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# ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

## High buprenorphine-related mortality is persistent in Finland

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#### Highlights

- In 28.8% of the fatalities, buprenorphine had been administered parenterally.
- The proportion of parenteral use remained relatively constant over the study period.
- The majority of the parenteral users had taken mono-buprenorphine.
- Poly-substance use was evident in nearly all buprenorphine-positive fatalities.

#### Abstract

Sublingual buprenorphine is used in opioid maintenance treatment but buprenorphine is also widely abused and causes fatal poisonings. The aim of this study was to investigate buprenorphine-positive fatalities in order to gain novel information on the magnitude and nature of buprenorphine abuse.

All post-mortem toxicology cases positive for urinary buprenorphine, including fatal poisonings caused by buprenorphine and fatalities in which the cause of death was unrelated to buprenorphine, in the five year period of 2010–2014 in Finland were characterized according to urine buprenorphine and naloxone concentrations (n=775). Urine concentrations were used to assess which buprenorphine preparation had

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