

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2013-14, 5/6 & 7 June 2013

Question: E13-128

**OUTCOME:** 1 - Population Health

**Topic:** Opiate Overdose Deaths from Legal Prescribed Drugs

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 54, 6 June 2013

**Senator:** Di Natale

**Question:**

My understanding is that when it comes to opiates there are more opiate deaths from legal prescribed drugs than there are from illegal opiates. Do you have that information at hand?

**Answer:**

The primary source for opiate-related deaths is the National Coronial Information System (the NCIS). At present, coronial data does not provide enough detail within available documentation to determine what proportion of legal opioids involved in death were sourced through licit and illicit means.

The table below includes the latest data from the NCIS for deaths involving opioids reported to an Australian coroner in 2010, provided to the Department of Health and Ageing in 2013.

Opioid deaths in 2010	Primary contribution to death		Secondary contribution to death		Total Cases
	Sole drug	Multiple drugs	Sole drug	Multiple drugs	
<b>All Opioid related deaths</b>	<b>270*</b>	<b>488*</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>789*</b>
Heroin involvement	105	94	1	0	200
Methadone involvement	45	109	0	2	156
Other opioid deaths <sup>^</sup>	124	294	8	20	446

Source – NCIS Drug Mortality Data Report 2010

Notes

\* The subsets will not equal the total of all opioid deaths as some deaths will have involved both heroin and methadone.

<sup>^</sup> Excludes those with heroin and/or methadone involvement. Other opioids include: morphine, oxycodone, tramadol, fentanyl, propoxyphene, codeine, naloxone.