

ODMAP Spotlight Series:

Connecticut Department
of Public Health

Keep your community aware and prepared



ODMAP INTEGRATION AND SPIKE RESPONSE

The state of Connecticut enacted a Statewide Opioid Reporting Directive in 2019 requiring Emergency Medical Services providers to manually report fatal and non-fatal overdose data to the Connecticut Poison Control Center (CPCC). The data includes the reporting of 12 data points as well as a brief description of the scene, which is recorded the ToxiCall database maintained by the CPCC, as well as the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP).

In an effort to improve reporting rates and build capacity within the program, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) and the Office of EMS (OEMS) sought to automate this reporting process. They developed a tool creating a data bridge between the state data repository of Electronic Patient Care Reports (EPCR's) and ODMAP, a step that will help create a more efficient reporting model.

As a result of the data connection, the CT DPH uses spike alerts within ODMAP to inform the deployment of resources within various jurisdictions. Volunteers and physical resources are informed of spike alerts within ODMAP, which are deployed via vans and or Rovers.

THE SWORD PROGRAM

The Statewide Opioid Reporting Directive (SWORD) working group comprised of members including the Medical Director for the OEMS, University of Connecticut John Dempsey Hospital, DPH Injury and Violence Prevention, DPH Syndromic Surveillance, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner for the State of Connecticut, and the Connecticut Representatives of HIDTA.

The group meets monthly to discuss overdose trends reported in ODMAP and develops response strategies.

THREE-PRONGED APPROACH

CT DPH uses a three-pronged approach to identifying overdose spikes and issuing alerts. These three prongs include:

1. SWORD/ODMAP:

EMS responders contact the Connecticut Poison Control Center (CPCC) immediately after responding to a suspected opioid overdose. They answer a series of questions about the overdose and the information is logged in the CPCC's ToxiCall data base. A subset of the information is then input by CPCC specialists into ODMAP. Spike alert triggers are set in ODMAP to notify DPH administrators when a certain number of overdoses are logged. When a trigger is hit, a team member reviews all recent SWORD calls, including reading the ToxiCall narratives. If a particular pattern of public health significance – location, type of overdose, similar paraphernalia -- is observed, this is reported.

2. EpiCenter syndromic surveillance system:

State epidemiologists review the Epicenter syndromic surveillance system which represents near real-time estimates of emergency department (ED) utilization for non-fatal and fatal suspected drug and opioid overdoses as well as triage notes of suspected overdose patients.



3. The Office of the Connecticut Medical Examiner:

Office of the OCME is contacted for any reports of recent overdose fatalities. In October of 2021, the OCME began entering fatalities into ODMAP, which provides rapid identification of fatal overdoses. The OCME will then provide more detailed information about these overdoses on request.

Analyses of these three databases are shared with local health department/districts, ambulance companies, law enforcement, fire departments, and harm reduction groups when it is determined a threat exists. In June of 2019, a series of overdoses occurred in Hartford where people who used only crack cocaine suffered overdoses requiring naloxone. CPCC specialists were immediately able to identify a possible problem within hours of the first overdose. The nexus of the overdoses was pinpointed to a specific Hartford neighborhood. The CPCC and CT DPH notified local health and public safety officials, as well as harm reduction groups. Harm reduction groups distributed fentanyl test strips and naloxone to crack cocaine users and warned of the dangers of using alone. The outbreak lasted five days and tallied at least 22 overdoses, including six deaths.

IMPROVING OVERDOSE DATA

In the fall of 2021, a partnership was forged with the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) to increase data within ODMAP. An evaluation of data was conducted showing an increase in data accuracy to further foster effective response efforts.