; therefore, a single death might be included in more than one category when describing the number of drug overdose deaths involving a specific drug. For example, a death that involved both heroin and fentanyl would be included in the following categories: deaths involving heroin, deaths involving fentanyl, deaths involving opioids, and deaths involving prescription drugs.



Figure 1.  
 Number of Drug Overdose Deaths by Intent  
 South Carolina, 2012-2021  
 Occurrence Data

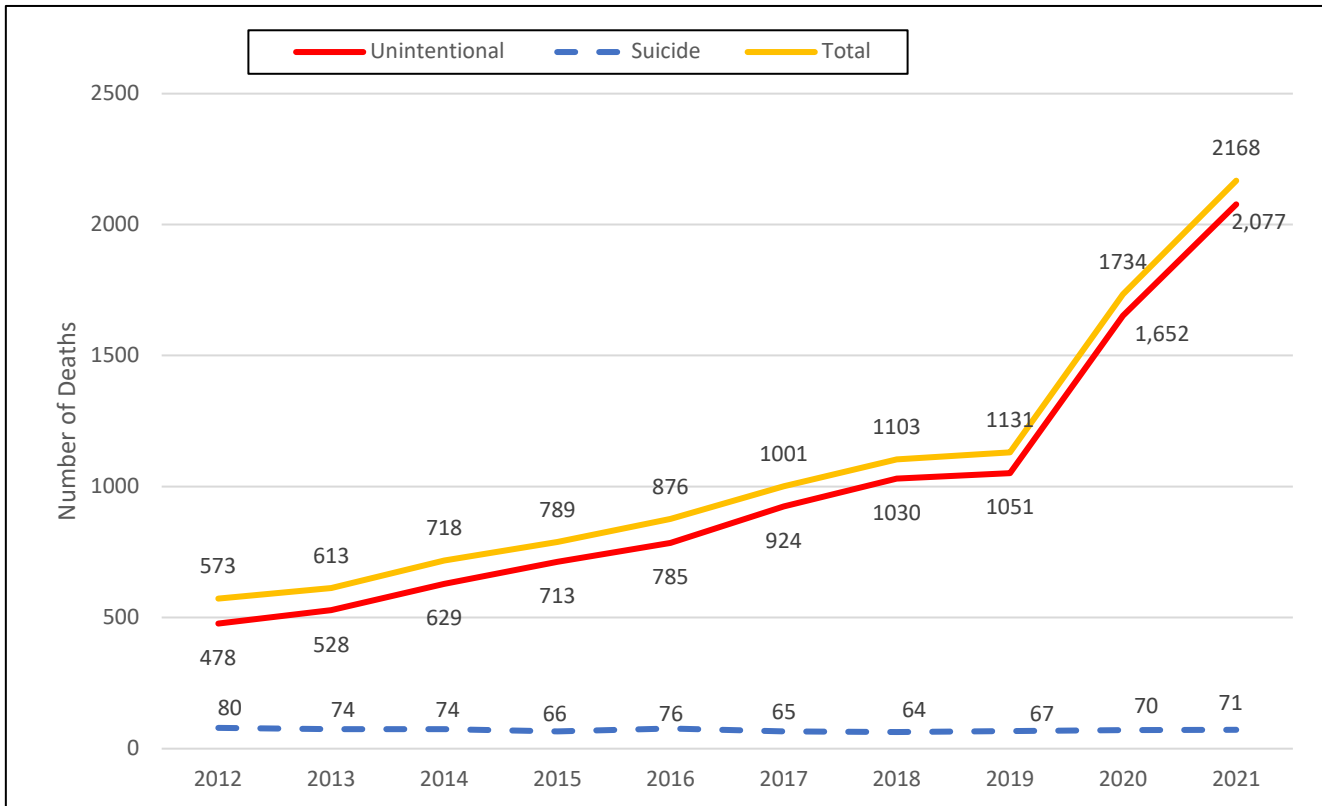


Table 1.  
 Number of Drug Overdose Deaths by Intent  
 South Carolina, 2012-2021  
 Occurrence Data

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Total</b>	573	613	718	789	876	1,001	1,103	1,131	1,734	2,168
<b>Unintentional</b>	478	528	629	713	785	924	1,030	1,051	1,652	2,077
<b>Suicide</b>	80	74	74	66	76	65	64	67	70	71
<b>Homicide</b>	1	0	3	0	3	1	3	0	1	9
<b>Undetermined</b>	14	11	12	10	12	11	6	13	11	11

Table 2.  
 Number of Drug Overdose Deaths by Category and Selected Drugs  
 South Carolina, 2017-2021  
 Occurrence Data

Year	Total Drug Overdose	Prescription Drugs	Opioids	Psychostimulants with Abuse Potential	Fentanyl	Heroin	Methadone	Cocaine
2017	1,001	782	748	194	362	144	45	235
2018	1,103	863	816	242	460	168	57	254
2019	1,131	923	876	338	537	196	28	230
2020	1,734	1,463	1,400	551	1,100	244	46	352
2021	2,168	1,853	1,733	778	1,494	136	69	446

Figure 2.  
 Number of Drug Overdose Deaths by Drug Category  
 South Carolina, 2017-2021  
 Occurrence Data

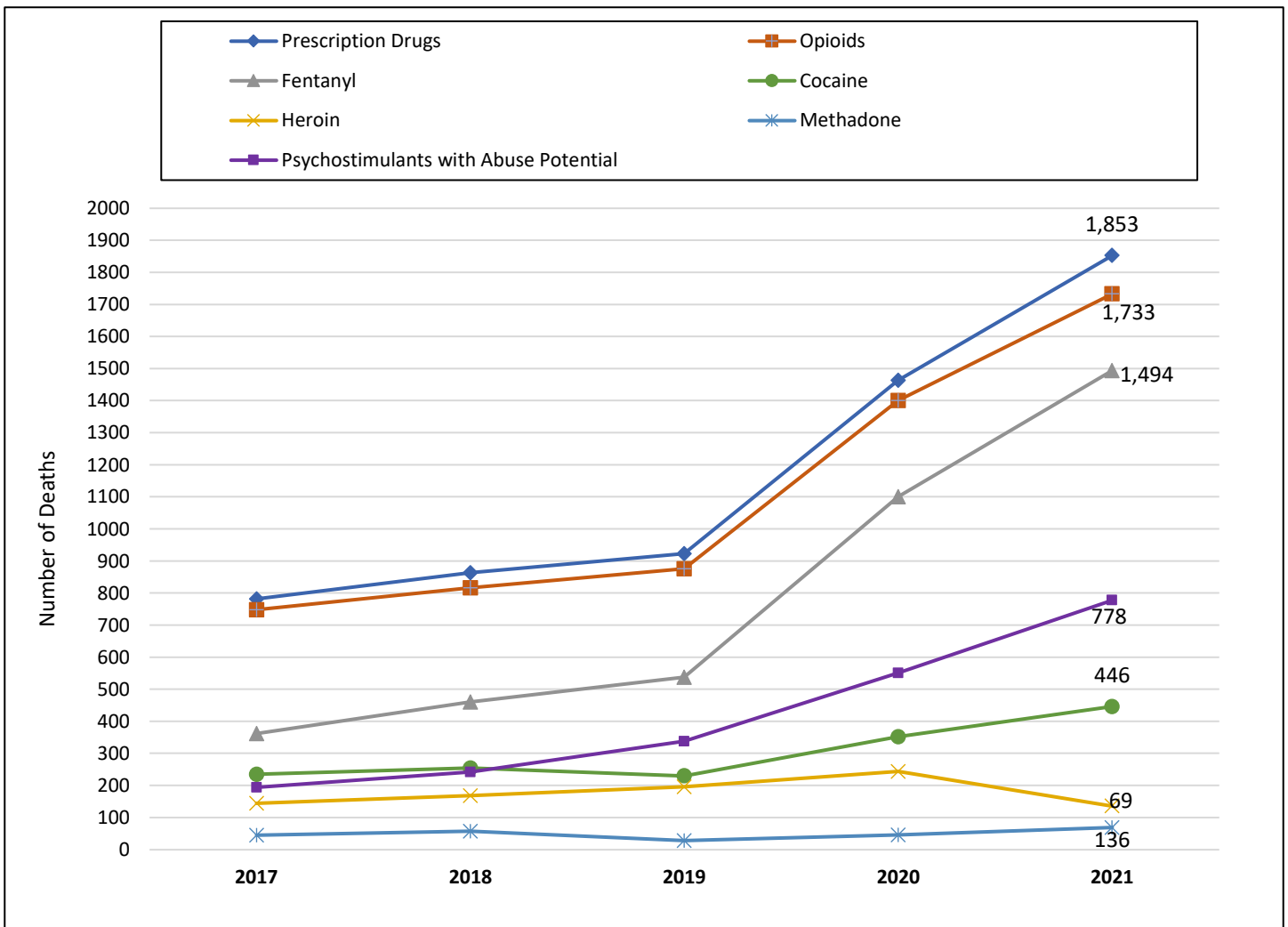


Table 3. A  
Drug Overdose Deaths by Drug Category and County  
South Carolina, 2021  
Occurrence Data

County of Death	Total Drug Overdose		Prescription Drugs		Opioids		Psychostimulants with Abuse Potential	
	Number	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Number	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Number	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Number	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<b>South Carolina</b>	2,168	43.4	1,853	37.6	1,733	35.5	778	16.3
Abbeville	7	35.7	7	35.7	7	35.7	4	21.6
Aiken	85	51.9	76	46.5	75	45.8	33	20.5
Allendale	3	26.1	2	19.9	2	19.9	1	13.8
Anderson	70	34.2	42	22.1	45	23.2	39	18.4
Bamberg	1	9.1	1	9.1	1	9.1	1	9.1
Barnwell	10	53.7	8	43.5	8	43.5	3	18.6
Beaufort	49	29.9	45	27.5	40	24.9	9	6.6
Berkeley	70	30.4	67	29.3	64	27.8	30	12.9
Calhoun	3	25.0	3	25.0	3	25.0	1	10.6
Charleston	201	46.0	164	37.8	156	36.1	47	11.4
Cherokee	10	16.4	7	11.6	5	8.5	6	9.7
Chester	13	46.9	11	40.3	11	40.3	5	16.7
Chesterfield	17	43.5	16	40.0	16	40.0	2	6.9
Clarendon	11	43.8	9	34.8	9	34.8	5	20.3
Colleton	11	32.3	7	20.2	7	20.0	3	9.8
Darlington	14	19.9	13	18.9	13	18.9	4	6.9
Dillon	16	69.8	16	69.8	16	69.8	7	30.8
Dorchester	36	22.3	34	21.2	30	18.5	18	11.4
Edgefield	5	21.2	4	17.3	4	17.3	1	3.9
Fairfield	3	19.7	3	19.7	3	19.7	-	-
Florence	66	53.5	57	46.2	57	46.6	26	20.5
Georgetown	38	70.2	34	64.2	32	59.8	10	23.1
Greenville	270	51.3	230	44.4	213	41.6	135	26.5
Greenwood	40	66.8	37	61.6	36	60.6	16	27.8
Hampton	3	18.7	3	18.7	3	18.7	1	7.6
Horry	272	87.3	248	79.3	212	68.9	83	28.4
Jasper	13	45.1	11	39.3	11	39.3	5	21.0
Kershaw	28	42.8	23	36.0	21	33.6	11	16.8
Lancaster	51	54.4	49	52.1	49	52.1	15	16.7
Laurens	31	48.3	25	40.2	24	39.5	15	24.3
Lee	4	24.3	3	20.6	3	20.6	1	8.4
Lexington	106	36.2	95	32.4	85	29.4	53	18.2
McCormick	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marion	6	28.9	5	23.9	6	28.9	1	5.0
Marlboro	4	18.3	4	18.3	4	18.3	1	4.9
Newberry	11	29.3	9	24.4	8	22.8	1	1.4
Oconee	30	40.9	22	28.3	24	31.8	11	16.2
Orangeburg	37	46.3	17	22.7	16	21.3	10	14.6
Pickens	55	47.5	46	39.3	41	35.7	23	20.4
Richland	137	33.6	110	27.5	98	24.6	36	9.1
Saluda	1	5.7	1	5.7	1	5.7	1	5.7
Spartanburg	153	45.9	131	39.8	129	39.4	62	19.2
Sumter	29	29.7	26	26.9	24	25.3	9	9.3
Union	15	61.6	14	57.7	13	53.8	3	13.3
Williamsburg	18	61.6	11	43.0	11	43.0	2	7.7
York	115	39.9	107	37.2	97	34.3	28	10.0

<sup>1</sup>Age-adjusted rate per 100,000 population. Rates calculated with 20 or fewer deaths are unreliable and should be used cautiously.

\*A previous version of this table showed incorrect numbers for drug overdose age-adjusted rate from Abbeville county to Calhoun county. The error has been corrected as of 3/15/2023.

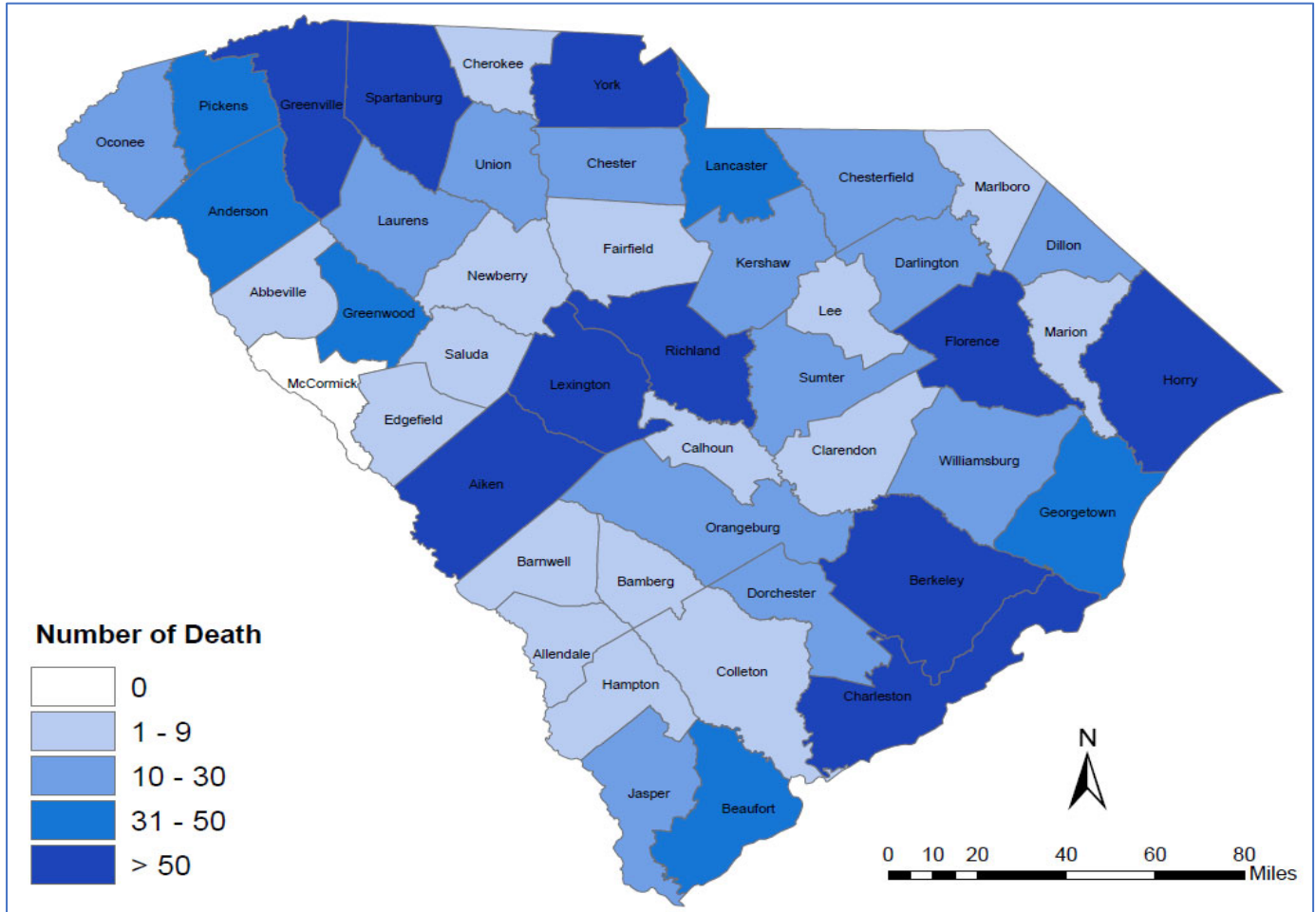
Table 3. B  
Drug Overdose Deaths by Selected Drugs and County  
South Carolina, 2021  
Occurrence Data

County of Death	Fentanyl		Heroin		Methadone		Cocaine	
	Number	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Number	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Number	Rate <sup>1</sup>	Number	Rate <sup>1</sup>
<b>South Carolina</b>	1,494	30.9	136	2.7	69	1.3	446	8.7
Abbeville	6	31.2	-	-	1	4.5	-	-
Aiken	67	41.2	6	3.4	2	1.3	12	7.5
Allendale	2	19.9	1	6.1	-	-	3	26.1
Anderson	30	16.2	7	3.5	4	1.8	10	4.8
Bamberg	1	9.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barnwell	7	36.0	1	3.0	-	-	1	2.7
Beaufort	35	21.6	4	3.0	-	-	7	3.9
Berkeley	60	26.1	3	1.4	-	-	16	7.1
Calhoun	2	21.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Charleston	139	32.2	17	3.7	5	1.0	54	12.2
Cherokee	4	6.7	-	-	1	1.8	2	3.6
Chester	10	37.0	-	-	-	-	1	3.7
Chesterfield	14	37.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Clarendon	6	25.1	-	-	-	-	2	9.9
Colleton	6	18.7	1	1.3	-	-	2	5.9
Darlington	6	9.9	-	-	4	5.2	1	1.0
Dillon	15	64.9	-	-	1	3.9	6	27.7
Dorchester	23	14.3	3	1.9	-	-	7	4.0
Edgefield	4	17.3	1	3.9	-	-	1	3.8
Fairfield	3	19.7	-	-	-	-	1	6.0
Florence	42	34.2	3	2.4	3	1.8	15	12.7
Georgetown	26	52.7	5	6.8	1	1.8	6	10.4
Greenville	194	38.0	16	3.1	8	1.4	47	8.5
Greenwood	32	53.8	-	-	5	7.8	2	3.7
Hampton	1	7.6	1	7.6	1	3.5	2	11.1
Horry	188	61.3	3	1.0	6	2.0	93	29.0
Jasper	10	35.3	1	4.0	-	-	5	15.8
Kershaw	21	33.6	-	-	-	-	3	2.6
Lancaster	48	50.9	4	4.0	1	1.2	4	4.0
Laurens	17	29.4	1	1.6	-	-	2	3.0
Lee	3	20.6	-	-	-	-	3	15.8
Lexington	76	26.7	9	3.1	3	0.9	12	4.1
McCormick	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marion	5	23.9	1	5.0	-	-	2	10.0
Marlboro	4	18.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newberry	6	17.2	-	-	1	2.8	1	3.5
Oconee	16	22.4	5	7.1	1	1.5	1	2.0
Orangeburg	13	18.3	2	2.2	-	-	16	20.7
Pickens	31	27.0	1	0.9	2	2.4	5	3.2
Richland	82	20.8	9	2.3	4	1.0	47	11.6
Saluda	1	5.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spartanburg	105	32.4	25	7.9	6	1.7	21	5.7
Sumter	23	24.0	1	0.9	3	3.1	7	6.4
Union	10	43.9	-	-	1	2.1	2	7.8
Williamsburg	11	43.0	2	8.7	-	-	11	35.4
York	89	31.8	3	1.2	5	1.9	13	4.3

<sup>1</sup>Age-adjusted rate per 100,000 population. Rates calculated with 20 or fewer deaths are unreliable and should be used cautiously.

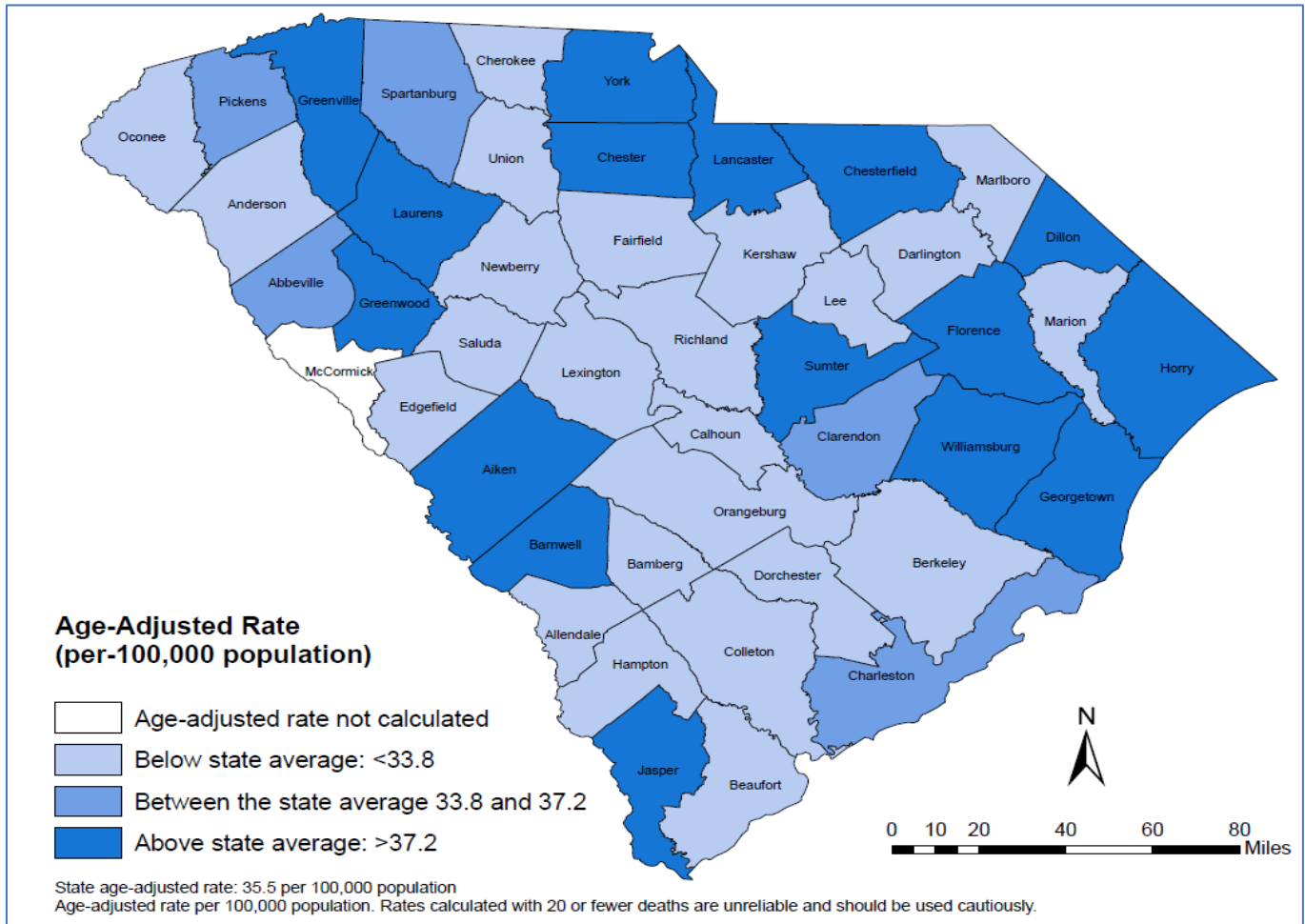


Figure 3.  
 Number of Opioid-Involved Overdose Deaths by County  
 South Carolina, 2021  
 Occurrence Data



\*A previous version of this map showed incorrect numbers for Marion and McCormick Counties. The numbers reported were reversed. The error has been corrected as of 2/15/2023.

Figure 4.  
 Age-Adjusted Rate for Opioid-Involved Overdose Deaths by County  
 South Carolina, 2021  
 Occurrence Data



\*A previous version of this map showed incorrect numbers for Marion and McCormick Counties. The numbers reported were reversed. The error has been corrected as of 2/15/2023.

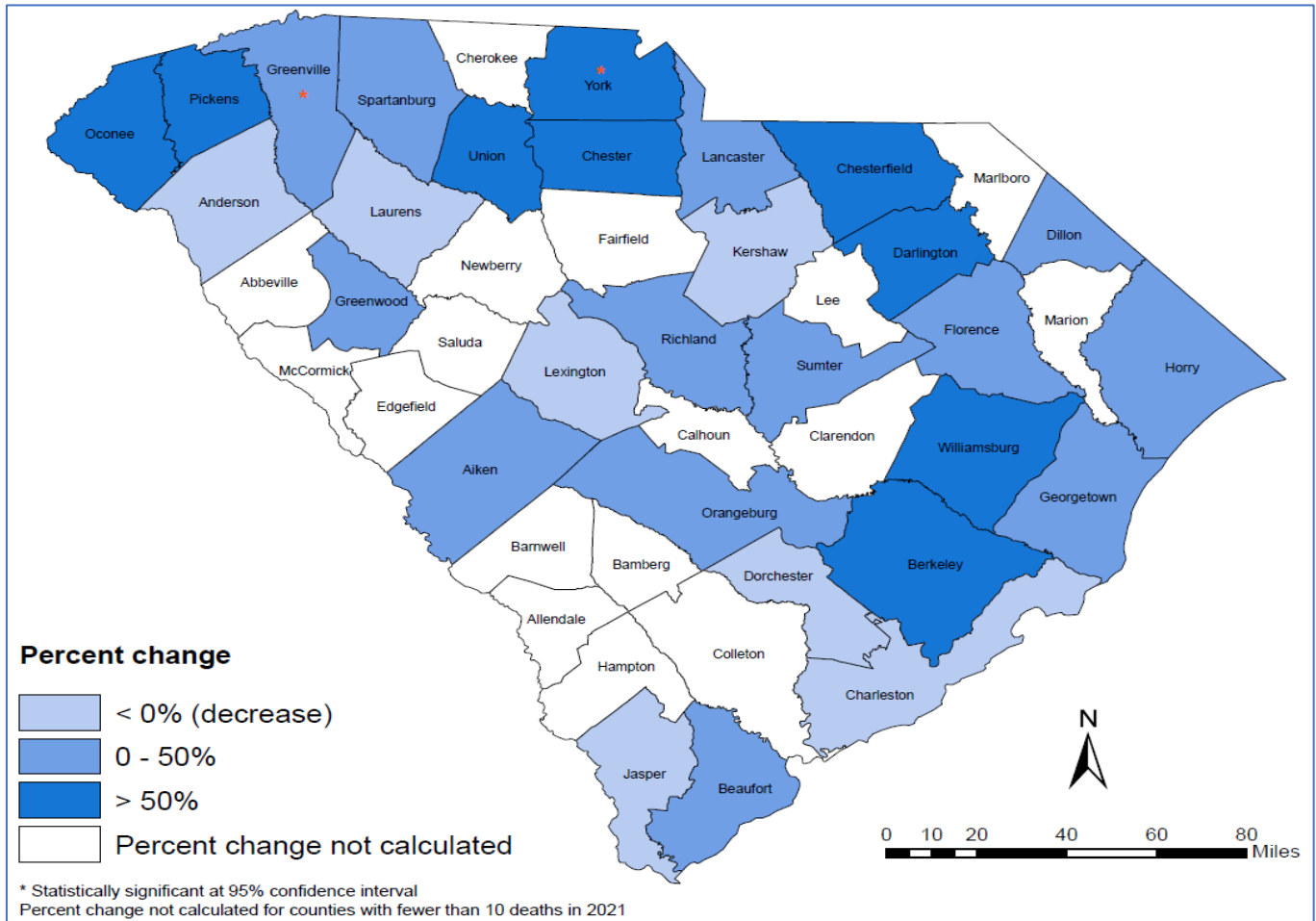
Table 4.  
Change in Drug Overdose Deaths by County  
South Carolina, 2020-2021  
Occurrence Data

County of Death	Total Drug Overdose			Opioids Overdose		
	2020	2021	Percent Change	2020	2021	Percent Change
<b>South Carolina</b>	1,734	2,168	25.0 *	1,400	1,733	23.8 *
Abbeville	6	7	.	2	7	.
Aiken	71	85	19.7	57	75	31.6
Allendale	-	3	.	-	2	.
Anderson	75	70	-6.7	47	45	-4.3
Bamberg	4	1	.	4	1	.
Barnwell	2	10	400.0 *	1	8	.
Beaufort	34	49	44.1	30	40	33.3
Berkeley	48	70	45.8	41	64	56.1
Calhoun	1	3	.	1	3	.
Charleston	197	201	2.0	168	156	-7.1
Cherokee	7	10	42.9	4	5	.
Chester	11	13	18.2	7	11	57.1
Chesterfield	8	17	112.5	7	16	128.6
Clarendon	2	11	450.0	1	9	.
Colleton	7	11	57.1	4	7	.
Darlington	7	14	100.0	6	13	116.7
Dillon	19	16	-15.8	16	16	0.0
Dorchester	36	36	0.0	34	30	-11.8
Edgefield	5	5	.	4	4	.
Fairfield	10	3	.	8	3	.
Florence	52	66	26.9	44	57	29.5
Georgetown	28	38	35.7	26	32	23.1
Greenville	181	270	49.2 *	144	213	47.9 *
Greenwood	37	40	8.1	29	36	24.1
Hampton	5	3	.	4	3	.
Horry	197	272	38.1 *	170	212	24.7
Jasper	24	13	-45.8	21	11	-47.6
Kershaw	30	28	-6.7	27	21	-22.2
Lancaster	47	51	8.5	42	49	16.7
Laurens	32	31	-3.1	26	24	-7.7
Lee	3	4	.	2	3	.
Lexington	112	106	-5.4	95	85	-10.5
McCormick	2	-	.	2	-	.
Marion	8	6	.	5	6	.
Marlboro	4	4	.	2	4	.
Newberry	9	11	22.2	8	8	.
Oconee	13	30	130.8	10	24	140.0
Orangeburg	19	37	94.7	13	16	23.1
Pickens	40	55	37.5	26	41	57.7
Richland	99	137	38.4	73	98	34.2
Saluda	2	1	.	2	1	.
Spartanburg	113	153	35.4	91	129	41.8
Sumter	30	29	-3.3	23	24	4.3
Union	9	15	66.7	5	13	160.0
Williamsburg	10	18	80.0	7	11	57.1
York	78	115	47.4	61	97	59.0 *

<sup>1</sup>Percent change not calculated for counties with fewer than 10 deaths in 2021.

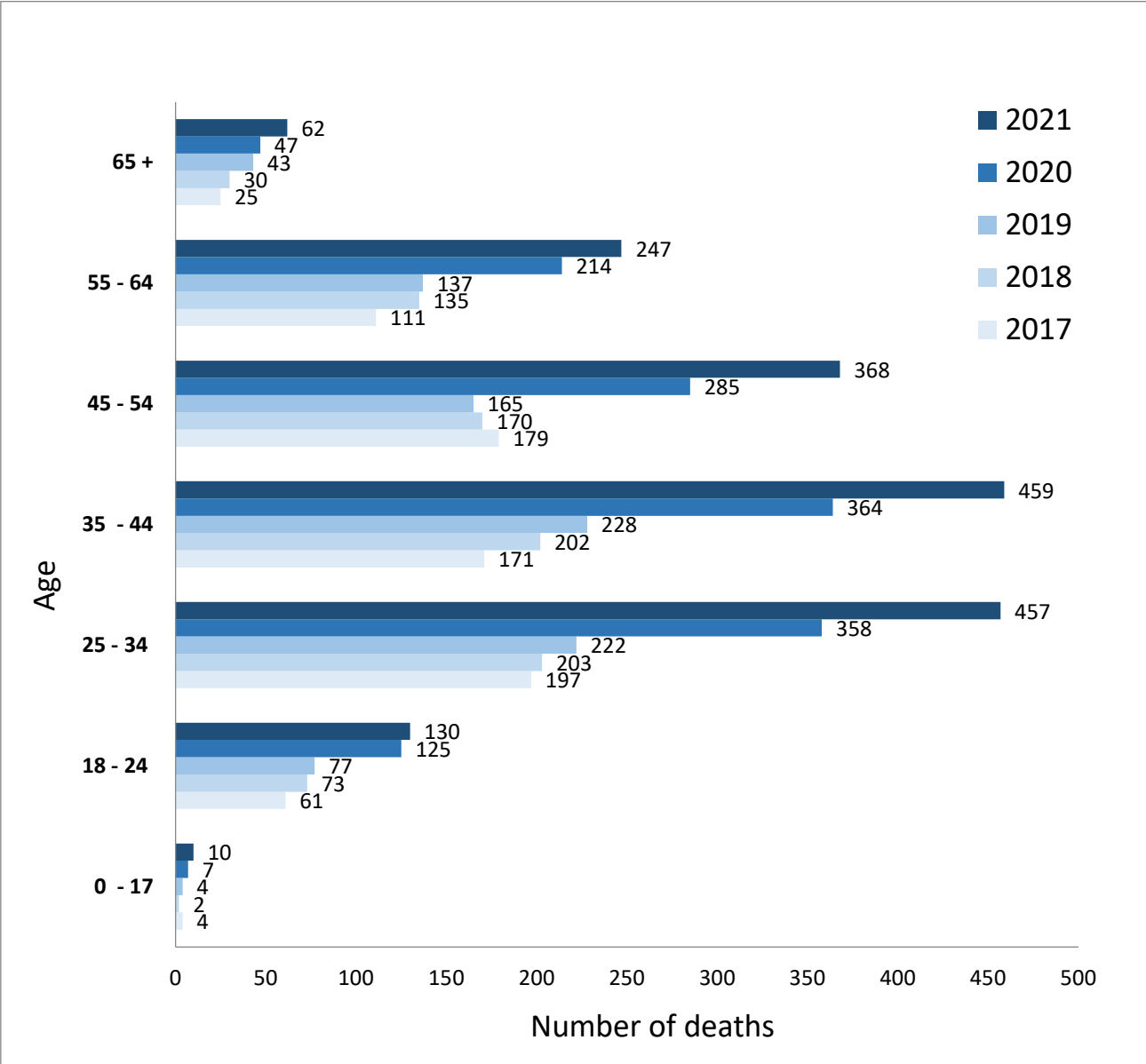
\* Statistically significant at 95% confidence interval

Figure 5.  
 Change in Opioid-Involved Overdose Deaths by County  
 South Carolina, 2020-2021  
 Occurrence Data



\*A previous version of this map showed incorrect numbers for Marion and McCormick Counties. The numbers reported were reversed. The error has been corrected as of 2/15/2023.

Figure 6.  
 Opioid-Involved Overdose Deaths by Age  
 South Carolina, 2017-2021  
 Occurrence Data



Source: SC DHEC, Vital Statistics

Figure 7.  
Select Drug Categories by Race/Sex  
South Carolina, 2021  
Occurrence Data

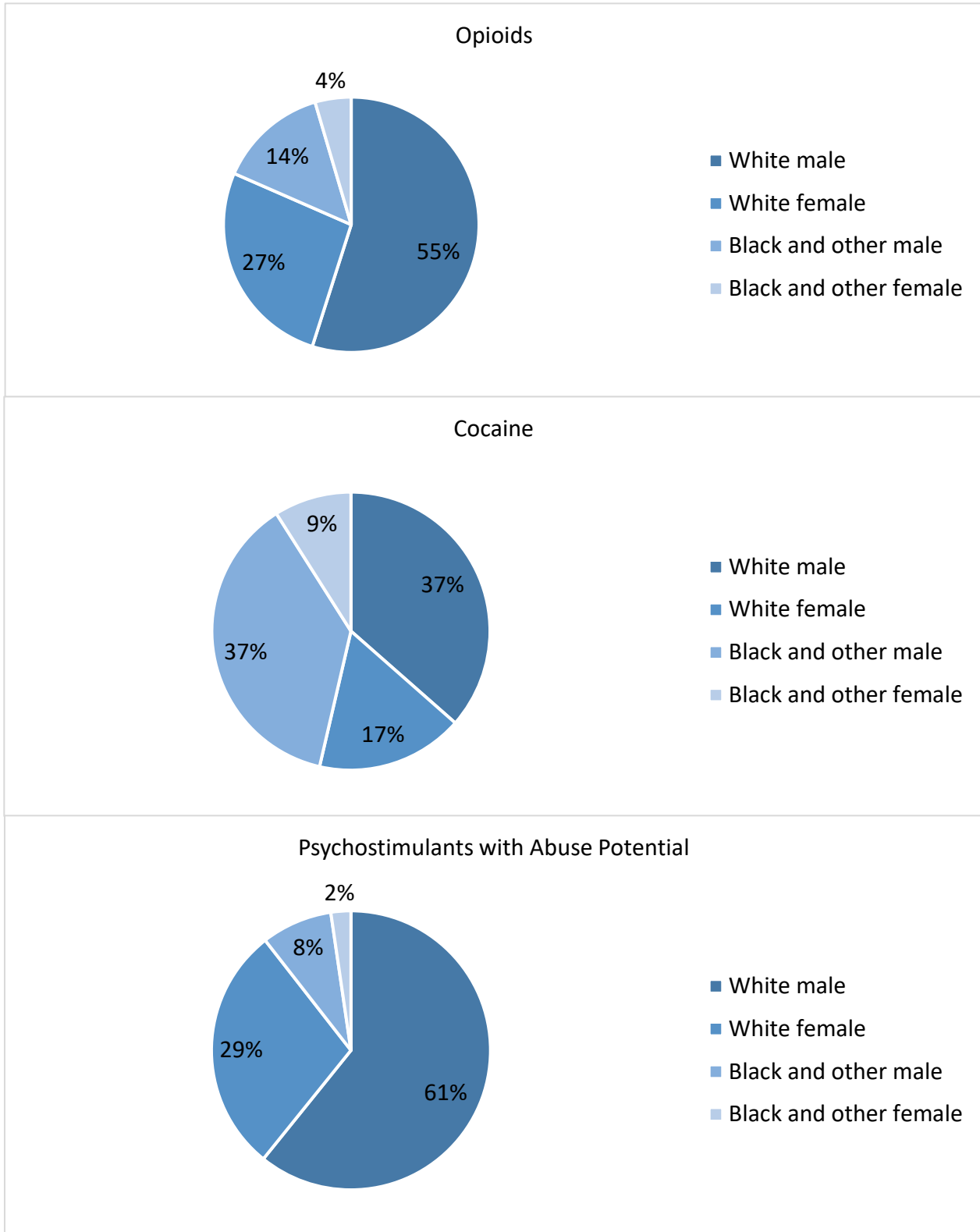


Figure 8.  
 Select Drug Categories by Education  
 South Carolina, 2021  
 Occurrence Data

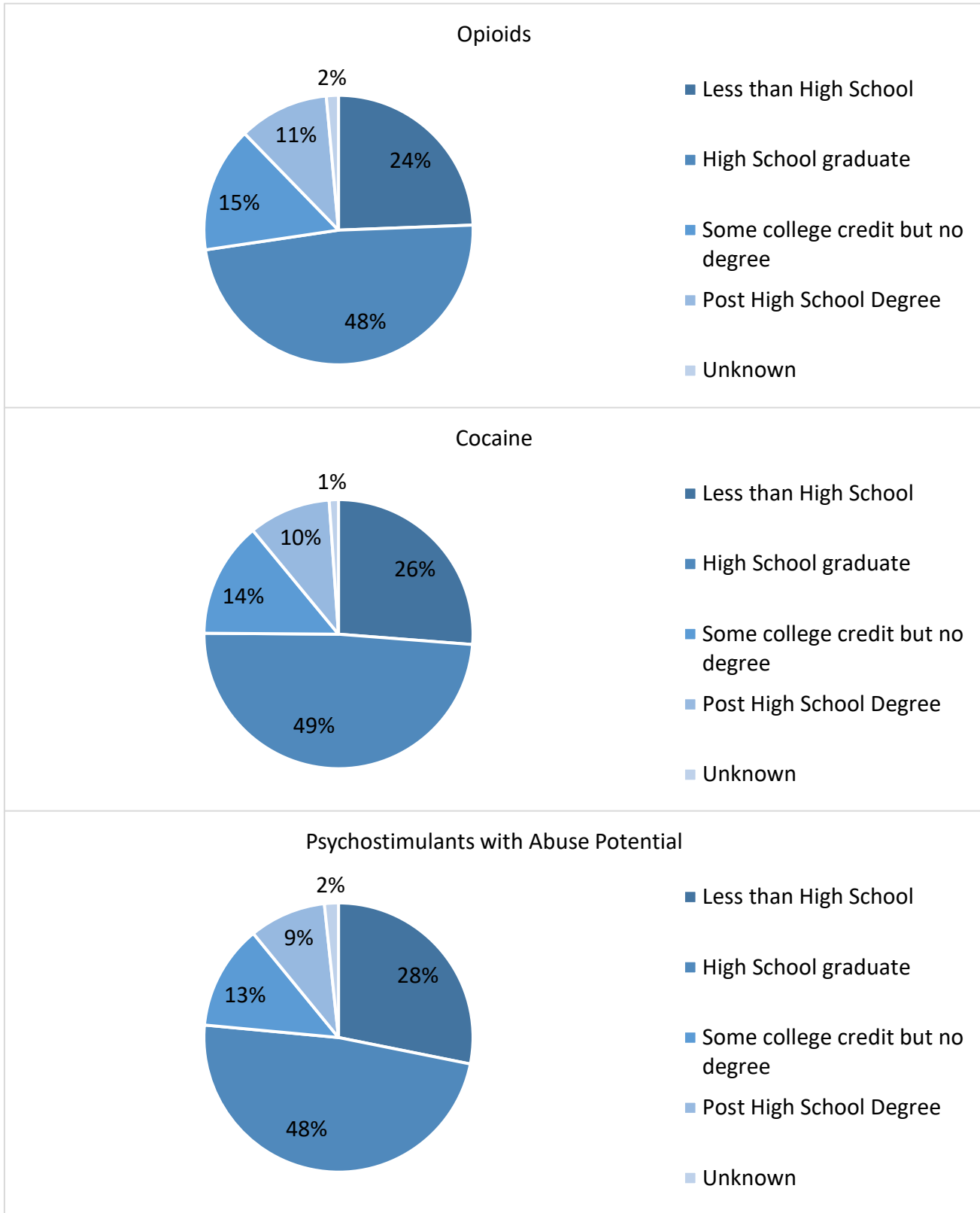
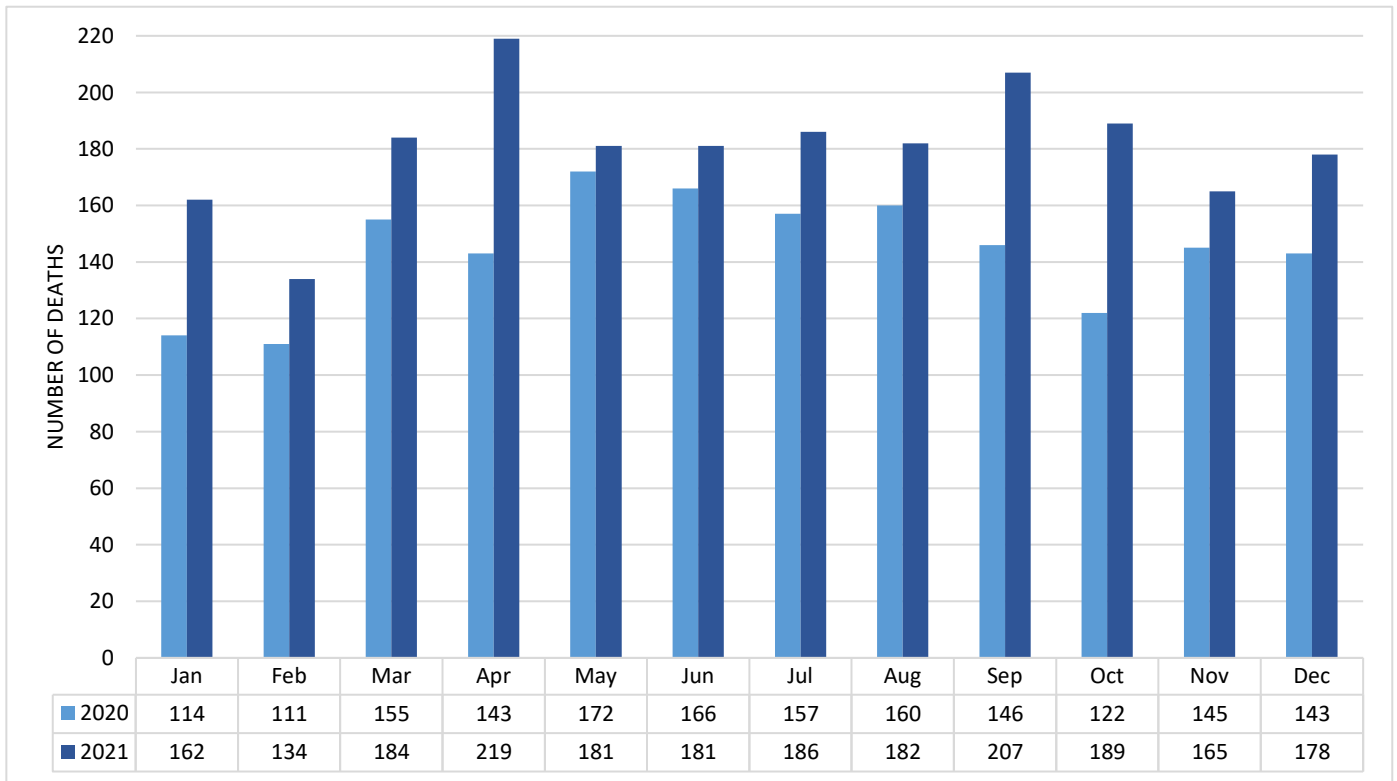


Figure 9.  
 Number of Drug Overdose Deaths by Month  
 South Carolina, 2021  
 Occurrence Data



\* Covid-19 Pandemic started in March, 2020