

Opioid – Expanded Panel

Marker for prescription and drugs of abuse that can increase mortality

Panel: Codeine; Heroin; Hydrocodone; Hydromorphone; Morphine; Oxycodone; Oxymorphone

Confirmation Methodology:
Gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS)

Specimen required:
Urine

Background

Drug overdose deaths and opioid-involved deaths continue to increase in the United States. The majority of drug overdose deaths (more than six out of 10) involve an opioid¹. Since 1999, the number of overdose deaths involving opioids (both prescription opioids and heroin) quadrupled². Additionally, the 2017 Drug Testing Index™³ report shows drug positivity in the US workforce is the highest it has been in a decade.

Expanded Opioid Panel Defined

ExamOne continues to offer drug panels consisting of cocaine, marijuana, opiates, amphetamines/methamphetamines, PCP, benzodiazepines, barbiturates and methadone. These are recommended by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for the testing of certain federal employees, as well as specified Department of Transportation-regulated occupations to prevent accidents, as well as morbidity and mortality.

The expanded opioid panel will consist of the following:

- Codeine
- Heroin
- Hydrocodone
- Hydromorphone
- Morphine
- Oxycodone
- Oxymorphone

Correlation and Study Results

Opioid use increases the risk of mortality from overdoses and accidents (i.e., motor vehicle).

Opioid overdose deaths in the United States continue to rise. In 2014, there were one and a half more drug overdose deaths in the US than deaths from motor vehicle accidents and every age group had an increasing death rate¹. Since 2000, the death rate has increased by 137% for drug abuse overdoses and 200% for opioid drug overdoses. This increase in overdose deaths is apparent in both genders, as well as across multiple age groups.

The prevalence of opioids found in the bodies of fatally-injured drivers increased in the past two decades from 1% in 1995 to 7.2% in 2015⁴. Prescribed opioids, as well as illicit opioids, are potent drugs and can cause drowsiness and impair overall cognitive functioning, leading to fatal deaths by motor vehicle accidents.

Recommended Testing Guidelines

As death rates from opioid overdoses in the US continue to rise in epidemic proportions, the expanded opioid panel should be considered as a screening test for all applicants over age 18 to identify risk in the life insurance population.

References

- (1) Rudd RA, Seth P, David F, Scholl L. Increases in Drug and Opioid-Involved Overdose Deaths — United States, 2010–2015. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* ePub: 16 December 2016. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6550e1>.
- (2) CDC. Wide-ranging online data for epidemiologic research (WONDER). Atlanta, GA: CDC, National Center for Health Statistics; 2016. Available at <http://wonder.cdc.gov>
- (3) www.questdiagnostics.com/DTI
- (4) Stanford Chihuri, and Guohua Li, "Trends in Prescription Opioids Detected in Fatally Injured Drivers in 6 US States: 1995–2015", *American Journal of Public Health* 107, no. 9 (September 1, 2017): pp. 1487-1492.