

Number of drug-induced deaths in Wisconsin before and after kratom was banned

On April 23th, 2014, Wisconsin legislators passed Senate Bill 325. This law added the two main alkaloids of kratom to the list of schedule 1 drugs, effectively making kratom illegal. [Wisconsin State Legislature](#)

Drug overdoses have been on the rise in this country for at least the last 15 years and Wisconsin has not been immune to the epidemic. Over the last 10 years Wisconsin has seen a 70% increase in the number of overdose deaths.

“A report compiled by University of Wisconsin-Whitewater epidemiologist David Nordstrom shows nearly 5,000 deaths were certified as drug-related between 1999 to 2008. ‘That’s more than one every day and we found out that the majority of them were males and the average age was about 43.’ Nordstrom says deaths from the synthetic drug methadone, which is used to treat heroin addiction skyrocketed from 10 in 1999 to 118 in 2008, an increase of more than 1,000 percent.”

Source: [WisconsinPublicRadio.org](#)

In recent years, the number of overdose deaths have continued to climb. The numbers for 2016 are on pace to be more disturbing than ever, particularly in Milwaukee County.

“Milwaukee County is on pace to “significantly eclipse” the 231 heroin and opiate overdose deaths in the county in 2015. This, according to a statement from Alderman Michael Murphy and [a study](#) conducted by the Medical College of Wisconsin. A report from the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner’s Office shows through September 24th, 2016 -- 191 people had fallen victim to opioid overdoses -- compared to 176 by September 24th, 2015. According to the statement from Alderman Murphy, if overdose deaths continue at this rate in Milwaukee County, the total figure for the year 2016 could exceed 250 (vs. 231 in 2015).”

Source: [Fox6now.com](#)

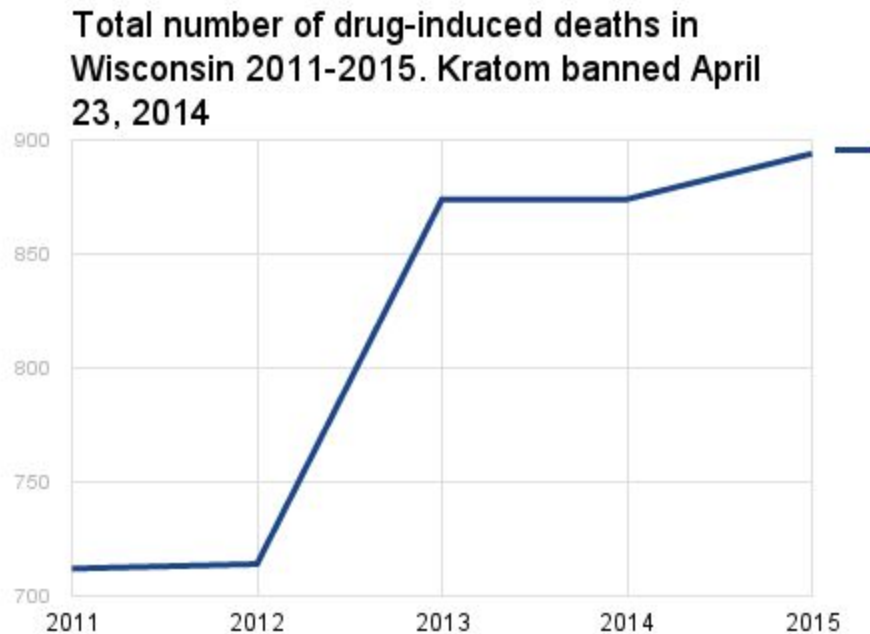
Total number of drug-induced deaths in Wisconsin from 2011-2015:

2011: 712
2012: 714
2013: 874
2014: 874
2015: 894

There was a 25% increase in drug-induced deaths between 2011 and 2015. There was an increase in deaths every year with the exception of 2013 to 2014, where the numbers stayed the same.

Source: CDC.gov

See graph below:



Although no direct correlation can definitively be made between the banning of kratom and an increase in drug-induced deaths, it is clear that more education is needed regarding the benefits of kratom. Keeping kratom legal and available could be helping numerous individuals who are addicted to drugs. There are many thousands of anecdotal reports from individuals saying that kratom saved their life, and saved them from the horrors of opioid withdrawal and other drug addictions.

-Melanie Victor