

## **Drug-induced deaths and drug-related hospitalisations by remoteness area of usual residence in Australia, 2018-2019**

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**Introduction and Aims:** Drug-related use and harms are reported to vary by remoteness area in Australia. We aim to describe rates of drug-induced deaths (DID) and drug-related hospitalisations by remoteness area (of usual residence) and by drugs involved in 2018-2019.

**Design and Methods:** DID were identified from underlying cause of death in the Cause of Death data. Drug-related hospitalisations were identified from the principal diagnosis in the National Hospital Morbidity Database. Age-standardised rates were computed to describe differences by remoteness area and/or by drug type identified using ICD10.

**Results:** Rate of DID was highest in inner regional areas (8.0 per 100,000), followed by major cities (7.2 per 100,000) and outer regional areas (6.7 per 100,000), and lowest in remote (including very remote) areas (4.4 per 100,000). Rate of drug-related hospitalisations was highest in outer regional areas (292 per 100,000), followed by remote areas (282 per 100,000), and it was similar for major cities (238 per 100,000) and inner regional areas (237 per 100,000).

Major cities and inner regional areas had higher rates of opioid-related DID and/or drug-related hospitalisations compared with other remoteness areas while rate of amphetamine-type stimulant-related hospitalisations was highest in outer regional areas. Remote areas had the highest rate of cannabinoid-related hospitalisations but the lowest rate of cannabinoid-related DID.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** DID were lowest in remote areas but we note administrative differences between jurisdictions may impact on estimates. Drug-related hospitalisations were highest among people residing in outer regional areas. Differences in overall rates may reflect differences in the types of drugs involved.

**Implications for Practice or Policy (optional):** Results suggest differing needs for harm reduction services in each region according to the drugs involved.

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