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NEW OPIOID REPORT HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR STRONGER ACTION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE DRUG HARMS

Findings in the new [Monash University report: Trends in pharmaceutical opioid-related harm in Victoria](#), highlights the need for stronger drug harm prevention and minimisation initiatives.

The report, published in [Monash University's Hazard Publication](#), has found:

- The number of opioid-related emergency department presentations in Victoria have increased significantly over a 10-year period, with an average annual increase of 3.1%
- The most commonly encountered opioid types were codeine, oxycodone and tramadol
- Polypharmacy is common in opioid-related emergency department presentations

“The Alcohol and Drug Foundation is extremely concerned about the continuous rise in pharmaceutical opioid-related hospitalisations in Victoria,” Chief Executive Officer Dr Erin Lalor said.

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation supports the report’s recommendation to increase the availability of [Naloxone](#).

“Naloxone is a drug that can temporarily reverse opioid overdose. Improving access to Naloxone and associated training could help to save lives,” Dr Lalor remarked.

Better access to Naloxone is part of a suite of measures needed to reduce pharmaceutical-related harms. Australians also need to be better informed about the [risks associated with drug use, including prescription medication](#).

“There is no safe level of drug use. Use of any drug carries risk of harm, including injuries, overdose, dependence and death. Mixing drugs, including alcohol, is particularly dangerous,” Dr Lalor emphasised.

“Perceptions that pharmaceuticals are ‘safe’ means many people may overlook the risks. Everyone should know that the use of pharmaceutical drug can be dangerous and even fatal,” Dr Lalor warned.

For drug [information or support](#), people can visit www.adf.org.au or call the Alcohol and Drug Foundation’s DrugInfo line on 1300 85 85 84. The confidential service provides drug information and puts people in touch with relevant support and health services in their state and territory.

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For media enquiries please call the Alcohol and Drug Foundation’s media team on 0430 948 380 or email media@adf.org.au.

About the Alcohol and Drug Foundation: Celebrating 60 years of service to the community, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation is one of Australia's leading bodies committed to preventing and minimising alcohol and other drug harms in communities around the nation. The Foundation reaches millions of Australians in local communities through sporting clubs, workplaces, health care settings and schools, offering educational information, drug and alcohol prevention programs and advocating for strong and healthy communities.