



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAI'I®
MĀNOA

FATAL OVERDOSES & OUR KŪPUNA

KNOW ANY KŪPUNA WHO LIVE ALONE?

30% of fatal opioid overdoses occurred in adults³ ages 45 and older between July 2020 to June 2021¹

CHECK IN ON A KUPUNA WHO LIVES ALONE

87.5% of those aged 55+ who experienced a drug overdose were **SINGLE**¹

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER CAN LOOK LIKE:

Dementia
Anxiety
Depression

These can be mistaken as signs of aging or signs of other chronic diseases²



RISK FACTORS FOR OVERDOSE:

Multiple Prescriptions
Chronic Pain and Chronic Disease
Psychiatric Disease
Low Socioeconomic Status
Poor Social Support³

Older adults and kūpuna are more susceptible to drug effects since the body cannot break them down quickly as they age. Also, older adults are more likely to unintentionally misuse medicines by forgetting to take them, taking them too often, or taking the wrong amount.

HOW TO REDUCE THE RISK OF AN OVERDOSE

Be mindful and non-judgmental of substance use
Maintain social support (family and friends)
Seek support from a professional therapist
Know the signs and risks of a drug overdose
Monitor substance use with a doctor

¹ University of Hawai'i at Mānoa & Hawaii Department of Health Adult Mental Health Division. OD2A Periods 9 and 10 Data (n=132).

² Han, B. H. & Moore, A. A. (2018). Prevention and Screening of Unhealthy Substance Use by Older Adults. *Clinical Geriatric Medicine* 34(1), p. 117-129. doi:10.1016/j.cger.2017.08.005

³ Lee, E. Park, J., Cho, J., & Lee, C. (2021). Prioritising Risk Factors for Prescription Drug Overdose among Older Adults in South Korea: A Multi-Method Study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(11), p. 5948-. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18115948>