

Montana FICMMR

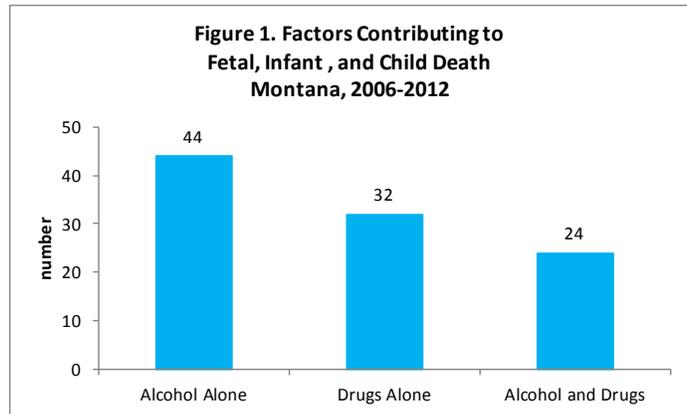
Fetal, Infant, Child, and Maternal Mortality Review

December, 2014

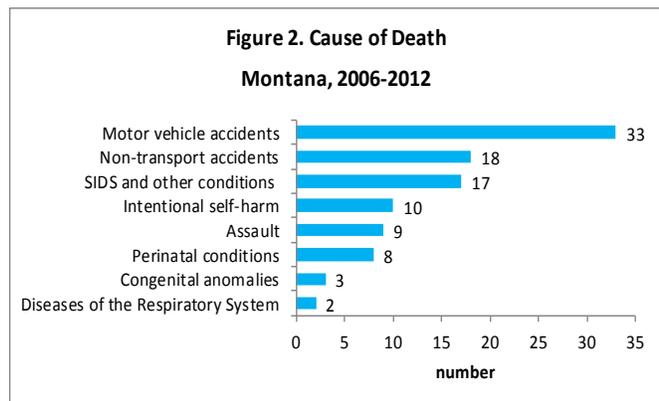
CHILDHOOD ALCOHOL AND DRUG ASSOCIATED DEATHS, MONTANA, 2006-2012

The Montana Fetal, Infant, Child, and Maternal Mortality Review (FICMMR) statute requires local jurisdictions to review all deaths of Montana-resident infants and children under the age of 18 years, fetal deaths from 20 weeks gestation through birth, and maternal deaths up to one year postpartum.¹ The goal of FICMMR is to determine whether deaths were potentially preventable and make recommendations to prevent future deaths. This report addresses statewide findings about alcohol and drug associated childhood and fetal deaths in Montana from 2006 through 2012.

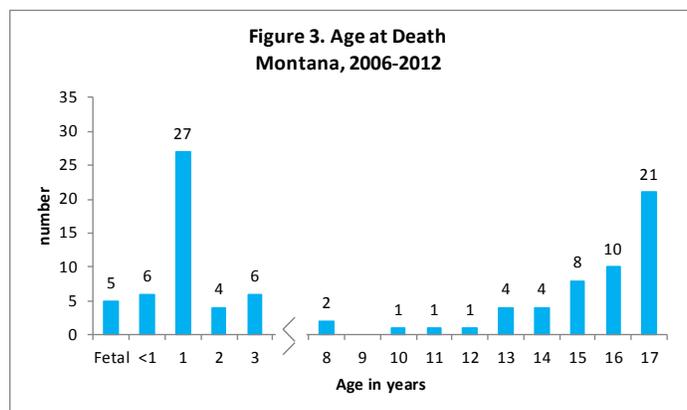
From January 2006 through December 2012, FICMMR team investigations determined that alcohol, drugs, or both alcohol and drugs contributed to the deaths of 95 children and 5 fetal losses. These include deaths where children's use of alcohol and/or drugs contributed to their own death and cases in which the parents or an unrelated person's use of alcohol and/or drugs contributed to child or fetal deaths. The FICMMR teams' investigations determined that alcohol, drugs, or a combination of alcohol and drugs contributed to 44, 32, and 24 deaths, respectively (Figure 1).



Motor-vehicle accidents caused the majority of deaths followed by non-transport accidents, SIDS and other conditions, intentional self-harm, assault, perinatal conditions, congenital anomalies, and respiratory disease (Figure 2).



Fifty-four decedents were male and 46 female. The ages of the decedents were nearly equally divided into two groups, under or over 12 years, with decedents age 1 and 17 representing the two largest single age groups (Figure 3).



Toxicology results were available for pertinent individuals in all the instances of death, including the decedent and other persons who might have been responsible. Alcohol was identified most frequently for the child or fetus, parents, or other involved party, followed by THC, the active compound in marijuana, opiates and other prescription medications, and other recreational drugs (Figure 4).

¹ Montana Code Annotated 50-19-401 through 50-19-406, http://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca_toc/50_19_4.htm

Thirty-nine decedents had prior involvement with Child Protective Services (CPS). This includes cases in which the child, another member of their family, or unrelated caregiver was investigated. Involvement with CPS was unknown for 24 decedents (Figure 5).

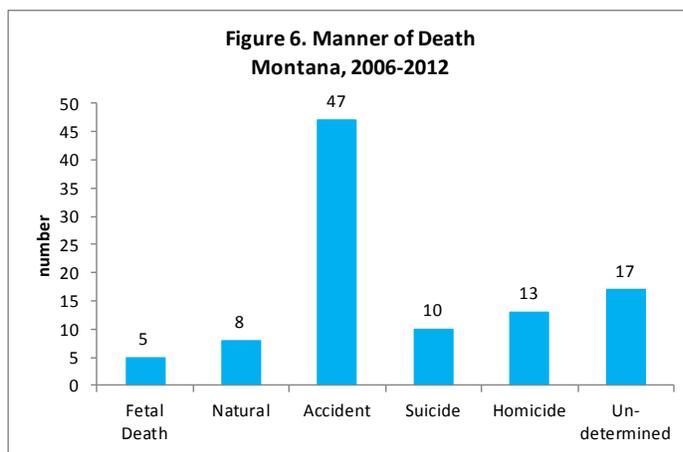
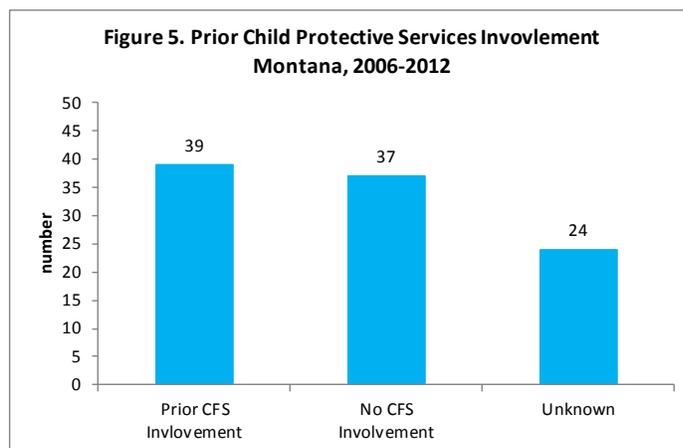
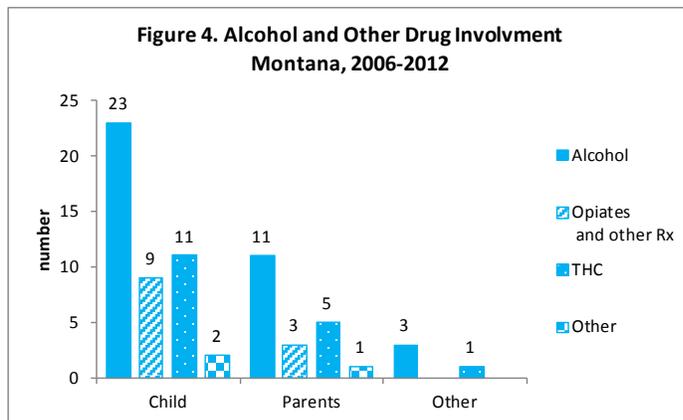
The majority of deaths where alcohol and/or drugs were determined to be contributing factors were accidents, followed by undetermined, homicide, suicides, natural, and fetal deaths (Figure 6).

Summary and Recommendations

Alcohol and drug associated deaths are a complex age-specific problem in Montana. Deaths attributed to natural causes and fetal deaths were due to maternal alcohol and/or drug use and lack of prenatal care. Children 1 year of age were particularly vulnerable to harm from alcohol and/or drug use by members of their households while adolescent deaths were most often the decedent's personal use of alcohol and/or drugs contributed to their death.

At least 39 (40%) of these childhood deaths had some prior involvement with child and family services. While the extent and nature of these cases were unknown, interaction with social services agencies may be a strong predictor of risk for these deaths. Prevention measures for reducing alcohol and drug associated deaths include:

- Recognize the signs of an abusive relationship. For help, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 to speak with a trained counselor.²
- To prevent serious problems during pregnancy, including miscarriage, birth defects and premature birth, don't smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs.³
- Talk to your children about the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse. Forming strong parental bonds early, being involved in their activities, and providing consistent support and discipline can reduce the risk of alcohol or drug abuse.⁴



Resources for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Associated Childhood Deaths

- Montana Addictive and Mental Disorders Division
<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/amdd>
- National Institute on Drug Abuse
<http://www.drugabuse.gov>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/features/intimatepartnerviolence/>

² The National Domestic Violence Hotline, <http://www.thehotline.org/is-this-abuse/abuse-defined/>

³ March of Dimes, <http://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/alcohol-and-drugs.aspx>

⁴ National Institute on Drug Abuse, <http://www.drugabuse.gov>