



European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

DRD indicator: Mortality cohort studies

Federica Mathis

8th November 2018, Lisbon
DRD annual expert meeting



Objective of the session

To provide an update on recent cohorts conducted in Europe among drug users

To discuss their implications for public health



Mortality cohort studies

Helpful in:

- determining overall and cause-specific mortality rates
- estimating the excess mortality of drug users
- detecting changing patterns in the causes of death
- determining the impact of interventions

Limitations:

- underestimation of the number of deaths
- results not readily generalizable to other populations of drug users
- limited study comparability

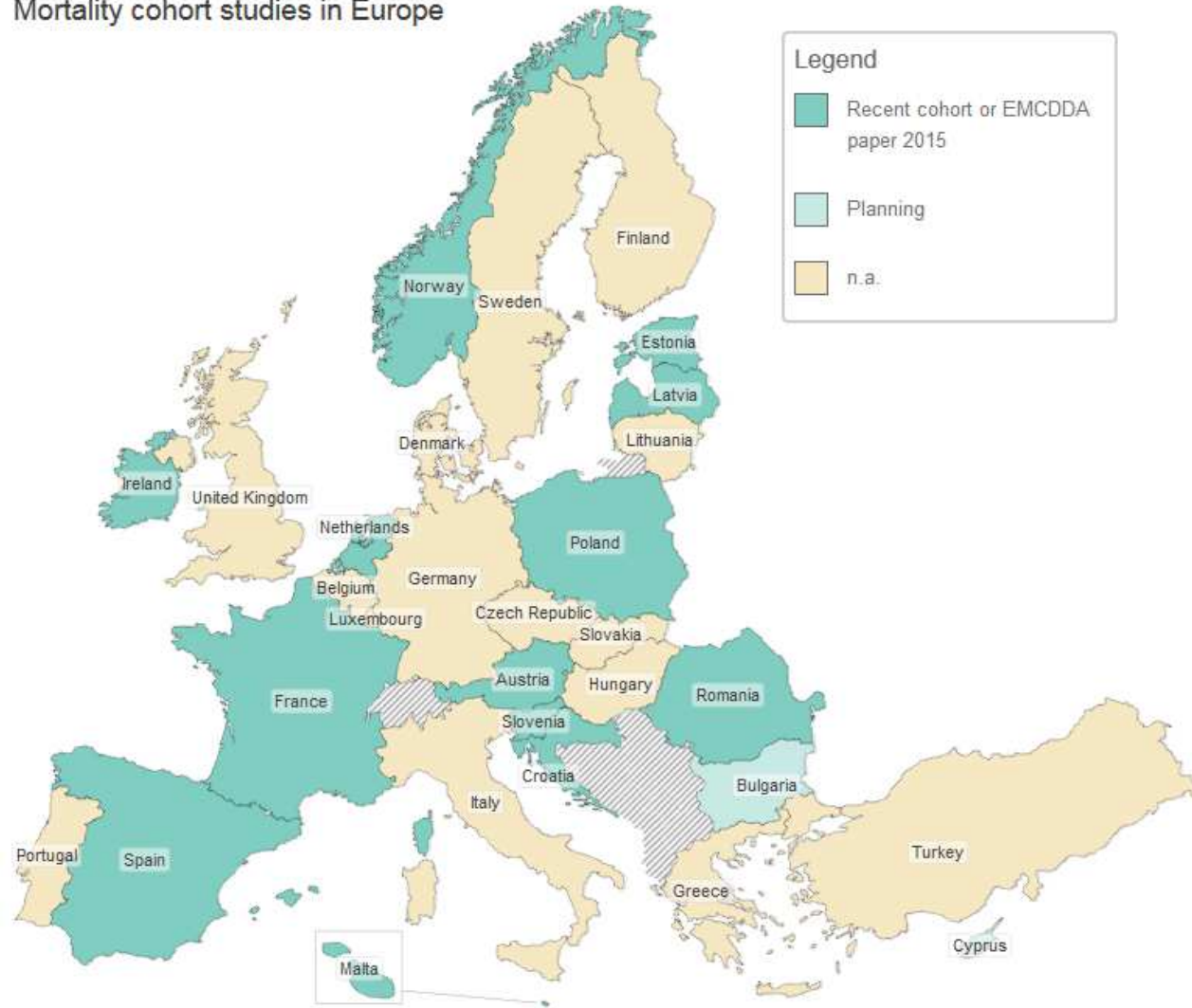
Difficulties:

- data availability
- database linkage
- costs
- privacy, laws, ethical rules, data property



Data availability

Mortality cohort studies in Europe



EMCDDA PAPERS

Mortality among drug users in Europe: new and old challenges for public health

Contents: Introduction (p. 2) | Methods and data sources (p. 3) | Key findings from recent mortality cohorts in Europe (p. 6) | Public health perspectives and implications (p. 13) | Conclusion (p. 15) | Glossary (p. 17) | References (p. 18)

Abstract: More than 6 000 drug users die of overdose each year in the European Union, and most of these deaths occur among problem drug users and involve opioids. In addition, many deaths related indirectly to drug use occur each year. To gain a clearer picture of the overall number of lives lost due to drug use in Europe, this paper builds on the results of an earlier work that looked at all-cause mortality among problem drug users. By linking data on entrants to drug treatment programmes with information from death registries, mortality cohort studies can determine death rates from all causes within the study population. The study presents data from nine European countries, including seven not previously studied using EMCDDA methodology. Among over 31 000 participants (22 % female), covering 203 000 person-years of follow-up, 2 886 deaths were recorded, 18 % among females. Overall crude mortality rate per 1 000 person-years follow-up was 14.2, but varied

geographically from 3.5 to 22.7. Cause of death was reported in 71 % of all deaths, half of which was accounted for by external causes: overdose (35 %), suicide (5 %) and other external causes (10 %). Somatic causes accounted for about 45 % of the known-cause deaths: HIV/AIDS (14 %), circulatory diseases (9 %), respiratory diseases (5 %) and other somatic causes (16 %). Risk of death among problem drug users was typically 10 or more times that among their peers in the general population. The analysis shows that the deaths of problem drug users are overwhelmingly premature and preventable.

Keywords: drug-related deaths, cohort study, drug overdose, opioid use

Recommended citation: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (2015). Mortality among drug users in Europe: new and old challenges for public health. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

1/21

http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/emcdda-papers/mortality-among-drug-users-in-europe_en



See also http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/selected-issues/mortality_en