



PIMA COUNTY

OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER

Annual Report 2016



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INTRODUCTION

The Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner (PCOME) investigates any death in Pima County that is sudden, violent, unexpected, or in which the cause of death is unknown. The PCOME also serves as the Medical Examiner (ME) for Cochise and Santa Cruz Counties and performs examinations as needed for eight additional counties. In 2016 there were 9,376 deaths in Pima County; of these 2,657 (28%) were reported to the PCOME for investigation. This annual report consists of three main sections. The first is an overview of the activities and notable events of the office over the course of the report year. The second is a statistical review of the types of cases processed by the office over the same time period. The third is a by-county breakdown of certain death classifications.

OVERVIEW

The PCOME was fully accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) following a two day inspection in October 2011. This accreditation was effective from October 24, 2011 through October 24, 2016 and requires annual accreditation verification. The office was re-inspected in January 2017 and received continued full accreditation valid through October 25, 2021. NAME accredited offices represent the highest quality of death investigation systems. There are 75 fully accredited Medical Examiner's Offices across the United States. The PCOME has the distinction of being the sole fully accredited office in Arizona.

Reportable Deaths

Arizona Revised Statute §11-593 delineates ten circumstances in which a death is reportable to the PCOME.

1. Death when not under the current care of a health care provider as defined pursuant to section 36-301.
2. Death resulting from violence.
3. Unexpected or unexplained death.
4. Death of a person in a custodial agency as defined in section 13-4401.
5. Unexpected or unexplained death of an infant or child.
6. Death occurring in a suspicious, unusual or non-natural manner, including death from an accident believed to be related to the deceased's occupation or employment.
7. Death occurring as a result of anesthetic or surgical procedures.
8. Death suspected to be caused by a previously unreported or undiagnosed disease that constitutes a threat to public safety.
9. Death involving unidentifiable bodies.

Investigations

Our 11 medical investigators processed 2,657 reports of deaths from Pima County and 725 reports from 10 additional Arizona counties in 2016. Jurisdiction was declined in 993 of these cases. A total of 2,064 decedents were transported to the PCOME for examination or storage in 2016.

Examinations

Pima County forensic pathologists and anthropologists performed 1,476 autopsies, 409 external examinations, 359 death certifications, 143 anthropologic examinations, and reviewed 6,280 death certificates for cremations in 2016.

Education, Training and Activities

- 1) *Medicolegal Death Investigators*
Calendar year 2012 saw a transition from the term Forensic Medical Investigator (FMI) to Medicolegal Death Investigator (MDI) for our 11 MDIs in keeping with national norms. Nine MDIs, our MDI Supervisor, and Administrative Supervisor are certified by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators to provide competent medicolegal death investigations. PCOME Forensic Pathologists lecture to the MDIs on varying topics monthly. In accordance with our MDI quality assurance and performance improvement program, 10% of reports are reviewed by a pathologist monthly and 10% of reports are peer reviewed quarterly.
- 2) *Community education, presentations and media interviews*
The PCOME receives numerous requests from various groups, organizations, individuals and schools for presentations regarding a host of forensic issues annually. Not all requests can be honored due to time and personnel constraints, but examples of educational activities include but are not limited to: presentations at local primary and secondary schools; lectures at various institutions and departments at the University of Arizona; presentations and tours for humanitarian organizations; and the teaching of a 3-credit-hour death investigation class at Pima Community College. The Chief Medical Examiner recorded 150 media interviews, emails and phone calls over the calendar year. Pima County's Forensic Anthropologist and Postdoctoral Fellow gave numerous platform and poster presentations to various organizations and at national anthropologic and forensic conferences.
- 3) *University of Arizona College of Medicine, Department of Pathology and School of Anthropology*
PCOME Forensic Pathologists hold clinical appointments with the Department of Pathology at the University of Arizona, College of Medicine, where they are involved with pathology resident and medical student teaching. Five pathology residents, four medical students and three pathology post-sophomore fellows rotated through the PCOME for month-long rotations in 2016. Funded by the Department of Pathology, the PCOME began a Forensic Pathology training program in 2016; the only such training program offered in Arizona. Our Forensic Anthropologists hold academic appointments at the University of Arizona and five anthropology interns trained at our facility in 2016.

Law Enforcement and Legal System

The availability of our pathologists to assist or advise law enforcement personnel in their investigations and the legal system in its proceedings is an important function of the PCOME. Involvement of the PCOME in the legal system generally consists of pretrial interviews, depositions and courtroom testimony. In 2016, the office's six forensic

pathologists and two anthropologists participated in a number of pretrial interviews, depositions and jury trials both in Pima and out-of-county cases.

Organ and Tissue Donation

Pursuant to A.R.S §36-861, the PCOME refers death notifications to, and partners with, Donor Network of Arizona (DNA) and other associated tissue research agencies for the coordination and procurement of anatomic gifts. The importance of supporting the efforts of the organ and tissue transplant and research communities in Arizona cannot be understated. Anatomic gifts can be life saving for organ and tissue recipients and these donations are always in short supply.

Organ Donations with PCOME Involvement 2016

Heart	Lungs	Liver	Kidneys	Pancreas	Sm. Intestine	Total
14	8	28	66	7	2	125

The total lives saved through organ donation involving deaths investigated by the PCOME in 2016 were 107 with 125 organs being transplanted. The authorization for the procurement of organs was granted in 100% of cases.

Cornea Donations with PCOME Involvement 2016

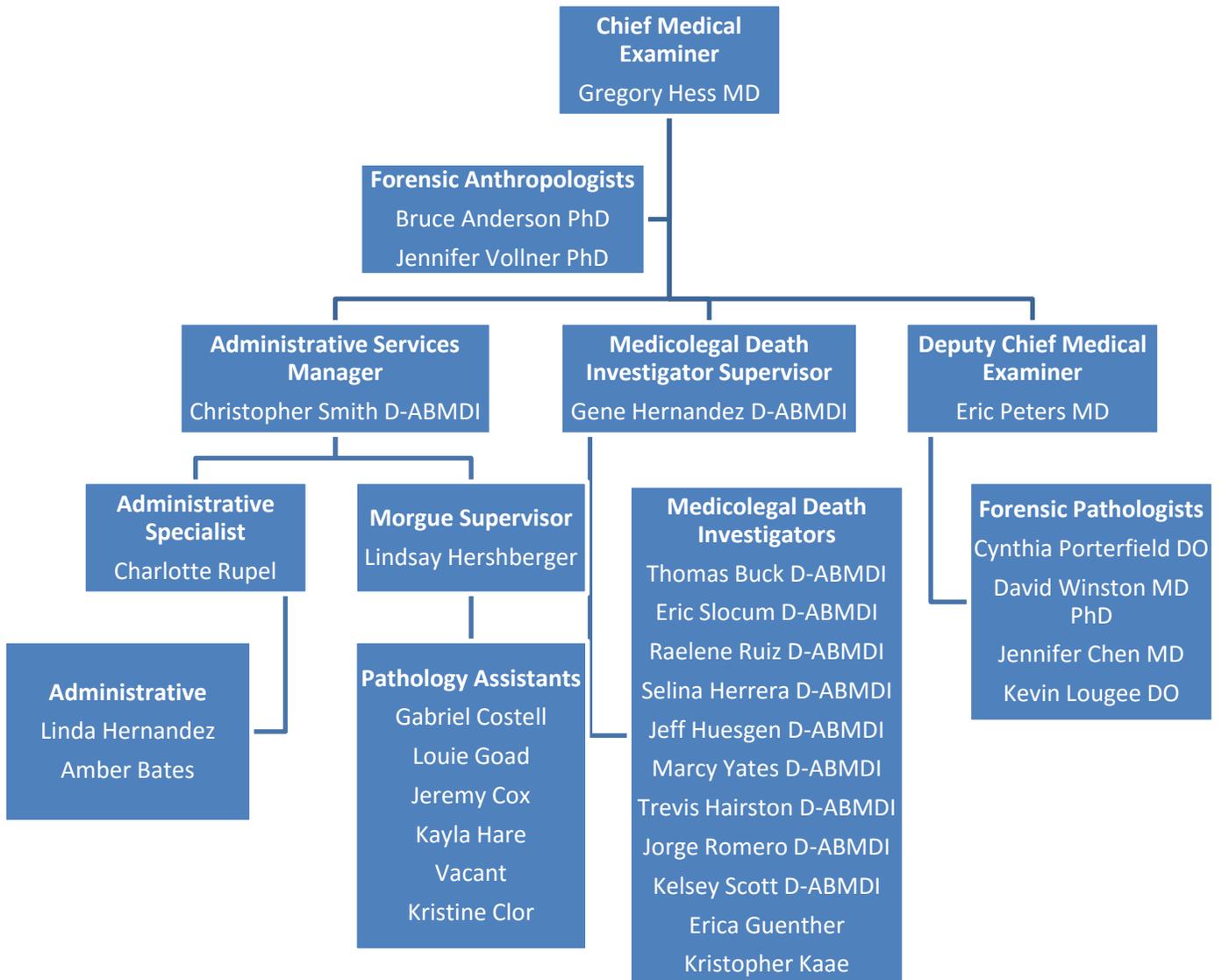
Corneas Recovered	Corneas Transplanted
296	123

There were 296 corneas recovered and 123 transplanted in 2016 with PCOME involvement. The release of corneas was granted 98% of the time.

Tissue Donation with PCOME Involvement 2016

Bone	Skin	Vascular	Heart	Aortoiliac
116	65	37	48	13

The PCOME was involved in approximately 20% of all DNA tissue recoveries in 2016. The average release of tissue for procurement was granted 85% of the time across the state of Arizona in 2016. The release of tissues was granted 94% of the time by the PCOME, significantly above the state average.

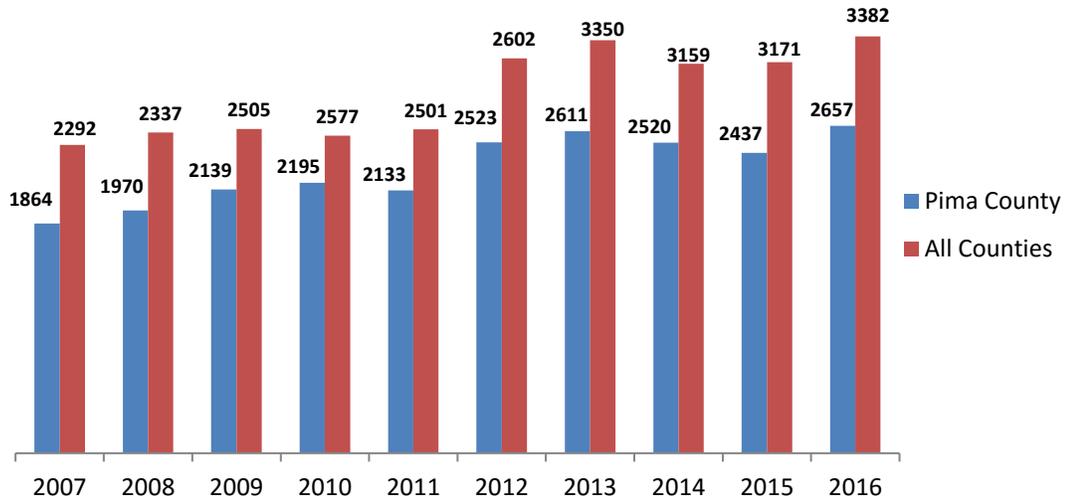


**OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2016**

TOTAL CASES

The total cases handled by the PCOME in a given year are the sum of the ME cases (autopsies, external examinations, and death certificate cases), cases in which jurisdiction was declined, and the number of cases stored at our facility during the calendar year (storage cases). ‘All Counties’ includes cases examined at the PCOME from Apache, Cochise, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Navajo, Pinal, Santa Cruz and Yuma counties in addition to Pima County.

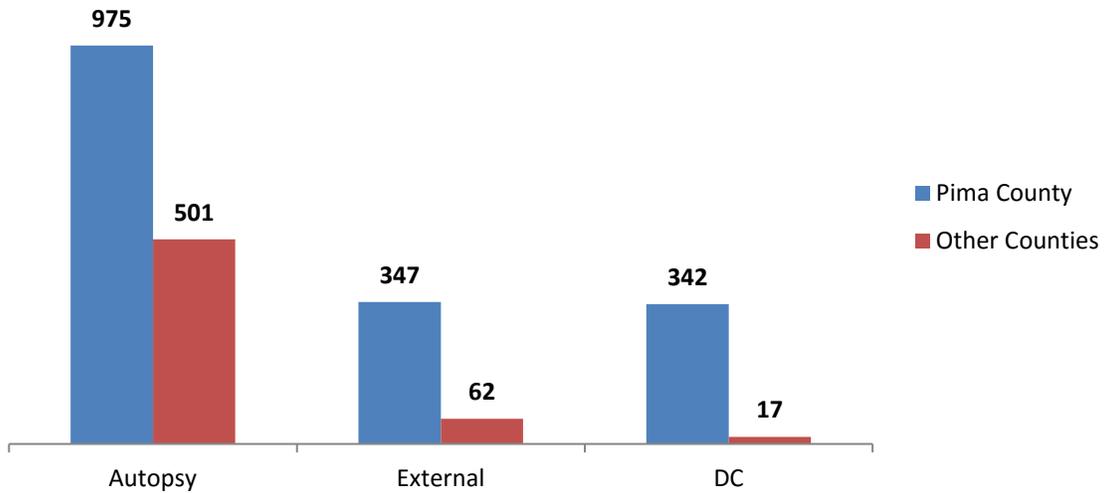
Total Cases 2007 - 2016



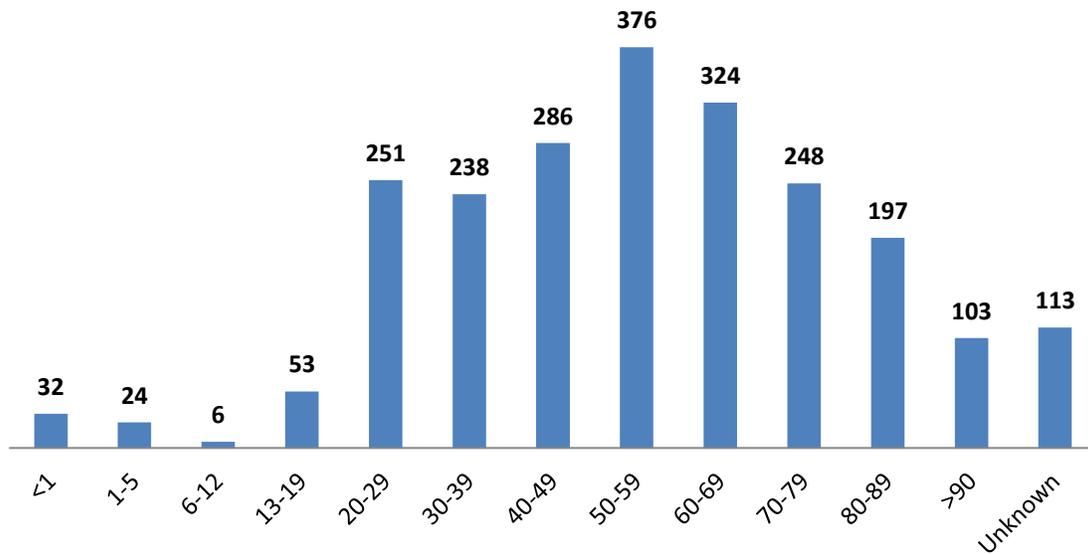
MEDICAL EXAMINER CASES

The PCOME considers all cases in which the cause and manner of death are determined by this office as “medical examiner cases.” Those cases include autopsies, external examinations and death certificate (DC) cases. Autopsies are examinations where a decedent is examined both externally and internally for evidence of injury or natural disease which may have caused or contributed to the individual’s death. External examinations consist of an external examination of the body without the internal examination. A DC case involves review of the medical records, law enforcement reports and any other information that may be necessary to determine the cause and manner of death without physical examination of the decedent. In 2016, for Pima and all other counties listed above, 1476 autopsies, 409 external examinations and 359 DC cases were performed at the PCOME. Pima County alone accounted for 975 autopsies, 347 external examinations and 342 DC cases.

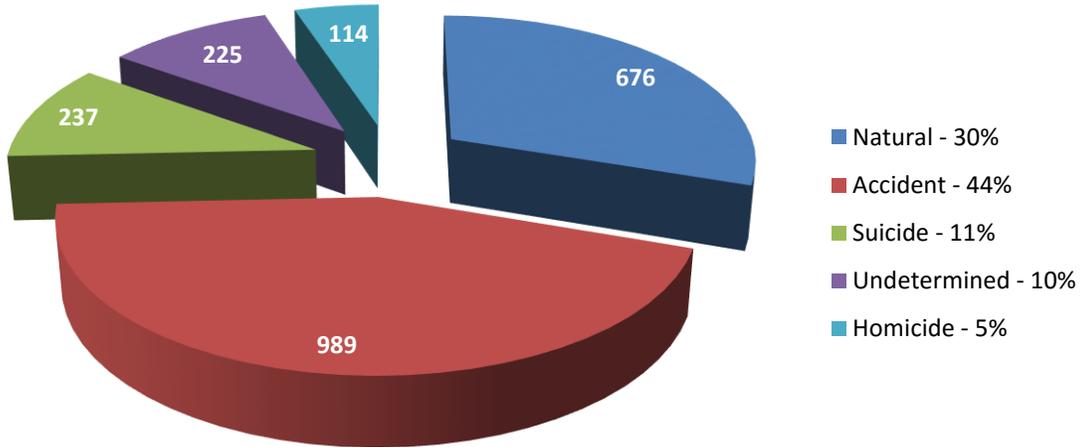
2016 Medical Examiner Cases



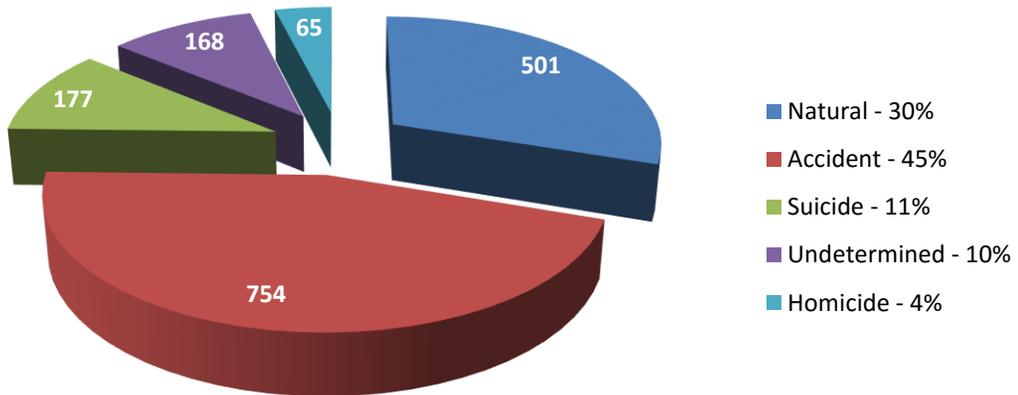
Medical Examiner Cases by Age - 2016



ME Cases (all counties) by Manner of Death - 2016



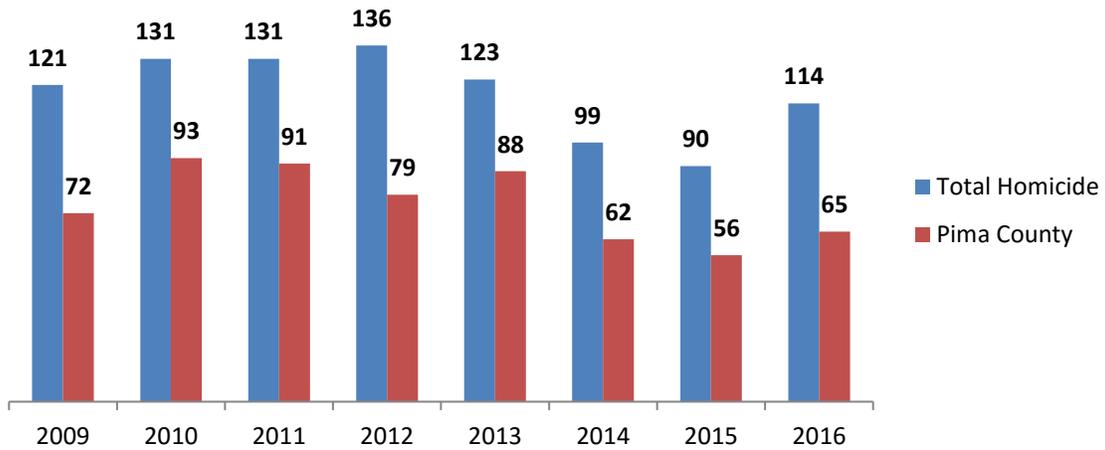
ME Cases (Pima only) by Manner of Death - 2016



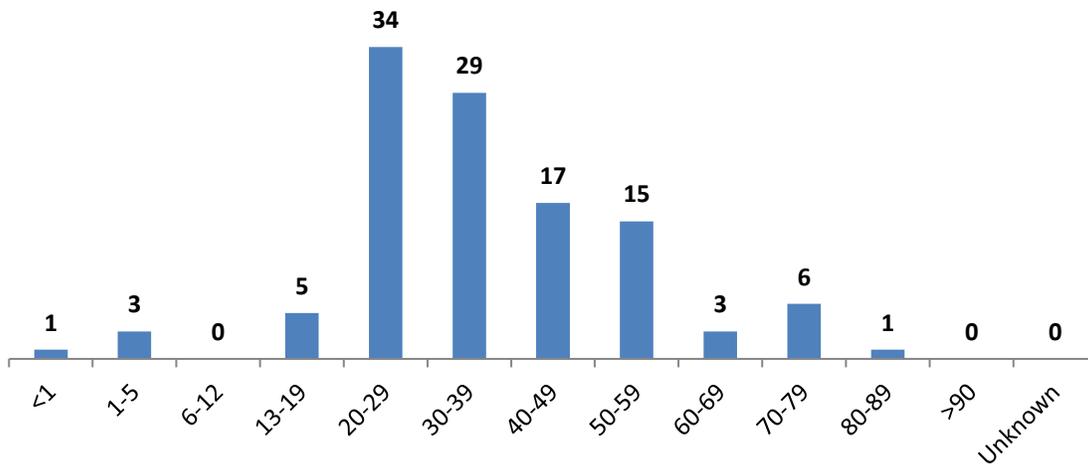
HOMICIDE DEATHS

The PCOME certified 114 deaths as homicide in 2016, 65 from Pima County and 49 from other counties. Homicide totals from 2009 – 2016 are compared below. Homicide victims were most frequently male (82%), between 20-29 years of age (30%) and died as the result of firearms (63%).

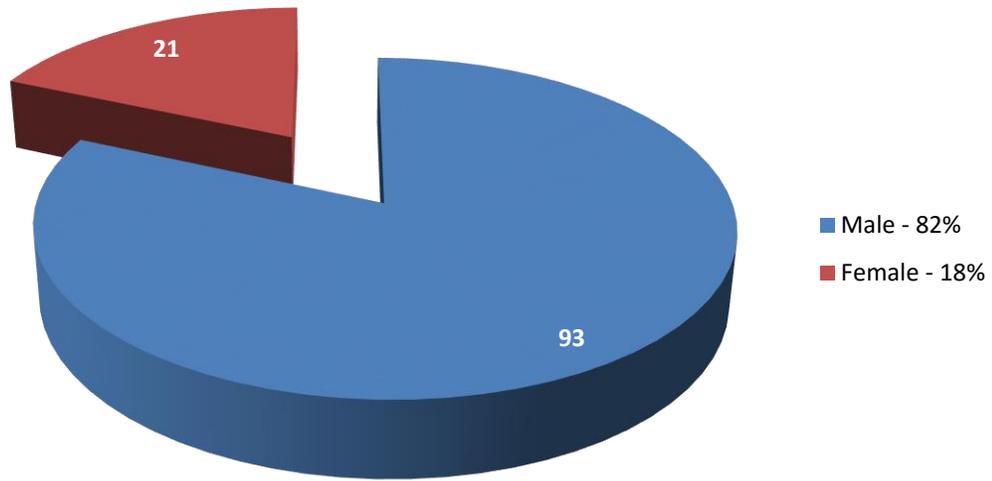
Homicide 2009 - 2016



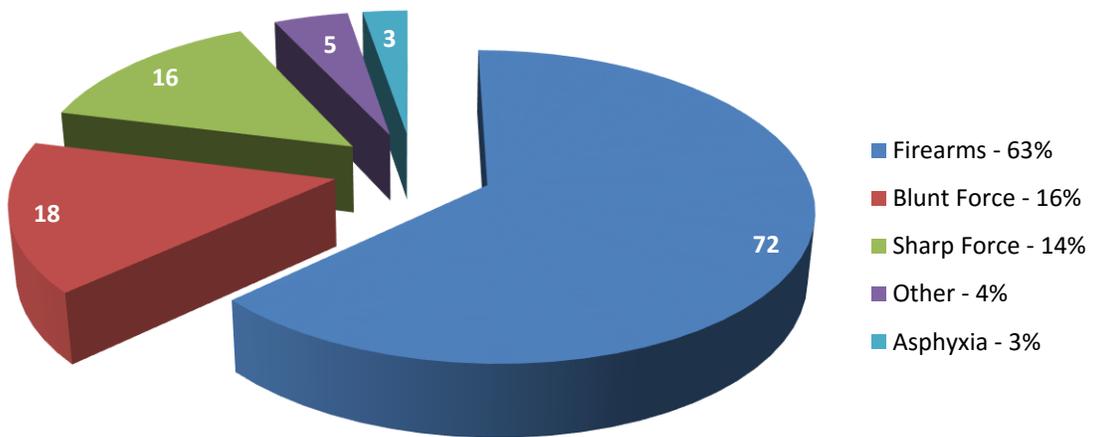
Homicide by Age 2016



Homicide by Sex 2016



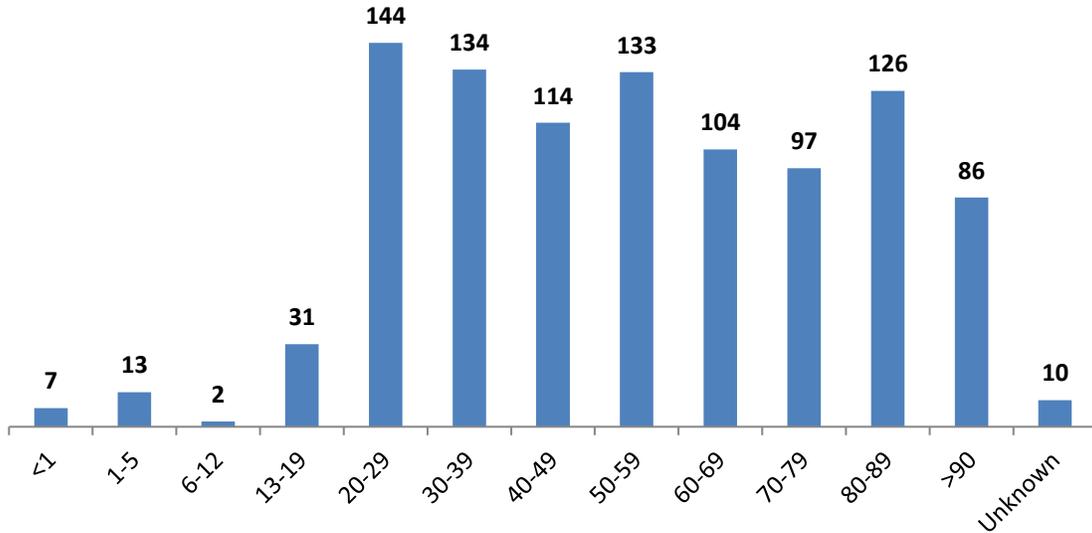
Homicide by Cause 2016



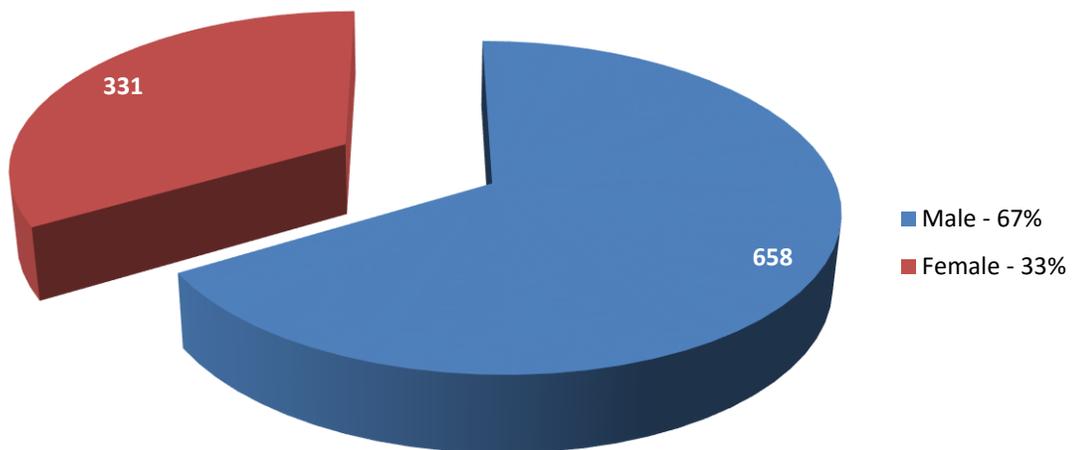
ACCIDENT DEATHS

Deaths due to accidents accounted for 44% of the ME deaths investigated by the PCOME in 2016. Accident victims were most frequently males (67%), between 20-29 years of age (15%) and died as the result of a drug or medication overdose (32%).

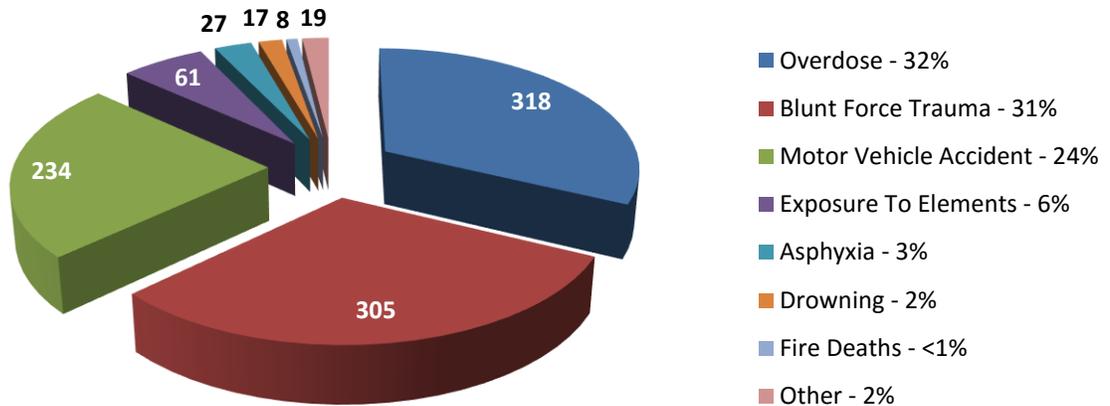
Accident by Age 2016



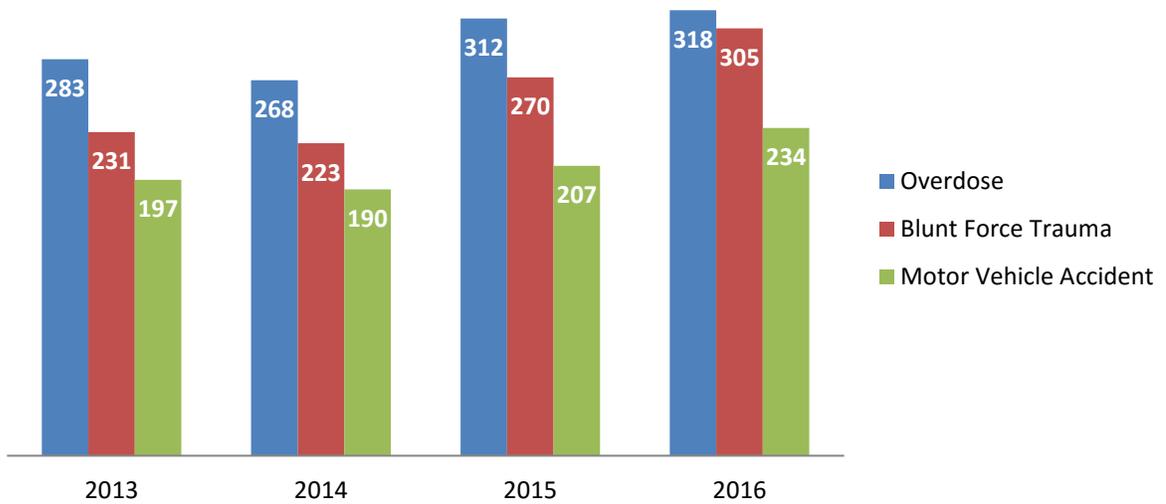
Accident by Sex 2016



Accident by Cause 2016



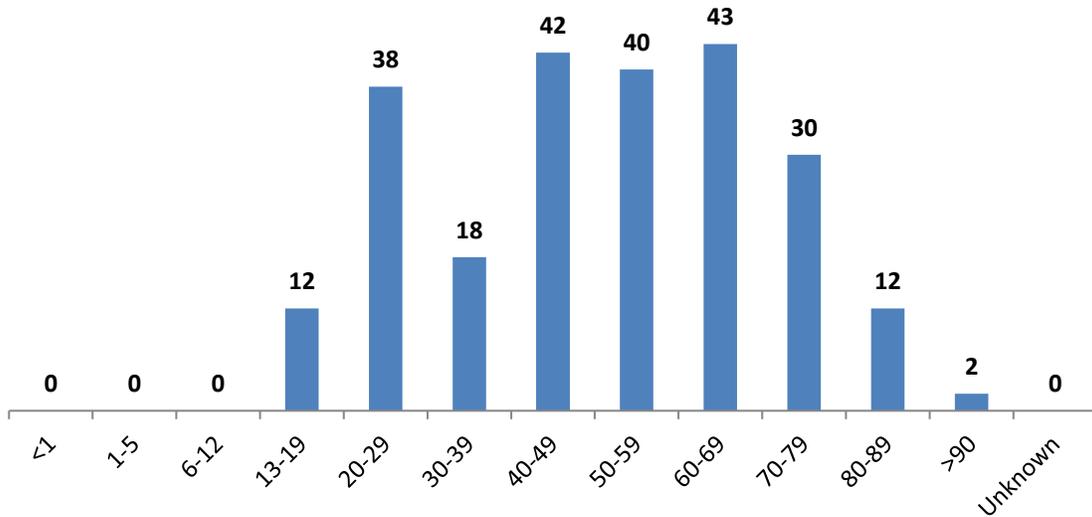
Accident by Cause (Top 3) 2013 - 2016



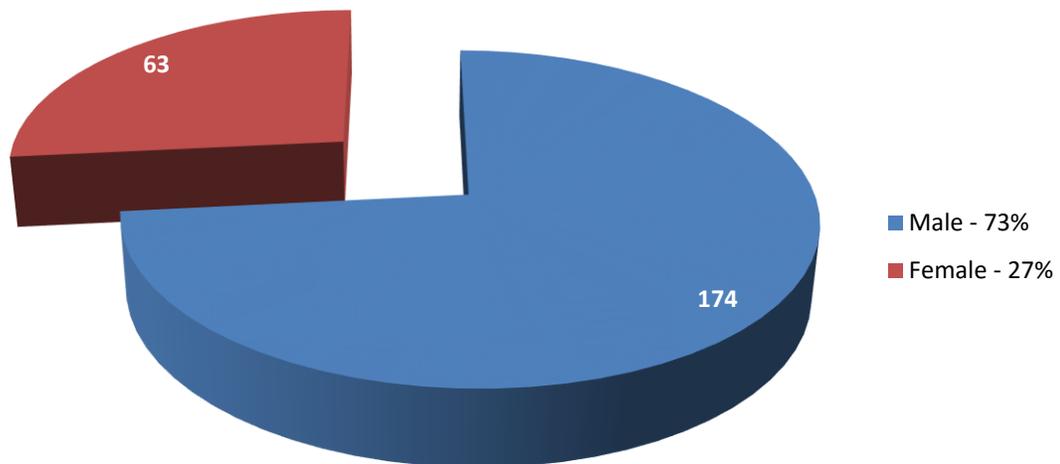
SUICIDE DEATHS

Suicide deaths accounted for 11% of the ME deaths investigated by the PCOME in 2016. Suicide victims were most frequently males (73%), between 60-69 years of age (18%) and died as the result of firearms (60%).

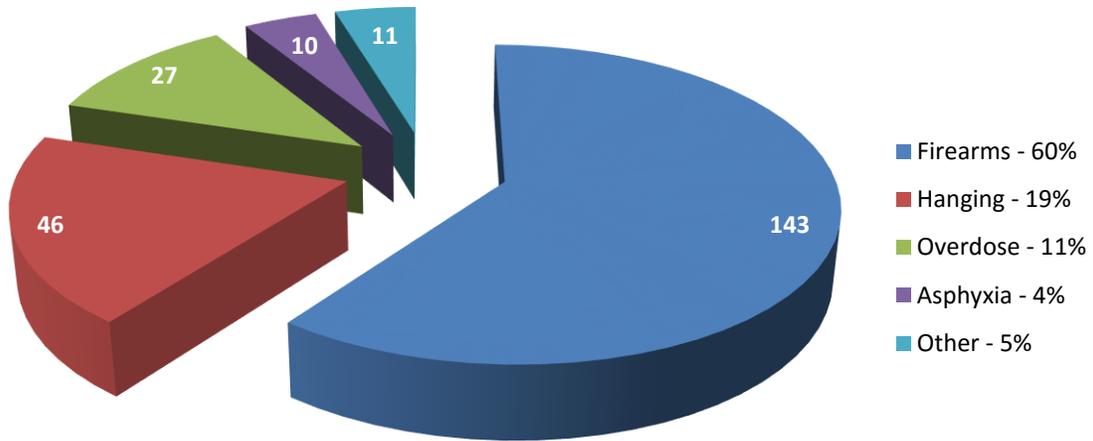
Suicide by Age 2016



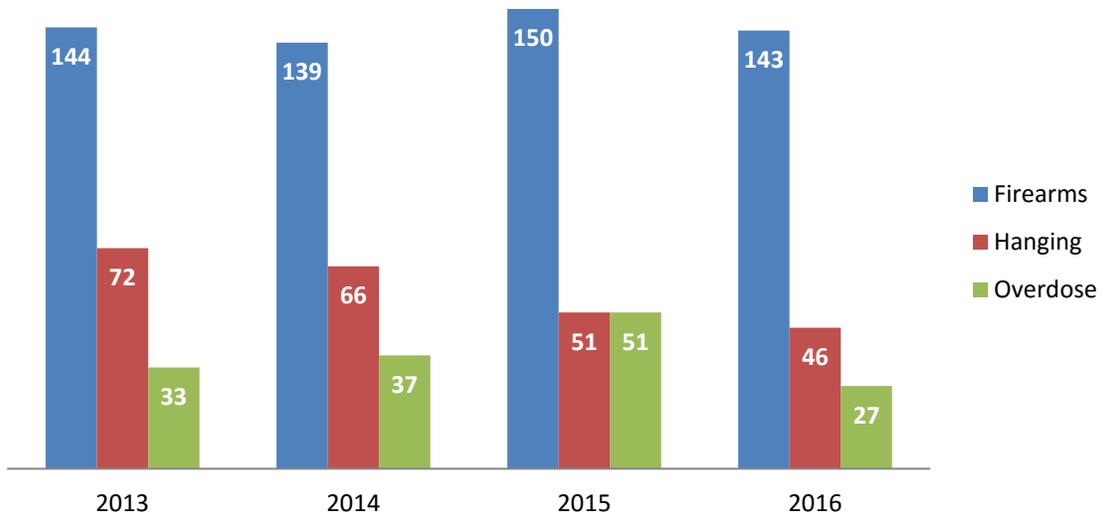
Suicide by Sex 2016



Suicide by Cause 2016



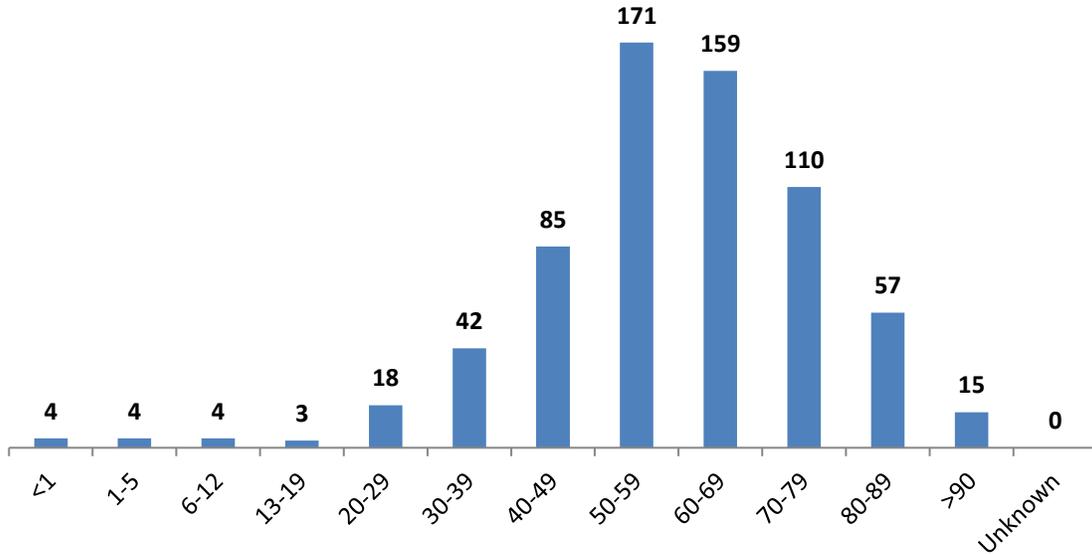
Suicide by Cause (Top 3) 2013 - 2016



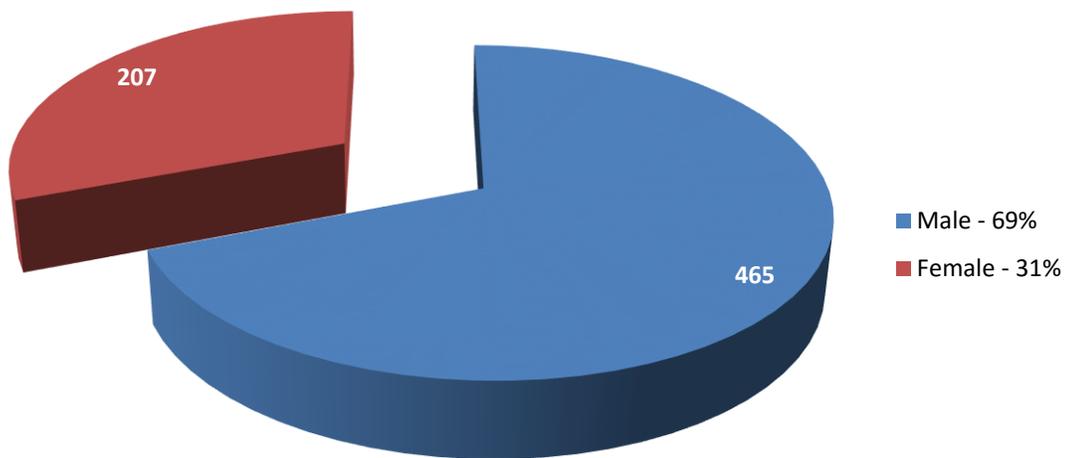
NATURAL DEATHS

Natural deaths accounted for 30% of the ME deaths investigated by the PCOME in 2016. Individuals who died from natural causes were most frequently males (69%), between 50-59 years of age (25%) and died as the result of cardiovascular disease (60%).

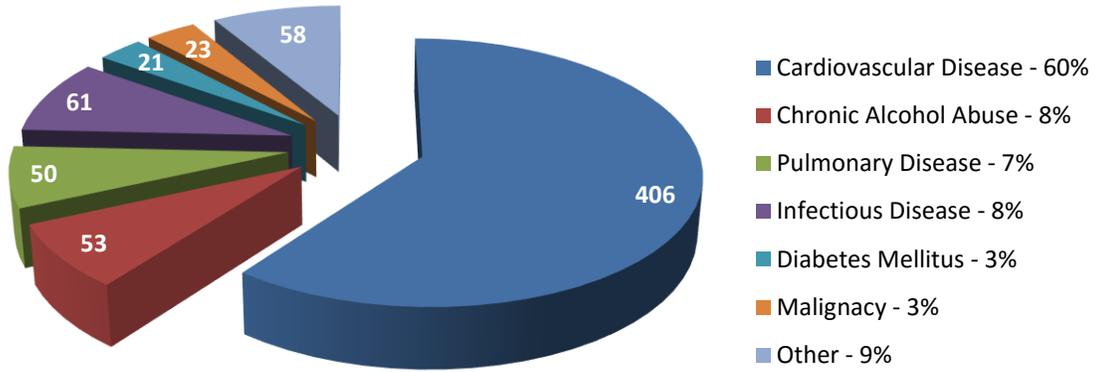
Natural Deaths by Age 2016



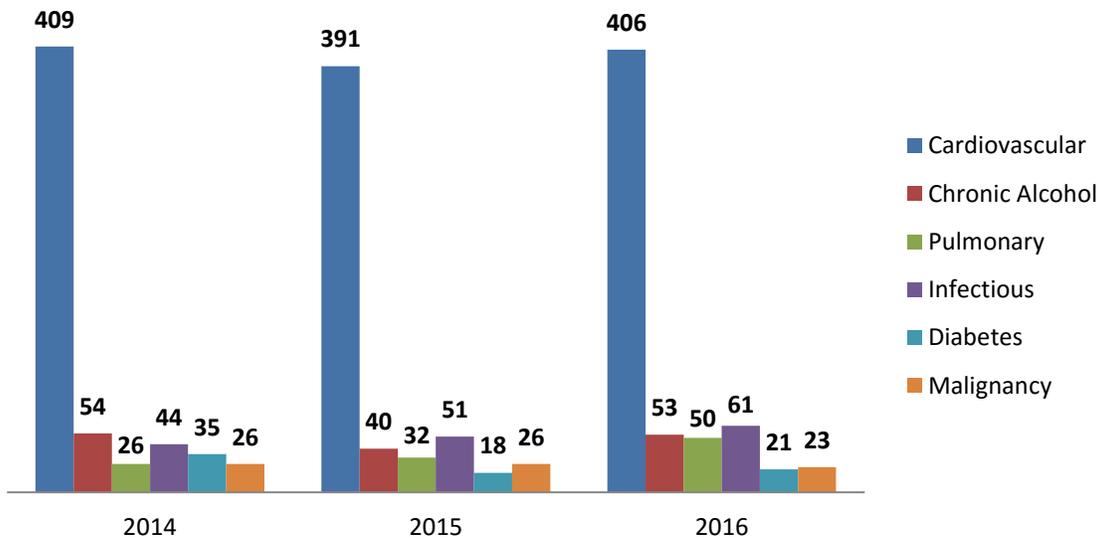
Natural Deaths by Sex 2016



Natural Deaths by Cause 2016



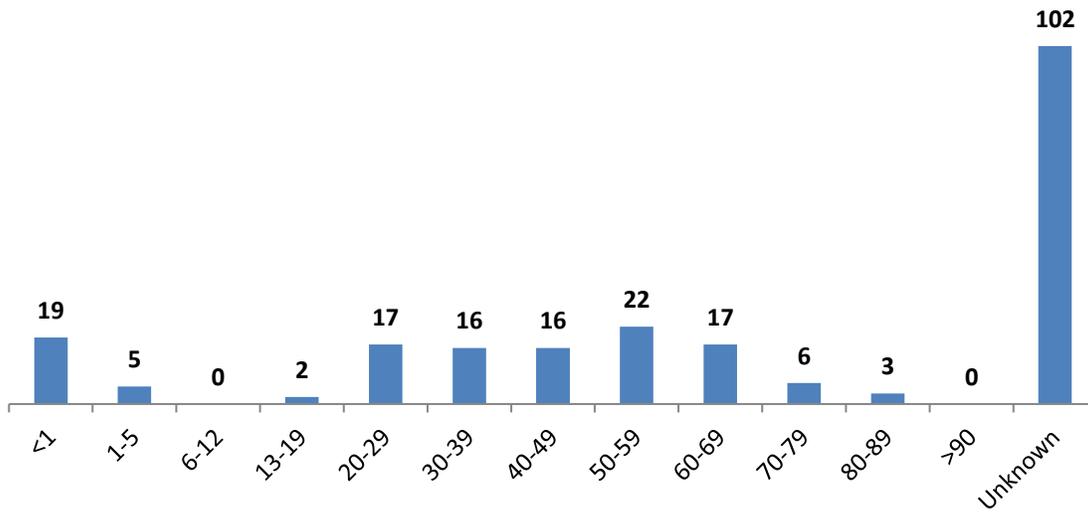
Natural Death by Cause 2014 - 2016



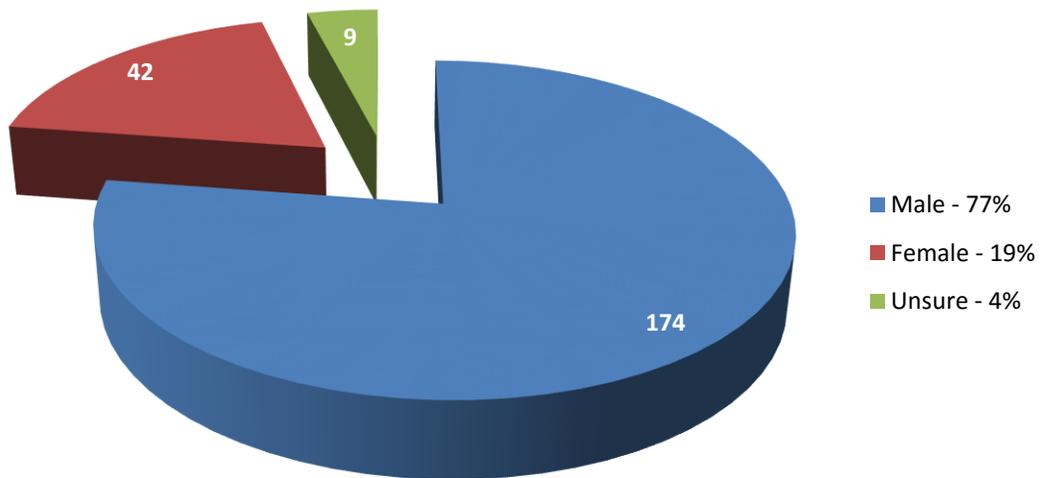
UNDETERMINED MANNER OF DEATH

Deaths in which the manner of death was undetermined accounted for 10% of the ME deaths investigated by the PCOME in 2016. Individuals who died with an undetermined manner were most frequently males (77%), of unknown age (45%) and died from undetermined causes (85%). Many of these deaths represent skeletal remains of undocumented border crossers who died in the deserts of southern Arizona.

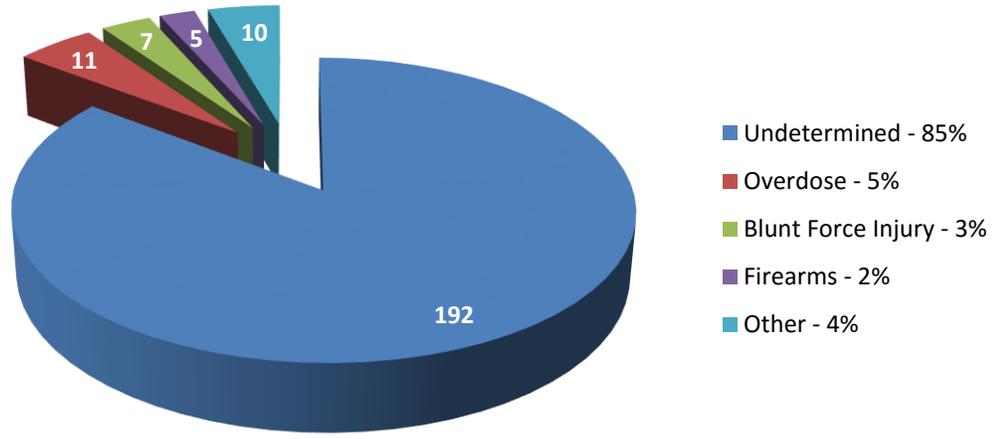
Undetermined Manner of Death by Age 2016



Undetermined Manner of Death by Sex 2016



Undetermined Manner of Death by Cause 2016



OVERDOSE DEATHS

There were 356 deaths attributed to an overdose of either a single drug (189 deaths, 53%) or a combination of drugs (167 deaths, 47%) in 2016. Overdose deaths commonly involved males (66%) between the ages of 30-39 (24%). The majority of these deaths were classified as accidents (89%).

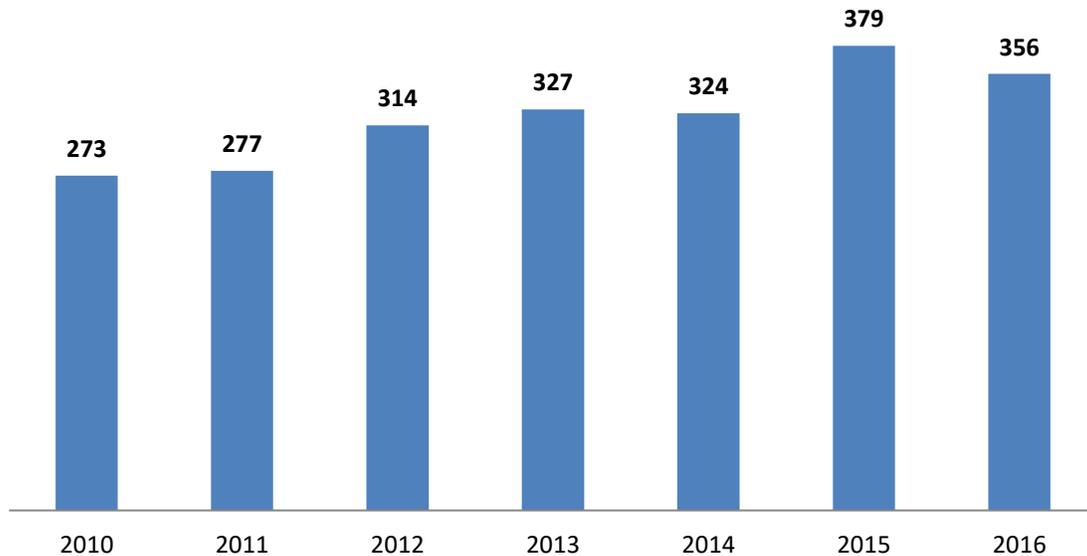
Opiate drugs (heroin, oxycodone, methadone, hydrocodone, morphine, oxymorphone, hydromorphone, tramadol, opiate unspecified) and fentanyl (a synthetic opioid narcotic) accounted for the majority of overdose deaths, either as a single drug or as a component of a poly-drug overdose. Methamphetamine was the most commonly abused illicit drug contributing to death in 2016 followed by heroin. Deaths due to methamphetamine were also on the rise in 2016 with a near doubling of the number of deaths from 2014 (57 to 111 deaths).

The number of heroin deaths is likely underreported as heroin is rapidly metabolized to morphine by the body and if the parent compound indicative for heroin (6-monoacetylmorphine) is not present on the toxicology report these deaths may be classified as either morphine intoxication or opiate intoxication.

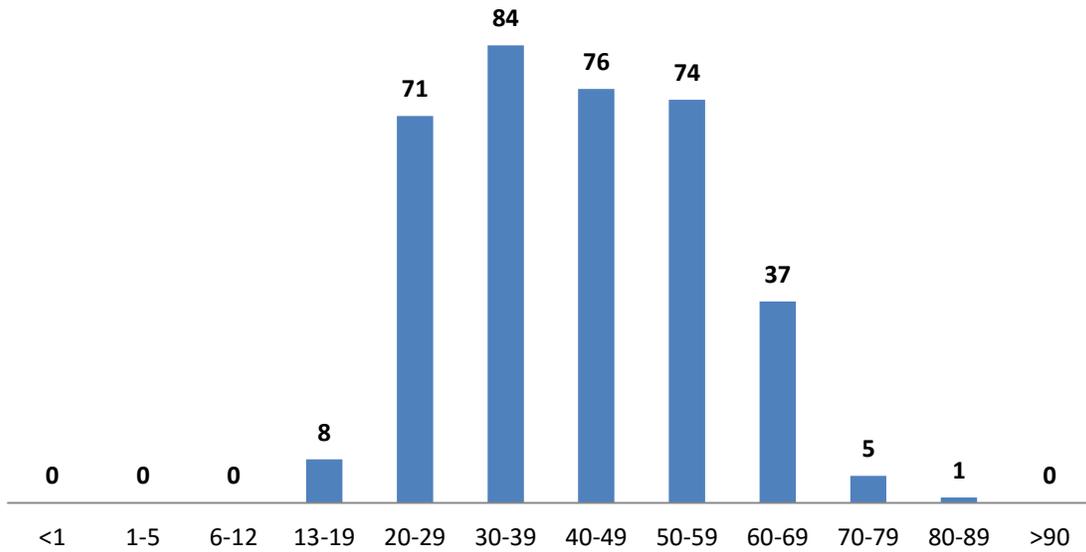
Acute alcohol (ethanol) intoxication alone, not as component of a poly-drug overdose, accounted for 15 overdose (4%) deaths in 2016.

Fentanyl related deaths continued to increase from 7 deaths in 2014 to 17 deaths in 2015 to 23 deaths in 2016, including 1 death in 2016 due to furanylfentanyl.

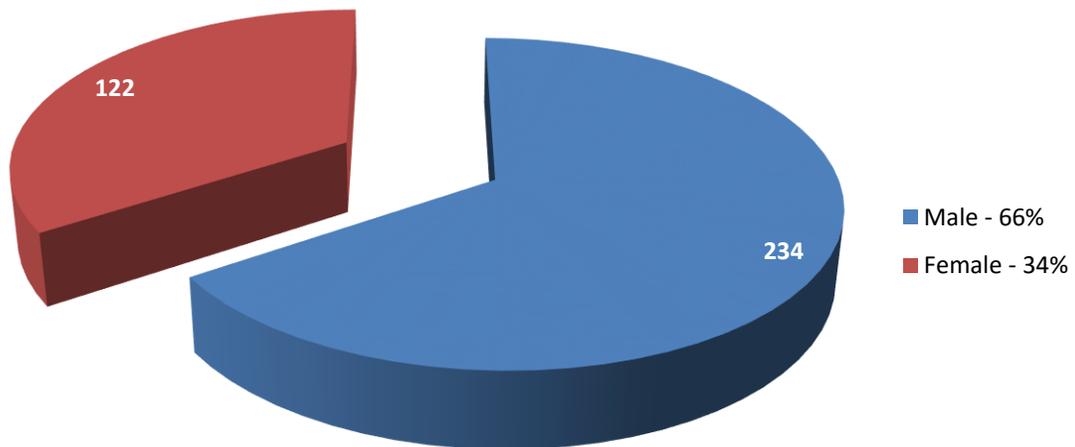
Overdose Deaths 2010 - 2016



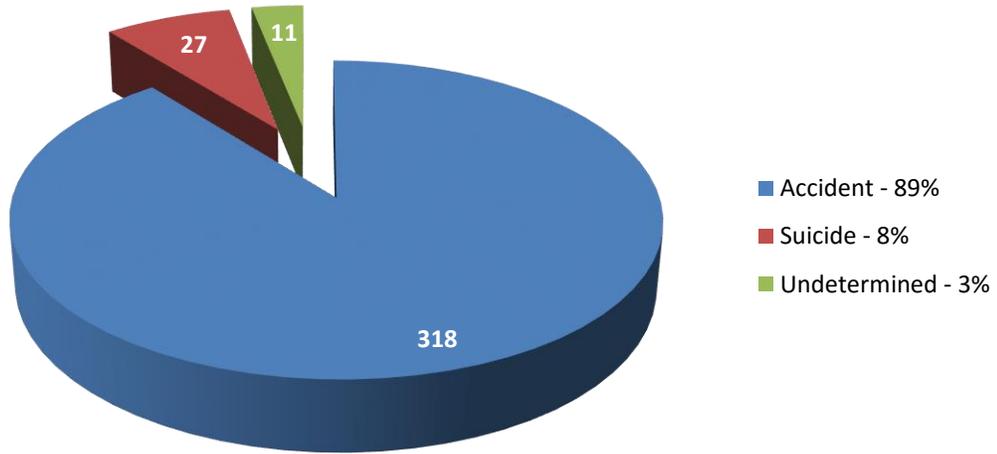
Overdose Deaths by Age 2016



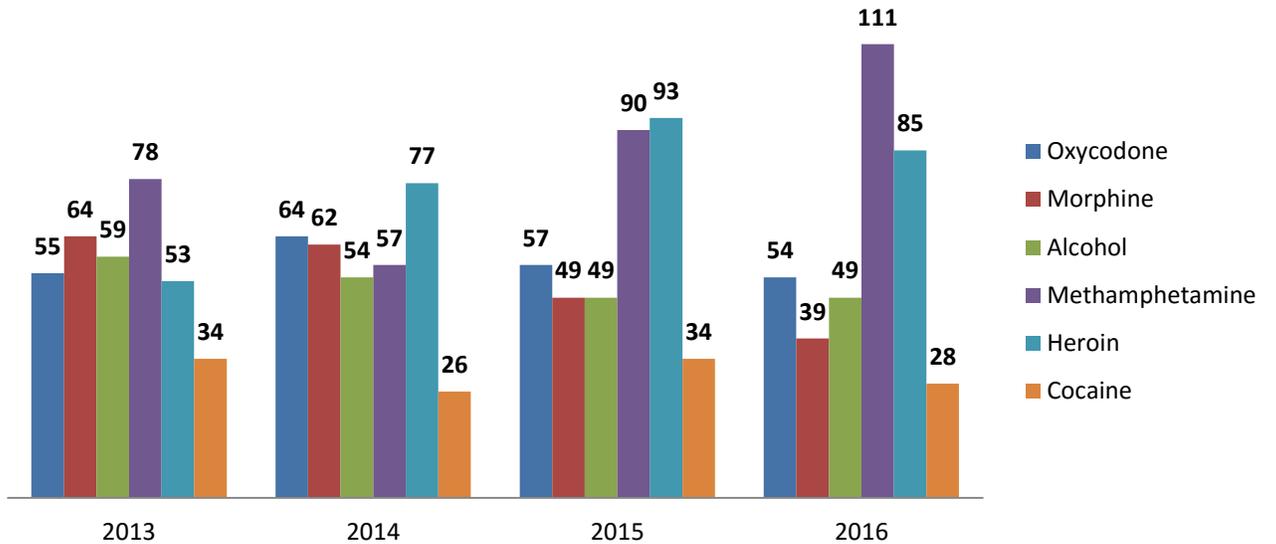
Overdose Deaths by Sex 2016



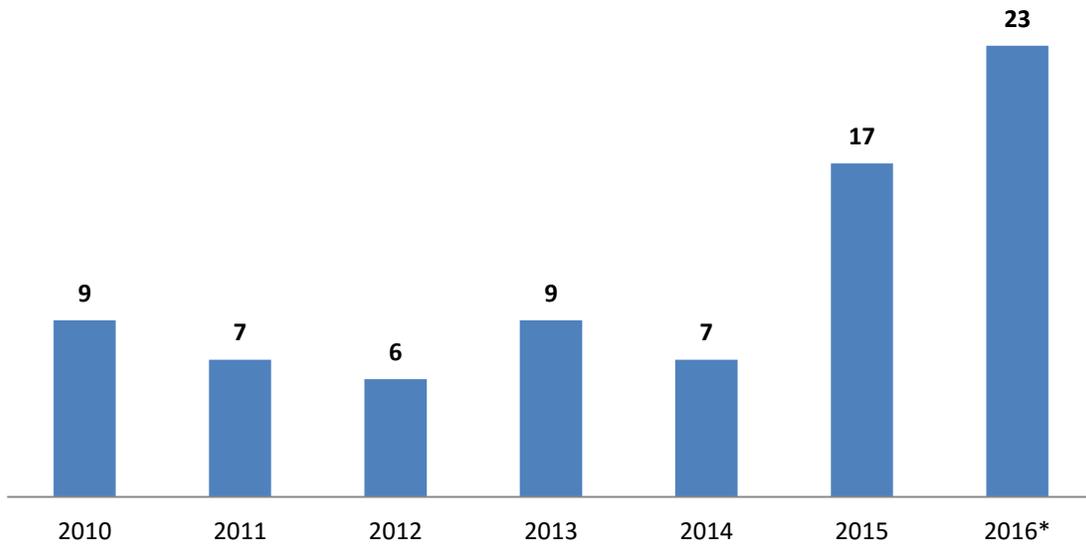
Overdose Deaths by Manner 2016



Select Drugs by Year 2013 - 2016

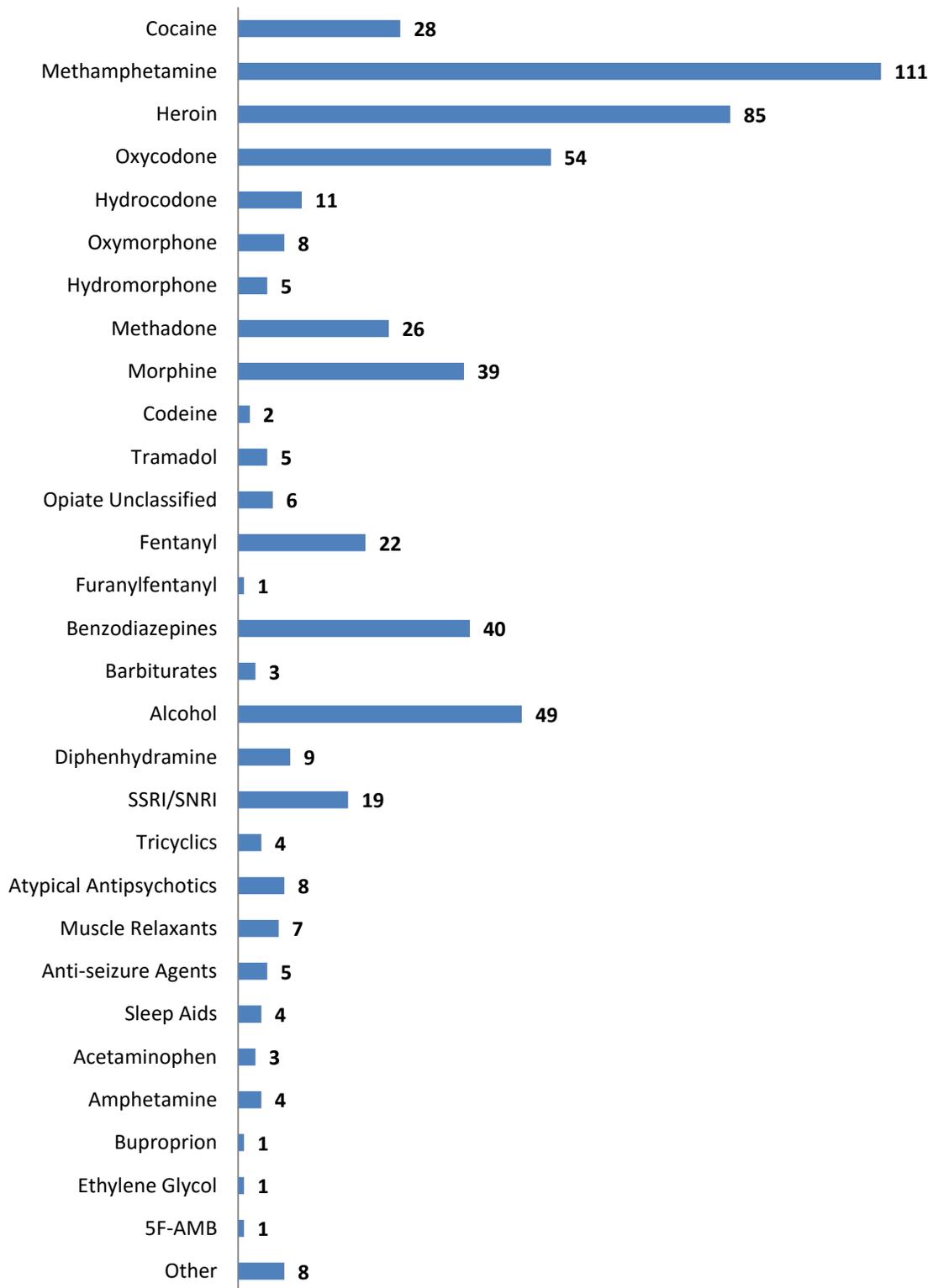


Fentanyl Related Deaths 2010 - 2016



*Including one fentanyl analog

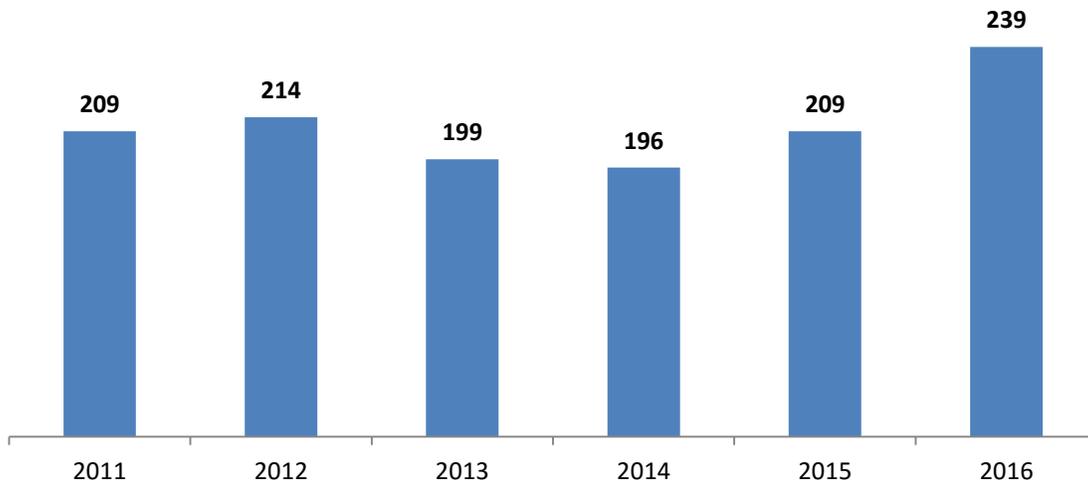
Overdose Deaths by Drug 2016



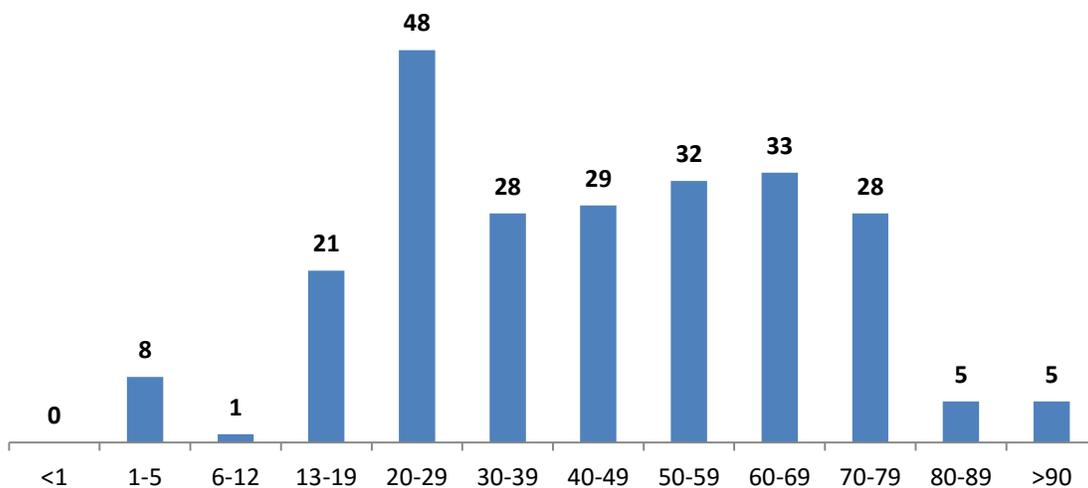
MOTOR VEHICLE RELATED FATALITIES

Motor vehicle related fatalities accounted for 239 total deaths in 2016. The majority, 150 deaths, were occupants of a motor vehicle involved in an accident (MVA). Of the remaining, 33 were motorcycle accidents (MCA), 51 were pedestrians or bicyclists struck by vehicles and 5 were operating an all-terrain vehicle (ATV). Individuals who died from motor vehicle related fatalities were most frequently males (72%) and between 20-29 years of age (21%).

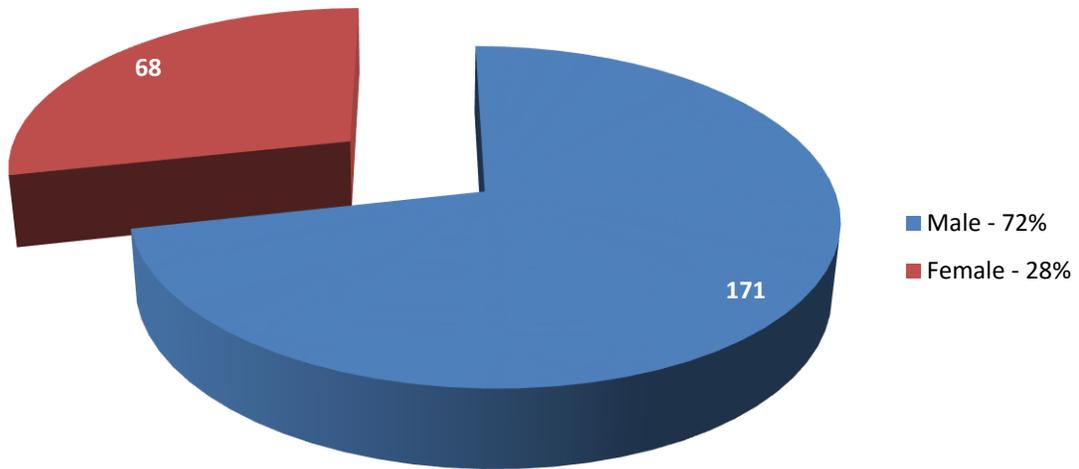
Motor Vehicle Fatalities by Year 2011 - 2016



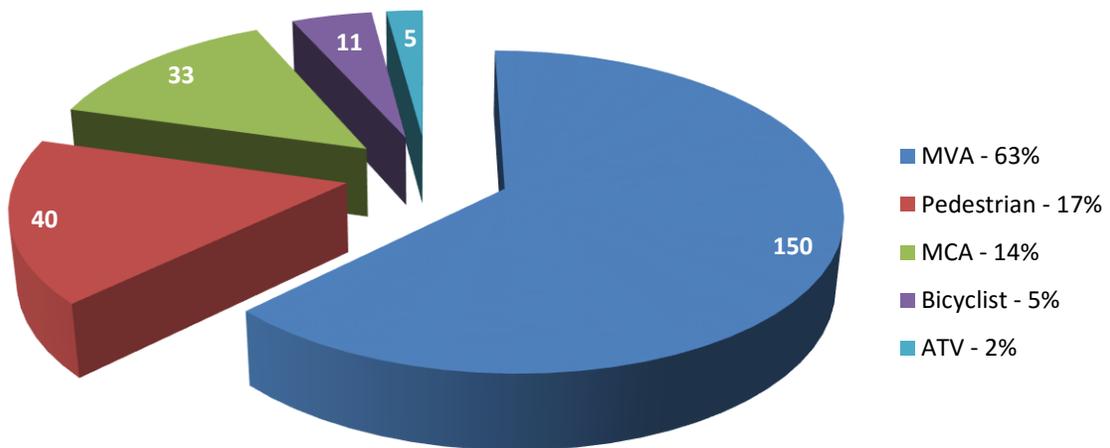
Motor Vehicle Fatalities by Age 2016



Motor Vehicle Fatalities by Sex 2016



Motor Vehicle Fatalities by Type 2016





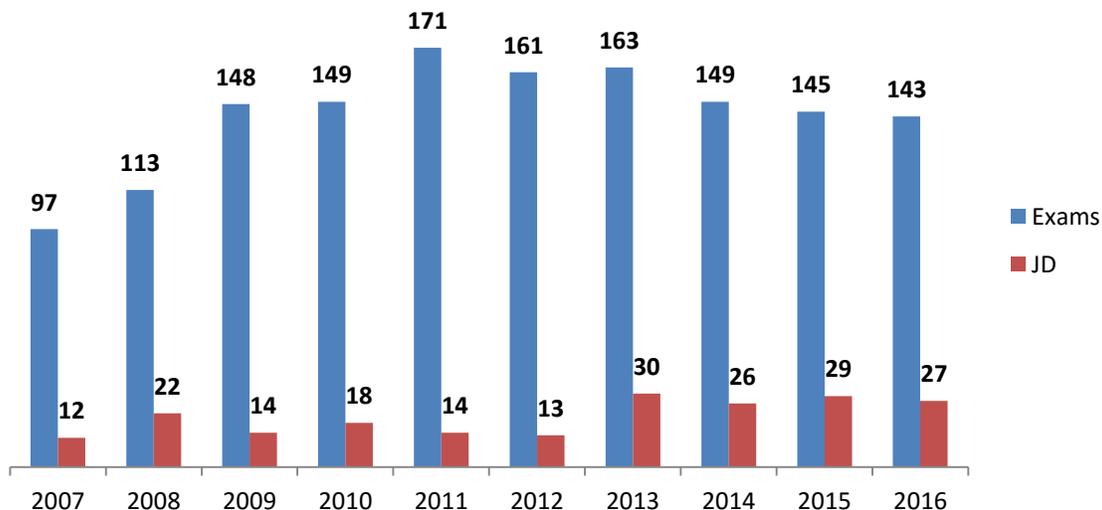
W.H. BIRKBY FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY LABORATORY

Forensic Anthropologists at the W.H. Birkby Forensic Anthropology Laboratory within the PCOME performed 143 examinations (biological profiles, trauma evaluations, dental examinations and examinations for identification) in 2016 on human remains of forensic significance. An additional 27 examinations were performed on remains ultimately deemed non-human, prehistoric or otherwise not forensically significant and these remains were classified as jurisdiction declined (JD) cases.

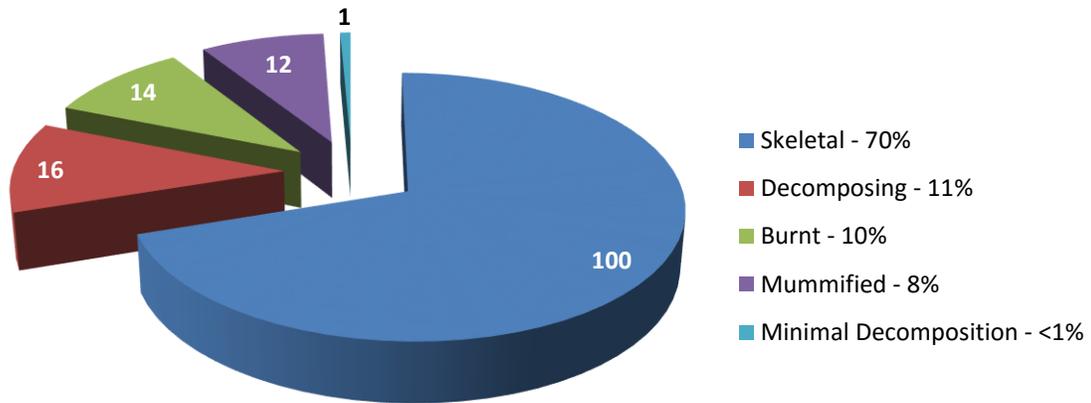
The extent of postmortem decomposition of a particular set of remains is important when performing a Forensic Anthropology (FA) examination. Remains examined by Forensic Anthropologists were categorized as minimally decomposed, decomposing, mummified, skeletal or burnt. In 2016, skeletal remains comprised 70% of FA examinations. Four main types of exams are performed; biologic profiles, dental, trauma and identification examinations.

Biological profiles refer to charting, measurements, descriptions, radiographs and photographs taken to estimate sex, age, ancestry, stature and postmortem interval of a set of remains. Dental and identification examinations entail charting, descriptions, radiographs and photographs in an effort to identify an unknown individual or confirm a suspected identity. Trauma examinations entail charting, measurements, descriptions, radiographs and photographs to characterize the nature of an injury, implement used to cause injury to the bone, age of injury, etc. It is common for a particular set of remains to receive more than one type of examination. Most (86%) FA exams include a biological profile with dental examination (90%) when applicable. Less common are examinations for identification (15%) or trauma (6%) with or without biological profiles and dental examinations.

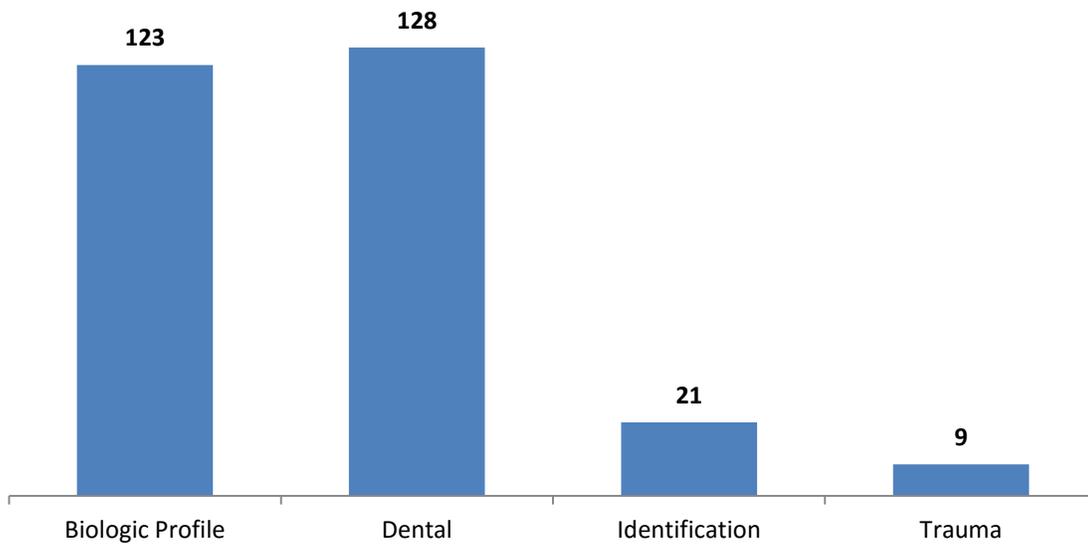
Number of FA Exams 2007 - 2016



FA Exam by Condition of Remains 2016



FA Examination by Type 2016



UNDOCUMENTED BORDER CROSSER (UBC) REMAINS

The term ‘UBC’ refers to foreign nationals who die attempting to cross the southern Arizona desert without permission from the United States government. Calendar year (CY) 2010 saw the highest number of UBC recoveries (222) recorded at the PCOME as compared to the annual average (169 recoveries per year on average from 2002 - 2016). The PCOME has received 2,615 recovered remains of suspected UBCs since 2001. The recoveries per year are adjusted annually to account for the association of remains found months or years apart later discovered to be that of the same individual.

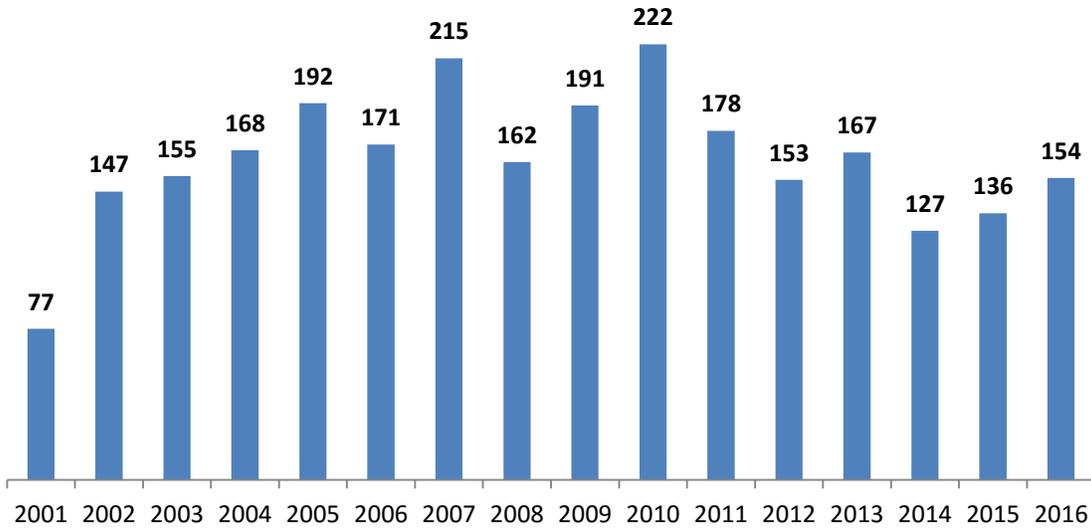
There were 154 UBC recoveries in calendar year 2016. As is the historic norm, UBC recoveries peaked during the warmer months (June – July) with 48 recoveries (31% of total for year) in 2016. Many remains are not identifiable due to postmortem changes and efforts by some UBCs to obscure their identities. Of the decedents who were identified, 32% (50 decedents) were between 20-39 years of age. Additionally, 90% (139) of the recovered remains, identified or unidentified, were males, 7% (11) were females and in 3% (4) the sex was unable to be determined.

Since the exact date and time of death of found remains are often unknown, PCOME staff determine a ‘postmortem interval (PMI)’, which is an assessment of what period of time elapsed from death to recovery of the remains. A 1-8 body condition scale was developed in 2013 to provide a more objective measure of the PMI. The PMI is an estimate and therefore subject to error. The PMIs for the body condition categories are listed following the Condition of Recovered UBC Remains table on page 32 of this report. In 2016, 25 remains (condition 1) were found within less than a day of death (16%), 42 remains (conditions 2-4) were found with a few days up to a few weeks from death (27%), and skeletal remains (body conditions 5-7) accounted for 87 (56%) of the recovered remains.

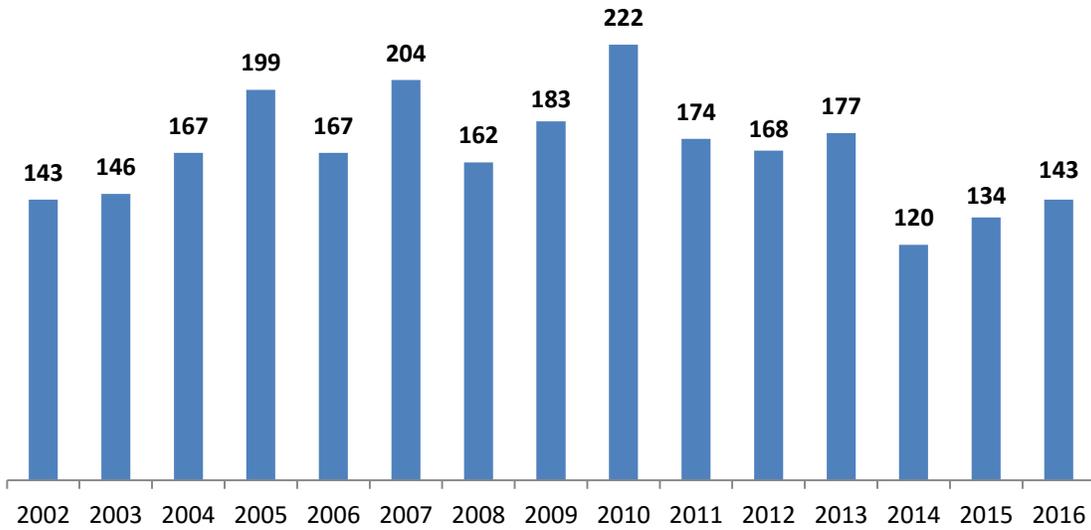
The cause of death was undetermined in 71% (110) of cases, primarily due to limitations of examination of decomposed and skeletal remains. Of the remainder, environmental exposure to extremes in heat or cold combined with dehydration comprised 26% (40) of deaths. Other, less frequent, causes of death included blunt force injuries from falls or motor vehicle accidents (2) and gunshot wound injuries (1 case).

In 2016, 38 (63%) of identified UBCs were of Mexican nationality, followed by Guatemalans (15 or 25%), Hondurans (4 or 7%), Salvadorans (2 or 3%), and Ecuadorian (1 or 2%). Since 2001, identified UBCs of Mexican nationality have been the most numerous (1,403, 84%), followed by Guatemalans (154, 9%) and Salvadorans (45, 3%). Of the 2,615 decedents since 2001, 1,676 (64%) have been identified, 340 (20%) by DNA comparison to a family or law enforcement reference sample. As of December 31, 2016, 939 decedents remain unidentified.

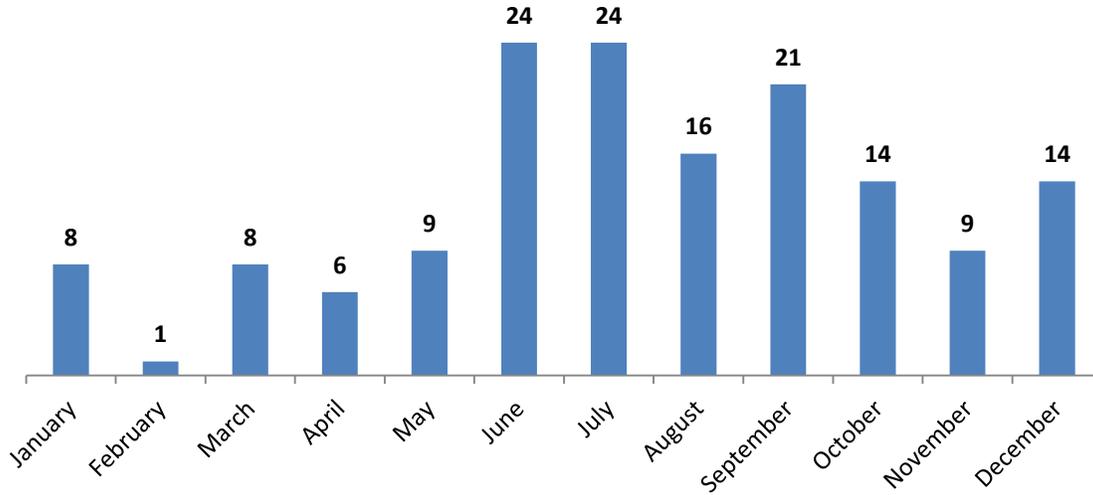
UBC Recoveries CY2001 - 2016



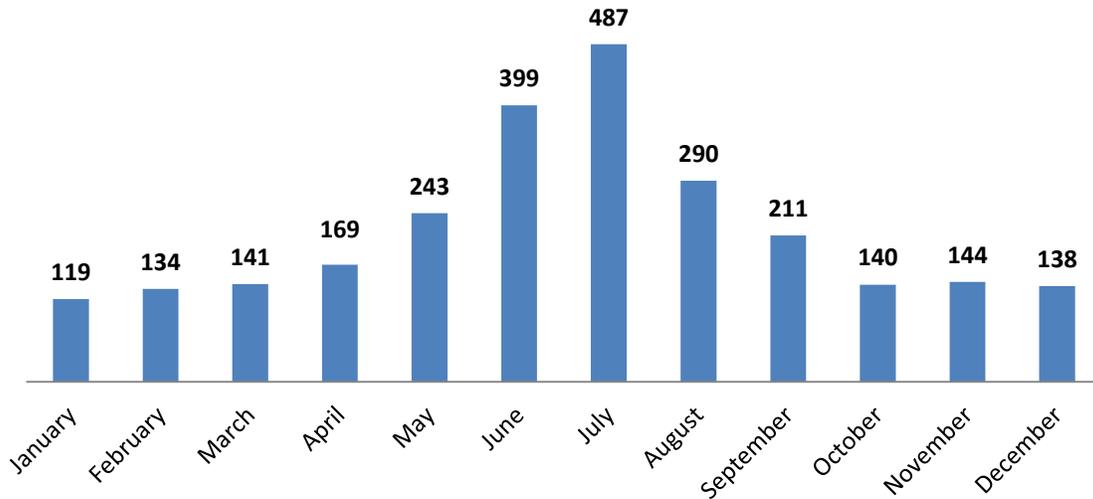
UBC Recoveries FedFY2002 - 2016



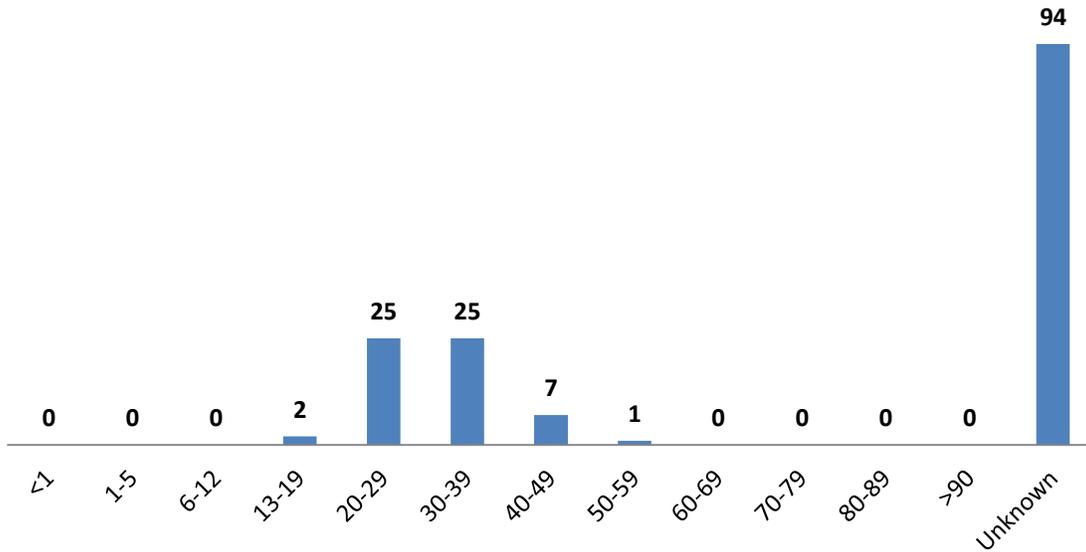
UBC Recoveries by Month CY2016



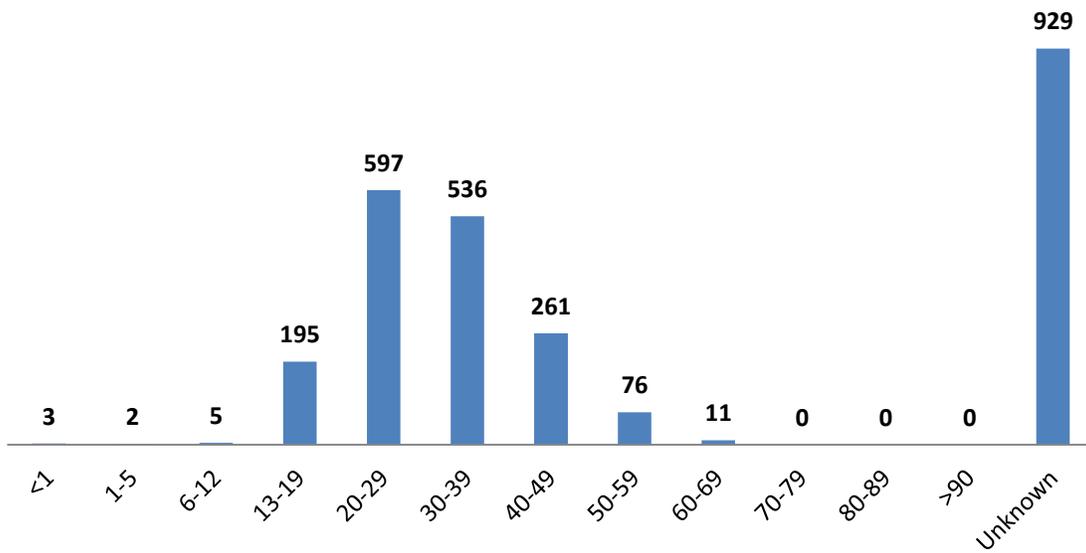
UBC Recoveries by Month CY2001 - 2016



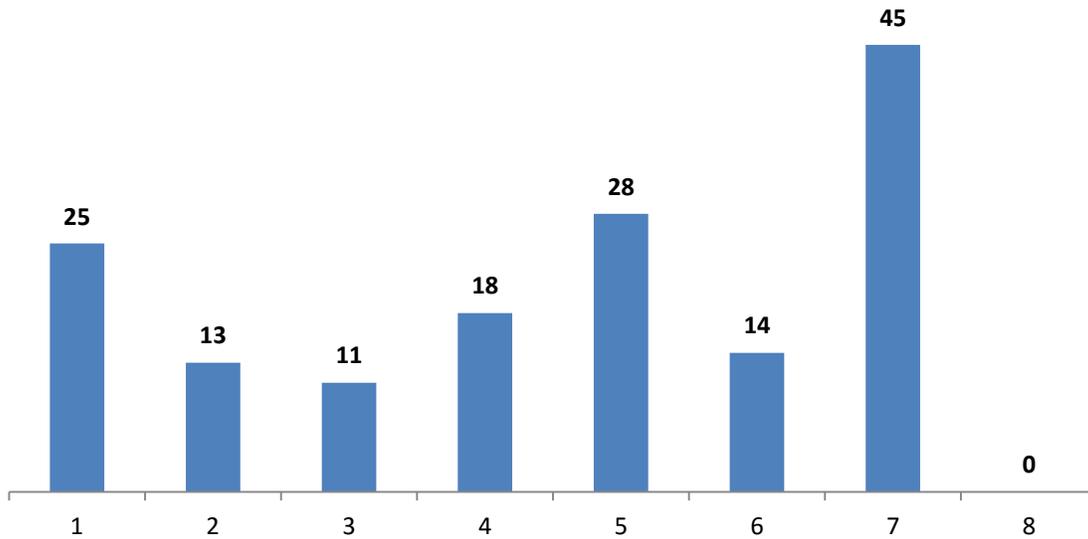
UBC Recoveries by Age CY2016



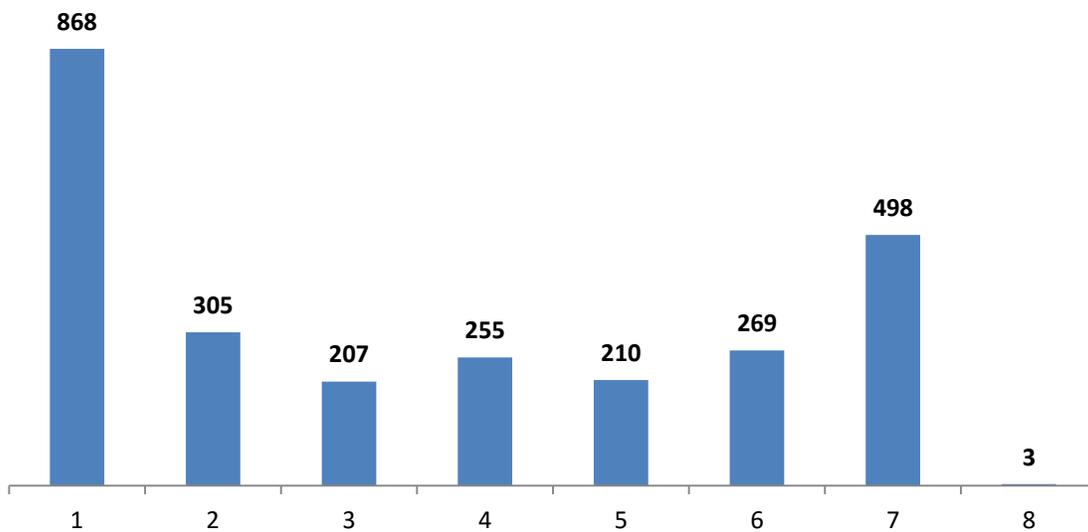
UBC Recoveries by Age CY2001 - 2016



Condition of Recovered UBC Remains CY2016

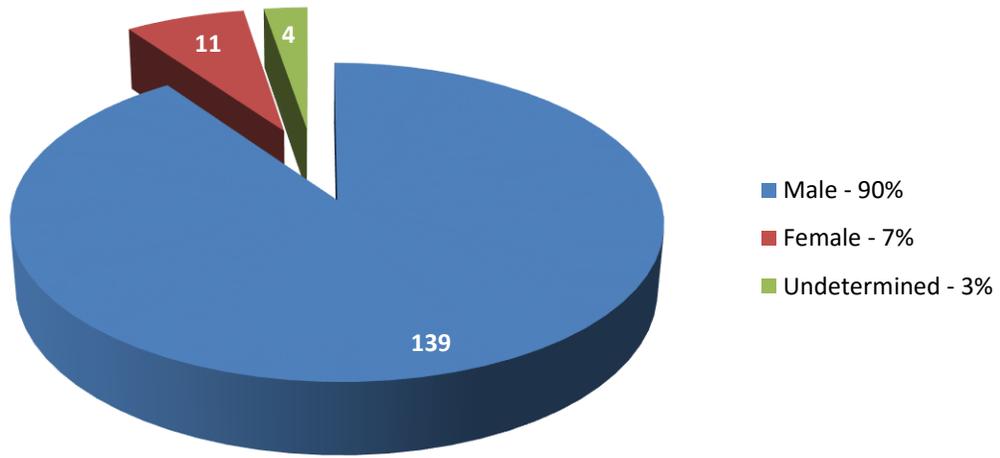


Condition of Recovered UBC Remains CY2001 - 2016

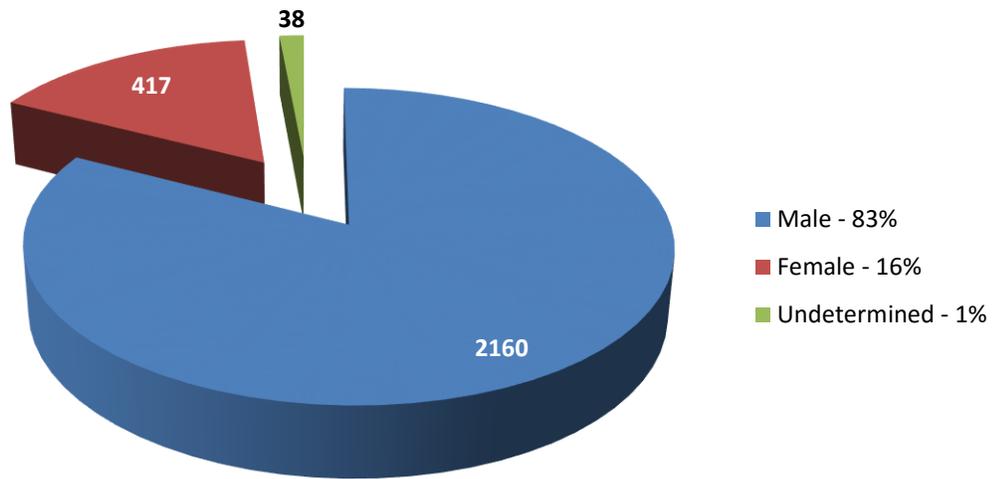


- 1 - Fully fleshed (PMI < 1 day)
- 2 - Decomposed (PMI < week)
- 3 - Decomposition with focal skeletonization (PMI < 3 weeks)
- 4 - Mummification with skeletonization (PMI < 5 weeks)
- 5 - Skeletonization with articulation/ligamentous attachments (PMI < 3 months)
- 6 - Complete skeletonization with disarticulation (PMI < 6-8 months)
- 7 - Complete skeletonization with bone degradation (PMI > 6-8 months)
- 8 - Other

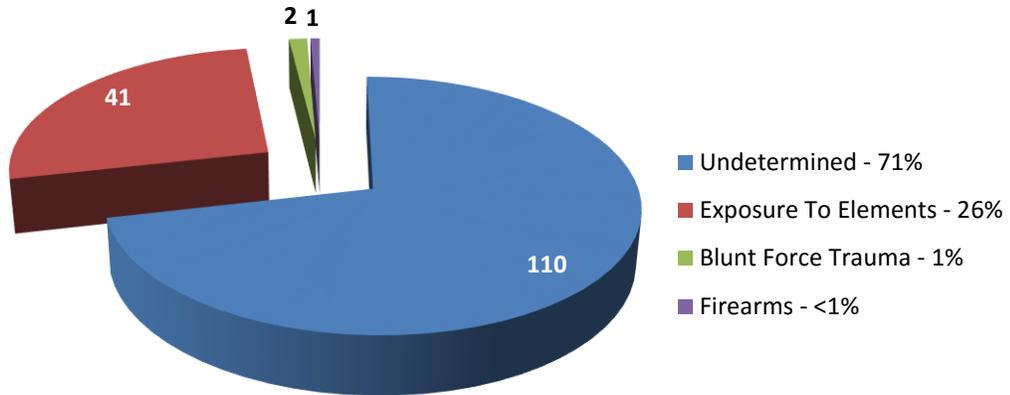
UBC Recoveries by Sex CY2016



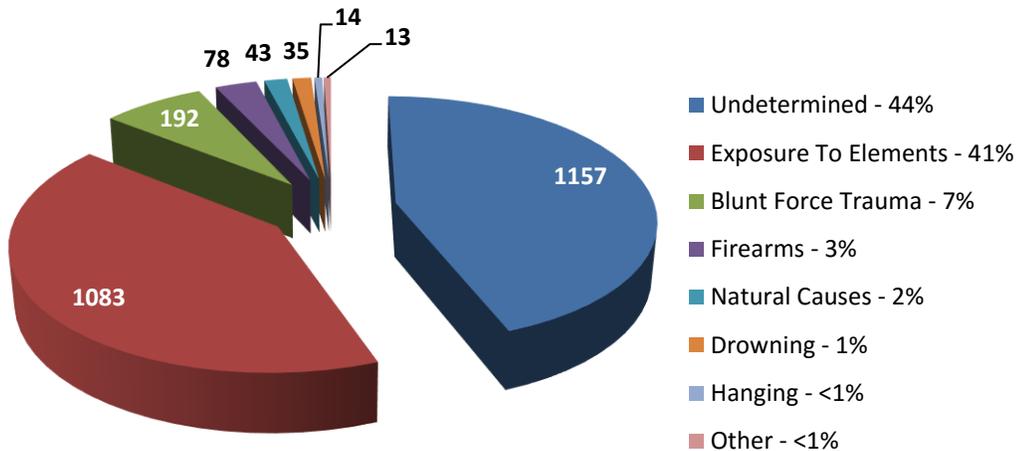
UBC Recoveries by Sex CY2001-2016



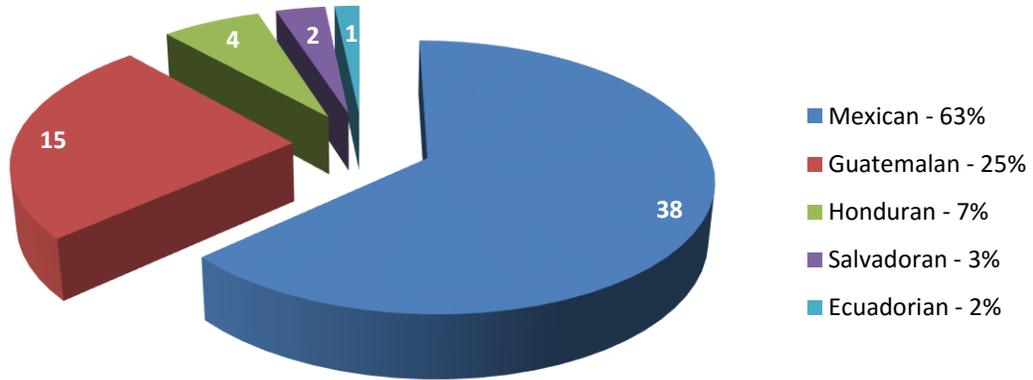
UBC Recoveries by Cause CY2016



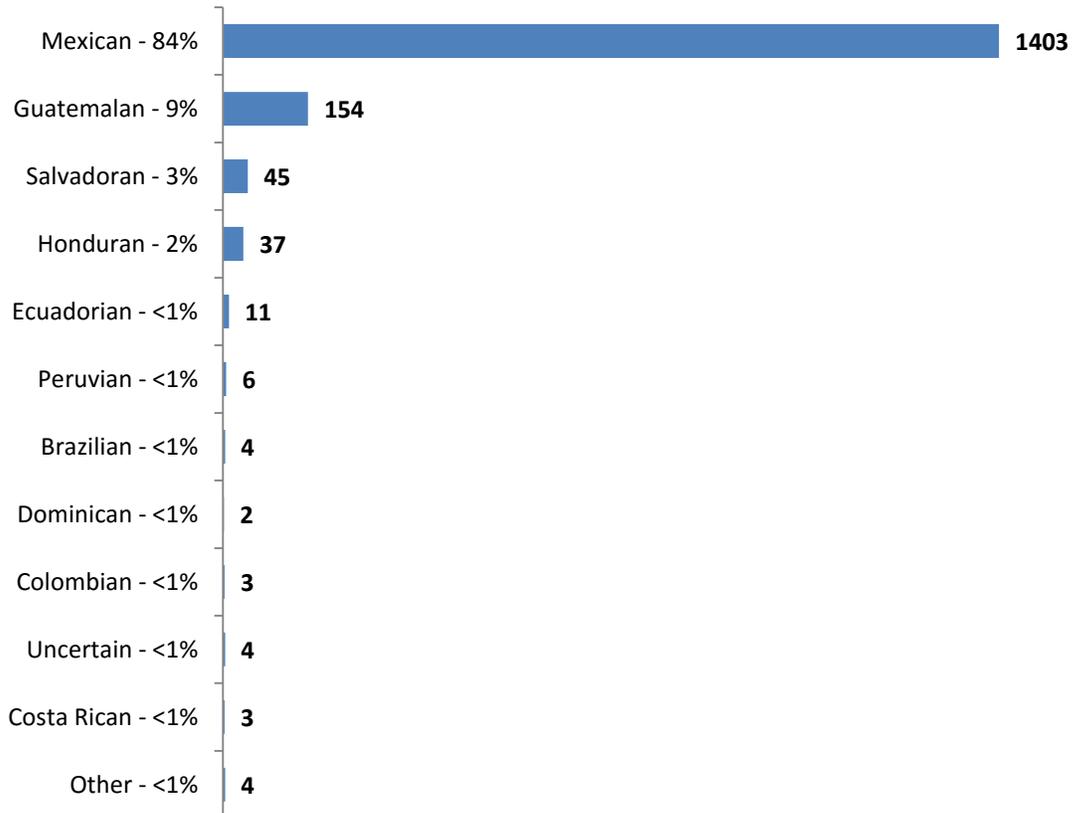
UBC Recoveries by Cause CY2001 - 2016



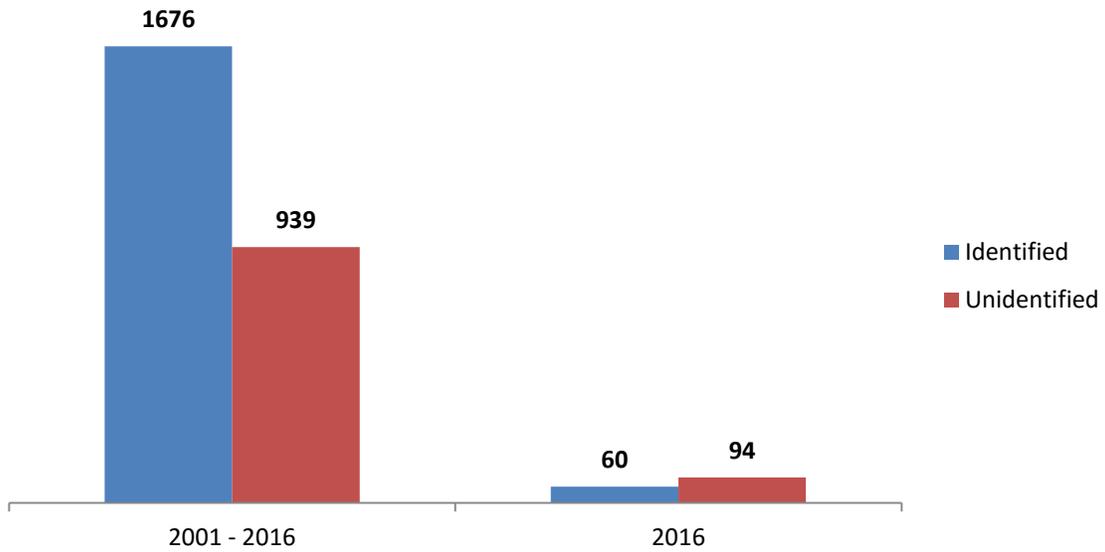
Identified UBC Recoveries by Nationality CY2016



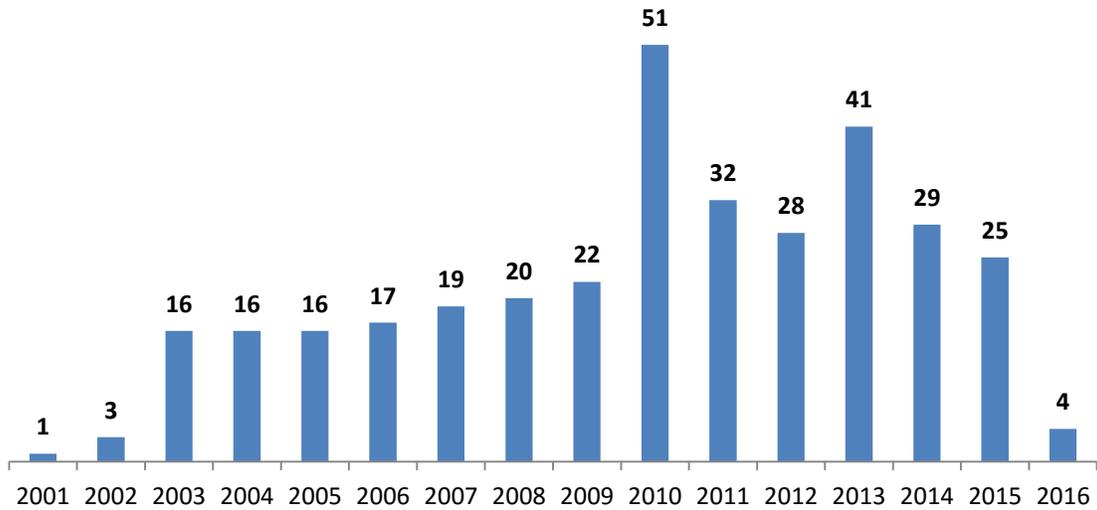
Identified UBC Recoveries by Nationality CY2001 - 2016



Identified vs Unidentified UBC Recoveries



DNA Identifications CY2001 - 2016

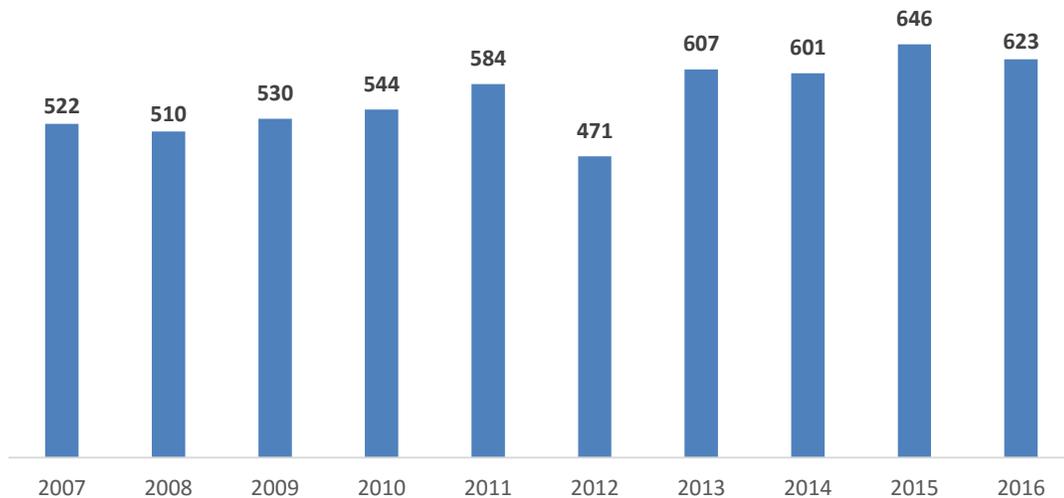


Apache County

Apache County contracts with an appointed non-Forensic Pathologist physician(s), termed an Alternate Medical Examiner(s) (AME) (A.R.S. §11-591); who triages, investigates and certifies deaths that fall under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner in Apache County. The Apache County AME does not perform autopsy examinations and if the AME deems an autopsy is necessary to certify the cause and manner of death, the decedent may be referred to the PCOME for an examination and death certification. The PCOME is not aware of how many deaths occurring in Apache County are reported to the Apache County AME, nor the total number or types of deaths certified by the AME. The PCOME only has a record of deaths reported to, or referred for examination to Pima County. Deaths on Native American tribal lands do not have to be reported through the respective death investigation system of that County and may be reported directly to the PCOME as necessary for the needs of the appropriate agency investigating that death (Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), FBI or local tribal police departments).

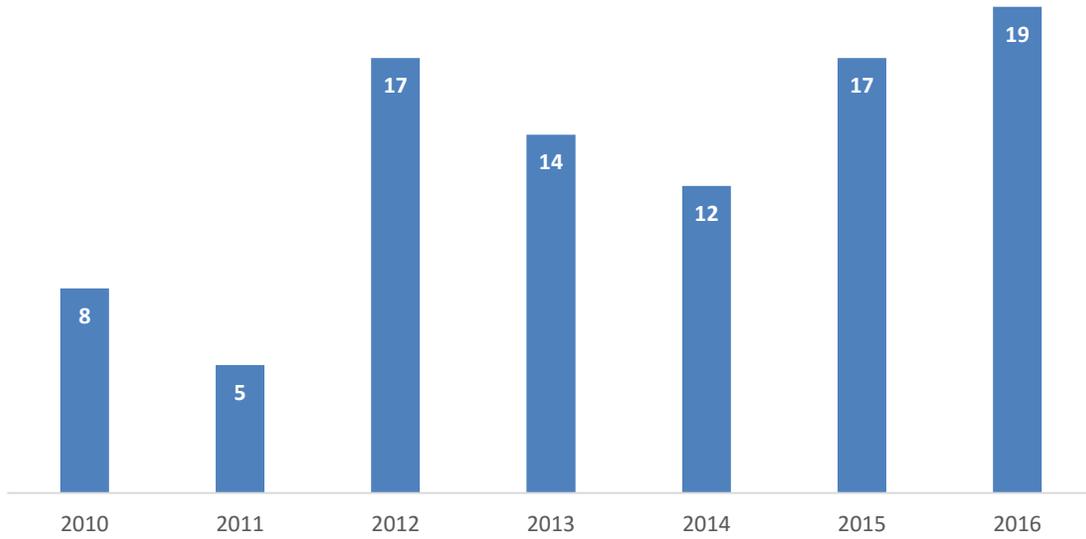
Nineteen deaths from Apache County were reported to the PCOME in 2016, 15 of which required autopsy examinations. Some pertinent statistics regarding these deaths are detailed in the tables and graphs below.

Apache County Mortality by Year 2007 - 2016*

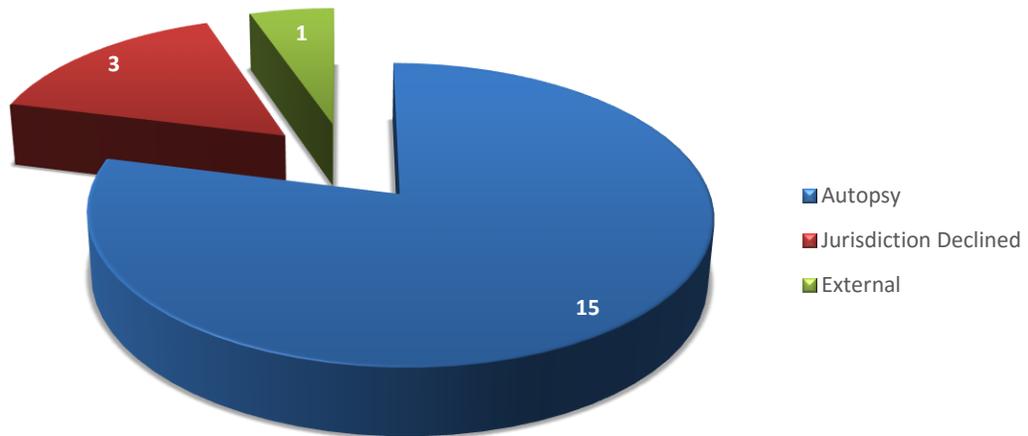


*Arizona Department of Vital Statistics as of 05/22/17

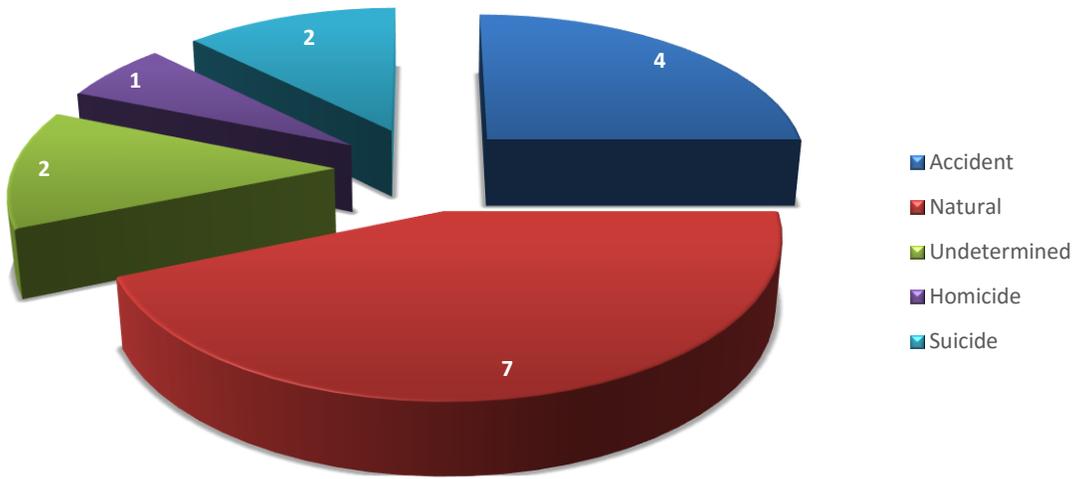
Apache County Deaths Reported to the PCOME 2010 - 2016



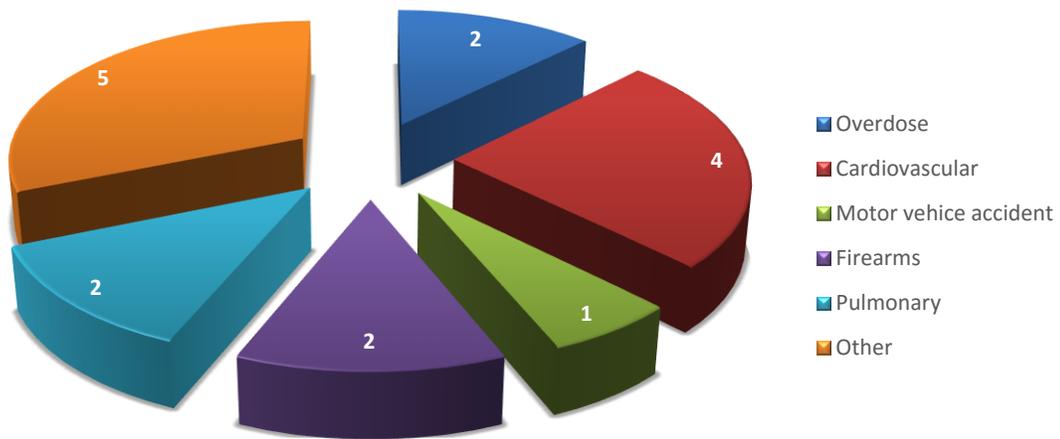
Apache County Deaths by Type of Exam 2016



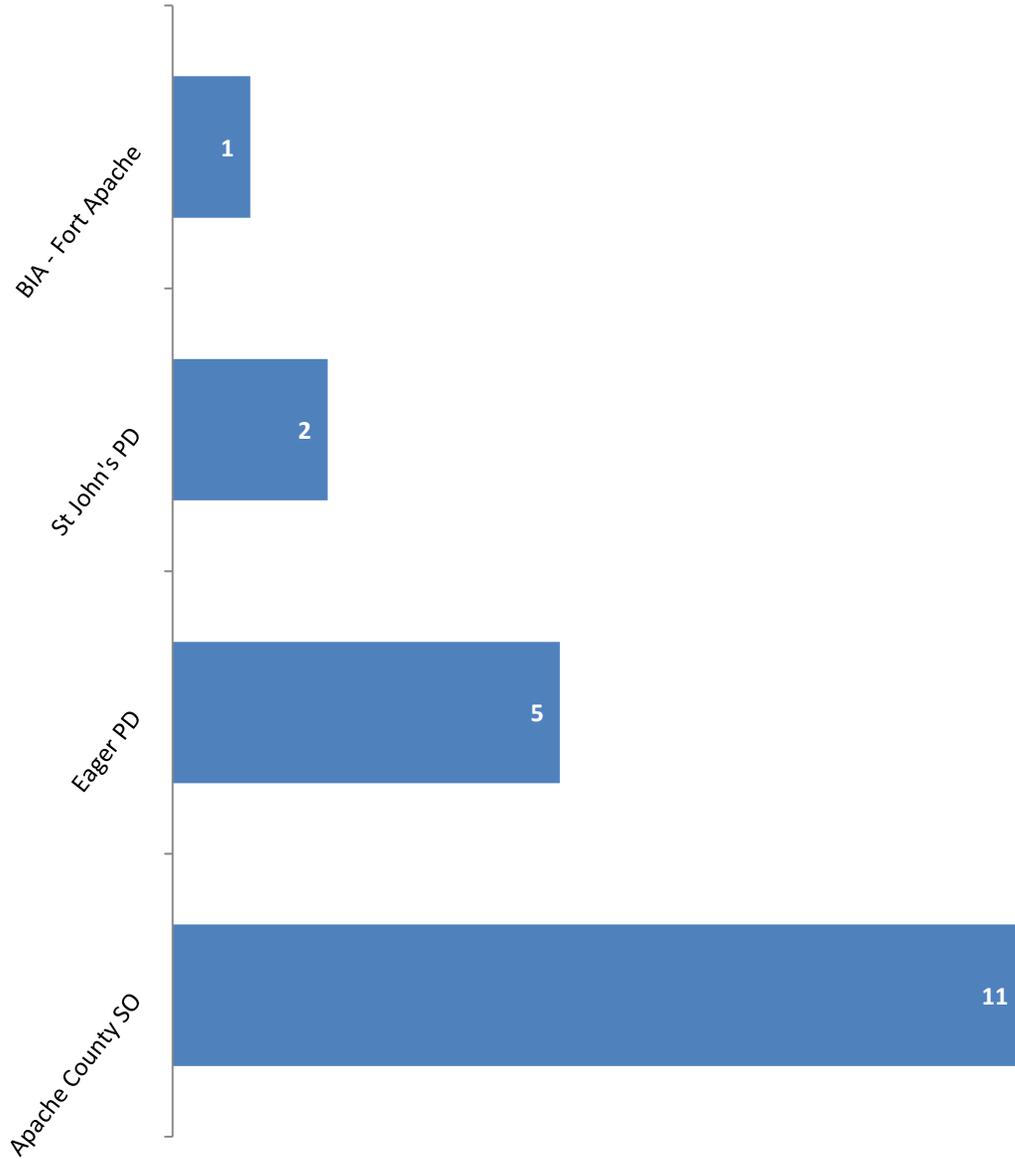
Apache County Deaths by Manner of Death 2016



Apache County Deaths by Type of Death 2016



Apache County Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency 2016



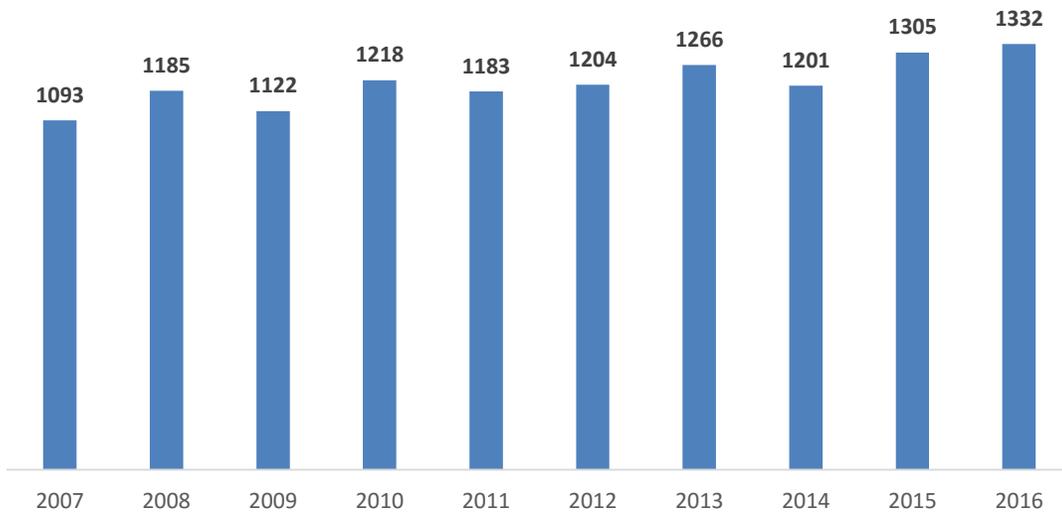
Cochise County

Cochise County contracts with the PCOME to certify deaths that fall under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner in Cochise County. Cochise County does not maintain an in-county Medical Examiner’s office to conduct death scene investigations, transport remains, or triage deaths reportable to the medical examiner. Cochise County does provide third party transportation services, local law enforcement death scene investigation and archival support for examinations that occurred prior to July 1, 2012. The PCOME works closely with Cochise County law enforcement agencies, the public fiduciary office and funeral homes to facilitate investigations, disposition of remains and transportation respectively. The PCOME is also involved as needed with mass fatality planning, child fatality review, or other medical examiner related issues in Cochise County.

TOTAL MORTALITY

The number of deaths reported to the medical examiner’s office in a given time frame is a reflection of the total population that the office serves. In 2016 there were 1,332 deaths in Cochise County; of these 276 (21%) were reported to the PCOME for investigation.

Cochise County Mortality by Year 2007 - 2016*

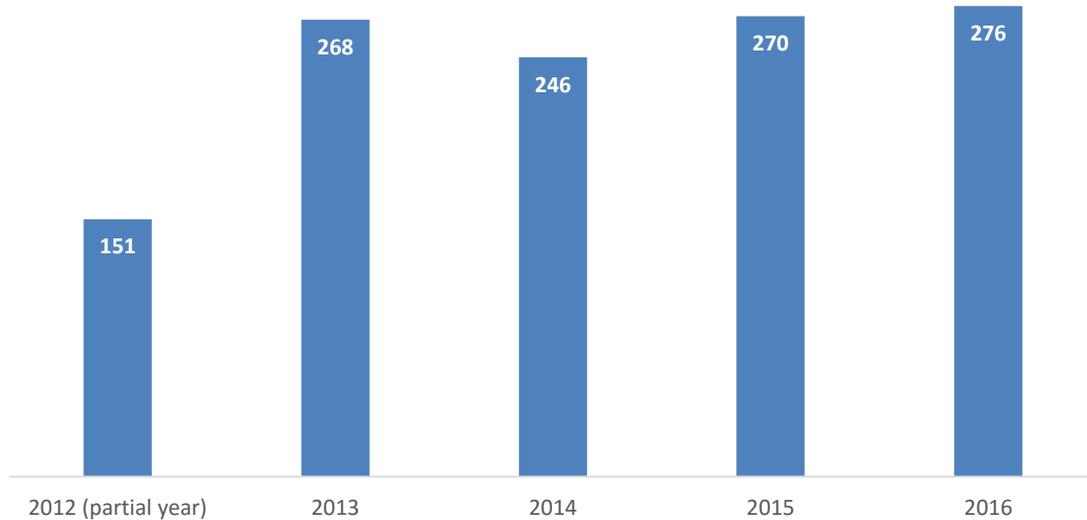


*Arizona Department of Vital Statistics as of 05/22/2017

TOTAL REPORTED DEATHS

The total cases investigated by the PCOME from Cochise County in a given year are the sum of the ME cases (autopsies, external examinations, and death certificate cases) and cases in which jurisdiction was declined.

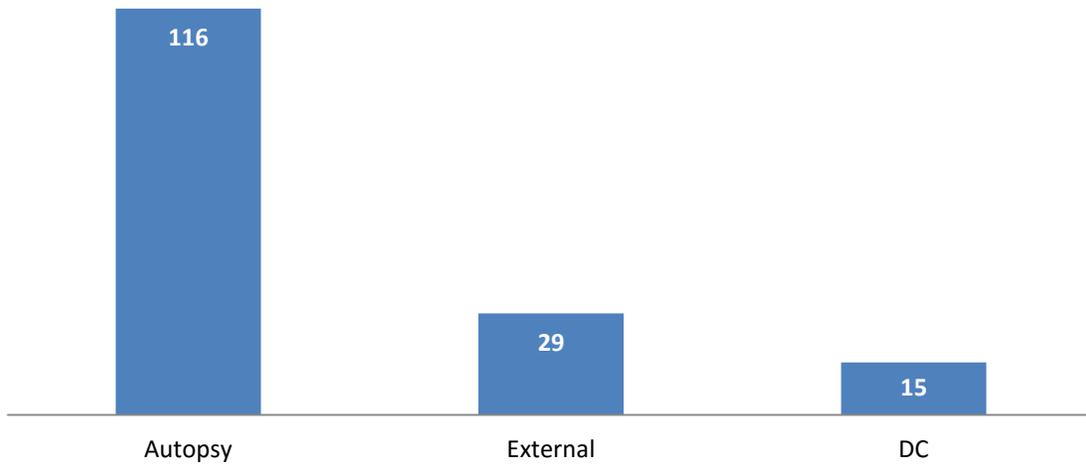
Cochise County Deaths Reported to the PCOME 2012 - 2016



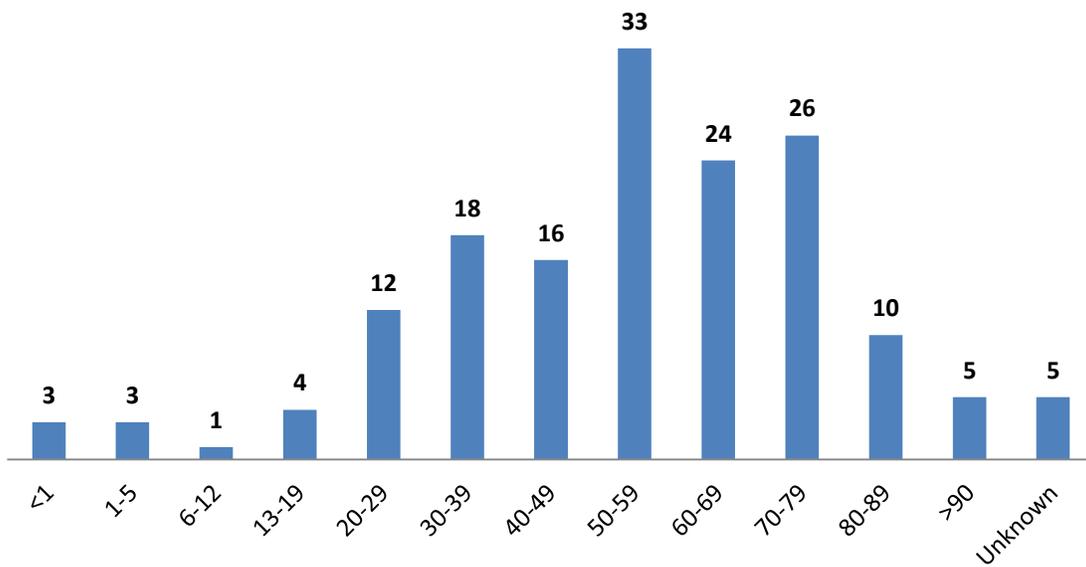
MEDICAL EXAMINER CASES

The PCOME considers all cases in which the cause and manner of death are determined by this office as “medical examiner cases.” Those cases include autopsies, external examinations and death certificate (DC) cases. Autopsies are examinations where a decedent is examined both externally and internally for evidence of injury or natural disease which may have caused or contributed to the individual’s death. External examinations consist of an external examination of the body without the internal examination. A DC case involves review of the medical records, law enforcement reports and any other information that may be necessary to determine the cause and manner of death without physical examination of the decedent. In 2016, 116 autopsies, 29 external examinations and 15 DC cases were performed on deaths from Cochise County.

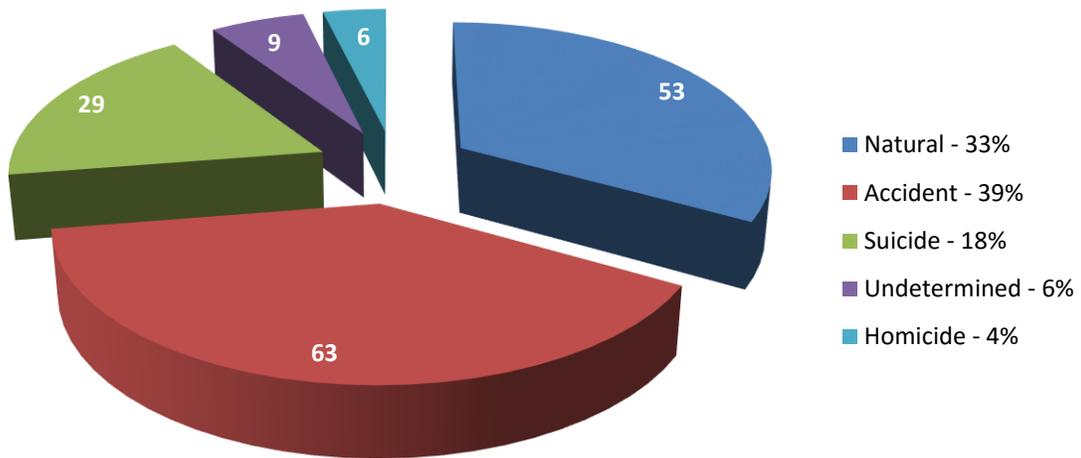
2016 Cochise County Medical Examiner Cases



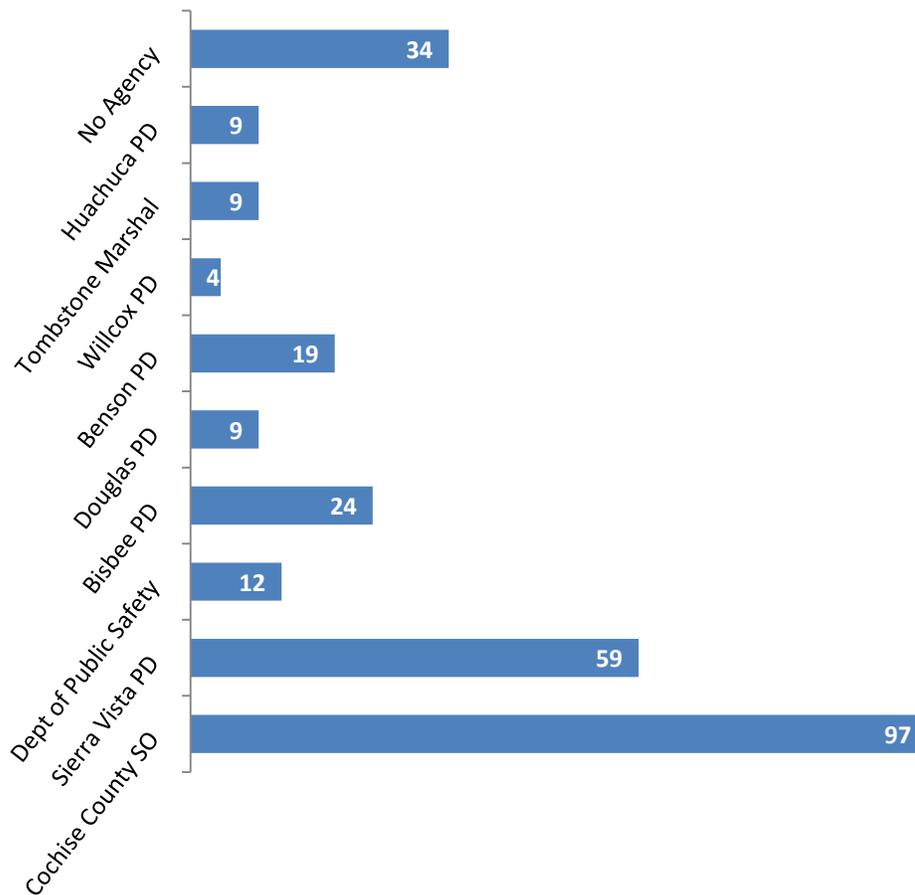
Cochise County Medical Examiner Cases by Age 2016



Cochise County ME Cases by Manner of Death 2016



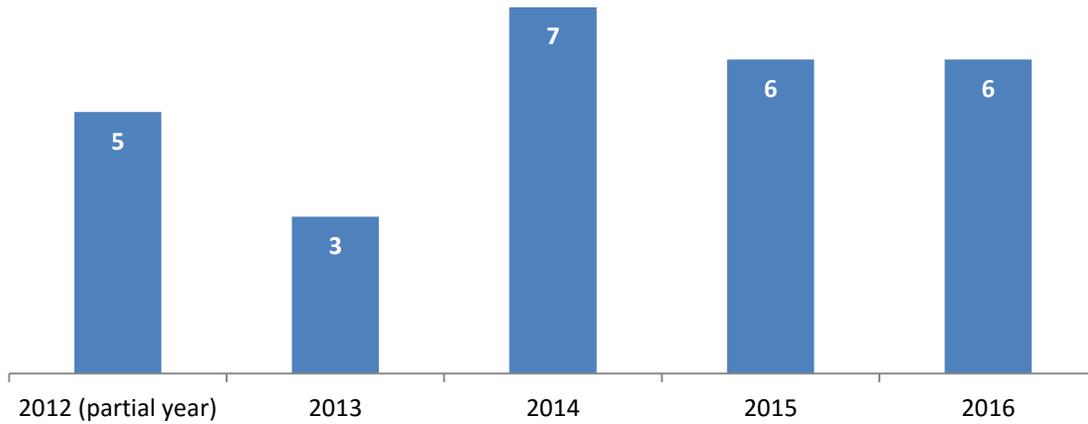
Cochise County Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency 2016



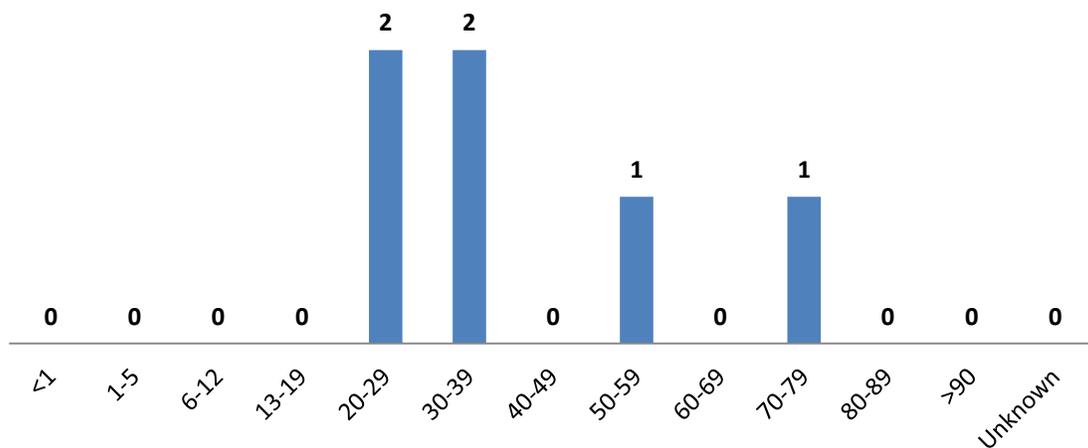
HOMICIDE DEATHS

The PCOME examined 6 homicides from Cochise County in 2016; 4% of total Cochise County deaths certified. Homicide totals from 2012 – 2016 are compared below. Homicide victims were most frequently male (83%), between 20-39 years of age (67%) and died as the result of firearms (83%).

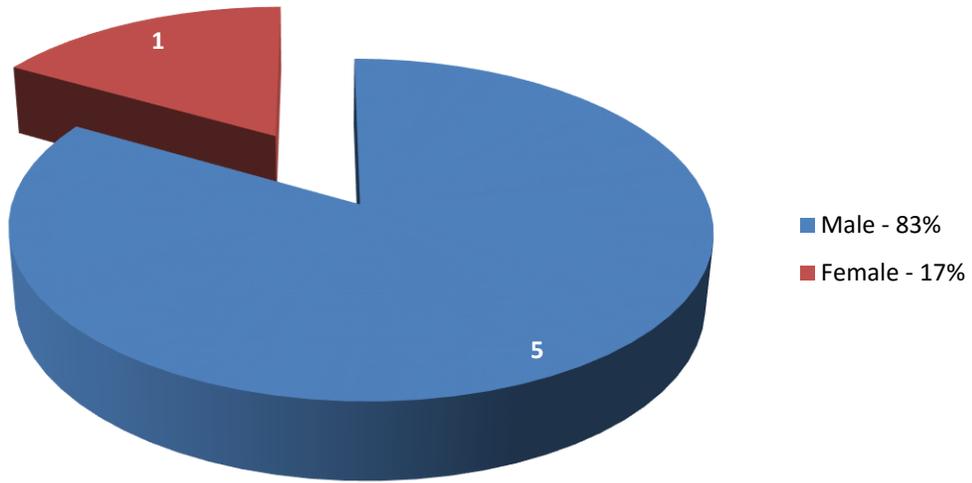
Cochise County Homicide 2012 - 2016



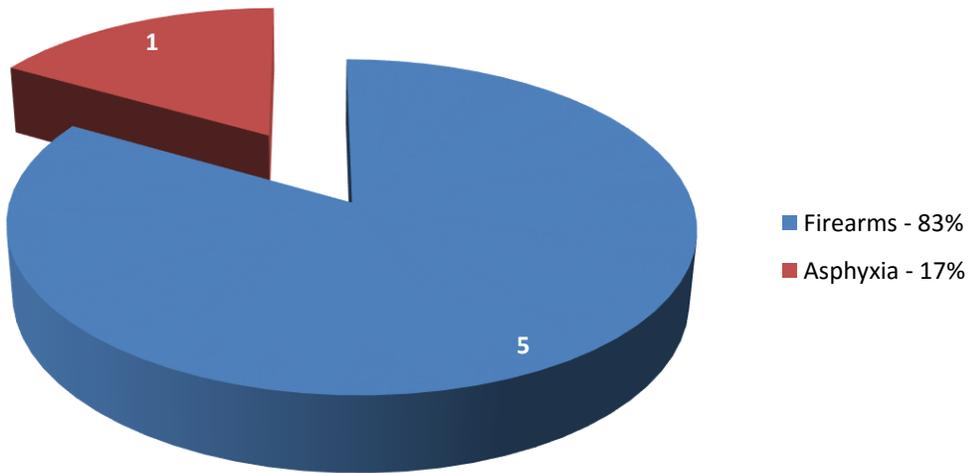
Cochise County Homicide by Age 2016



Cochise County Homicide by Sex 2016



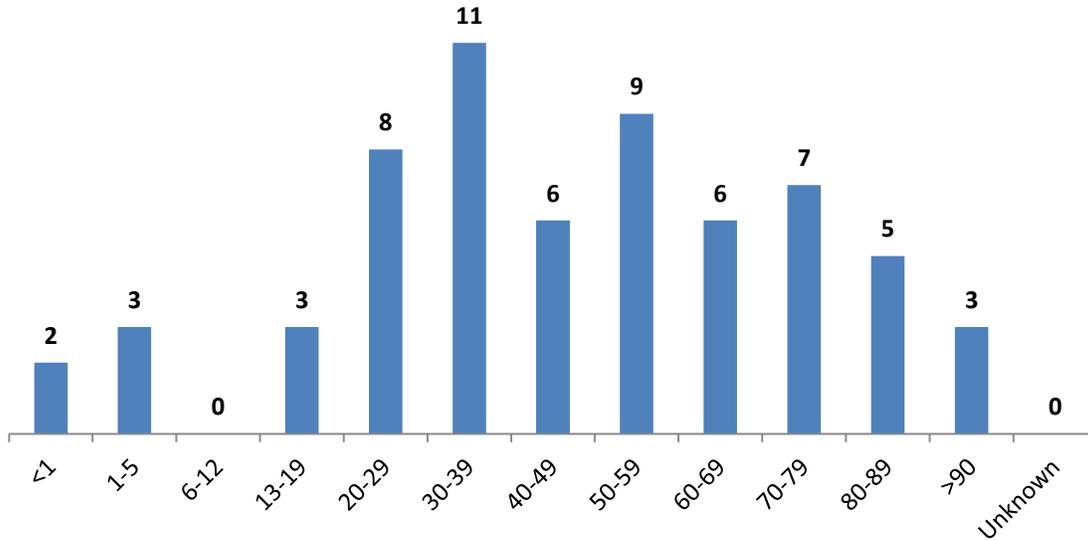
Cochise County Homicide by Cause 2016



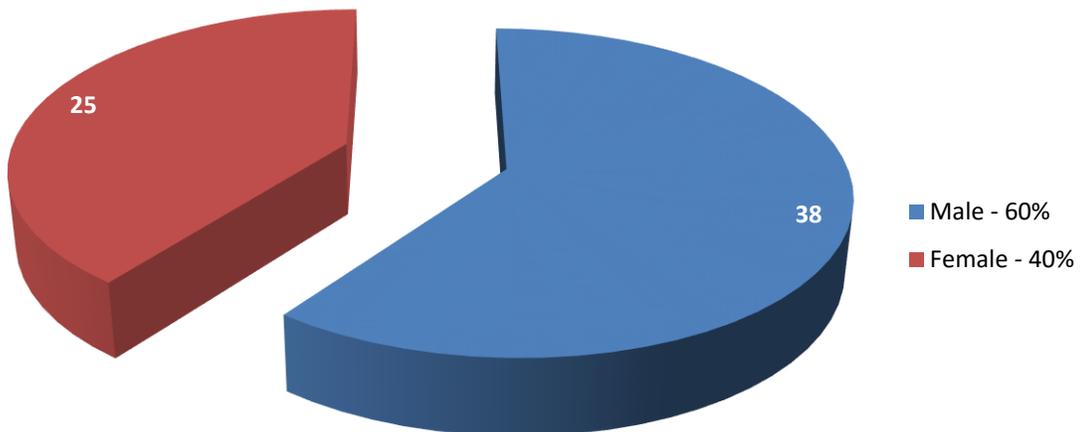
ACCIDENT DEATHS

The PCOME examined 63 accident deaths from Cochise County in 2016; 39% of total Cochise County deaths certified. Accident victims were most frequently males (60%), between 20-29 years of age (17%) and died as the result of motor vehicle trauma (38%).

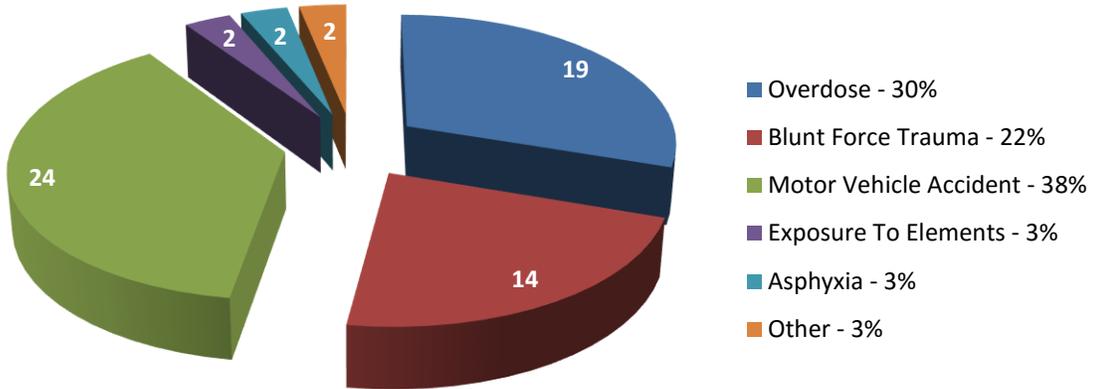
Cochise County Accident by Age 2016



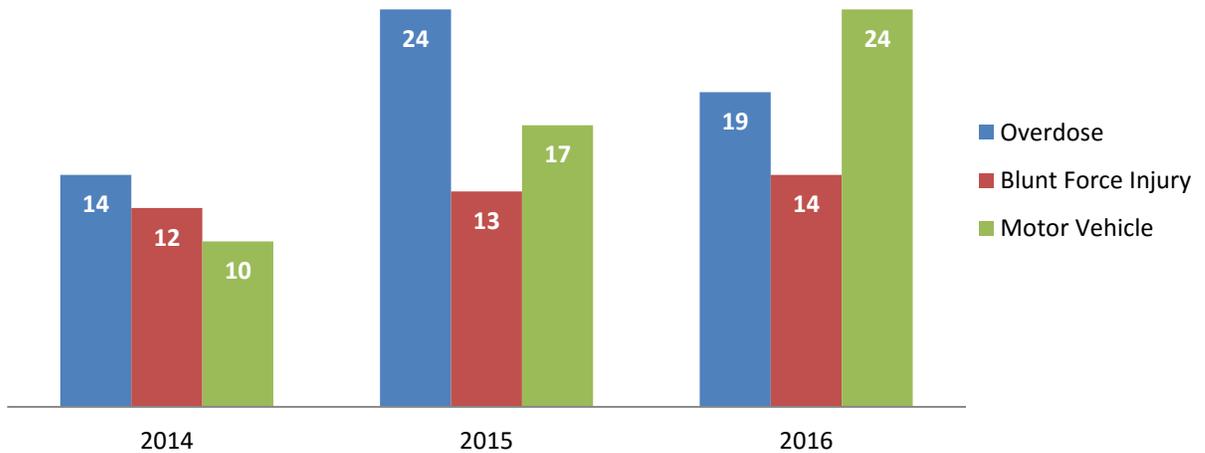
Cochise County Accident by Sex 2016



Cochise County Accident by Cause 2016



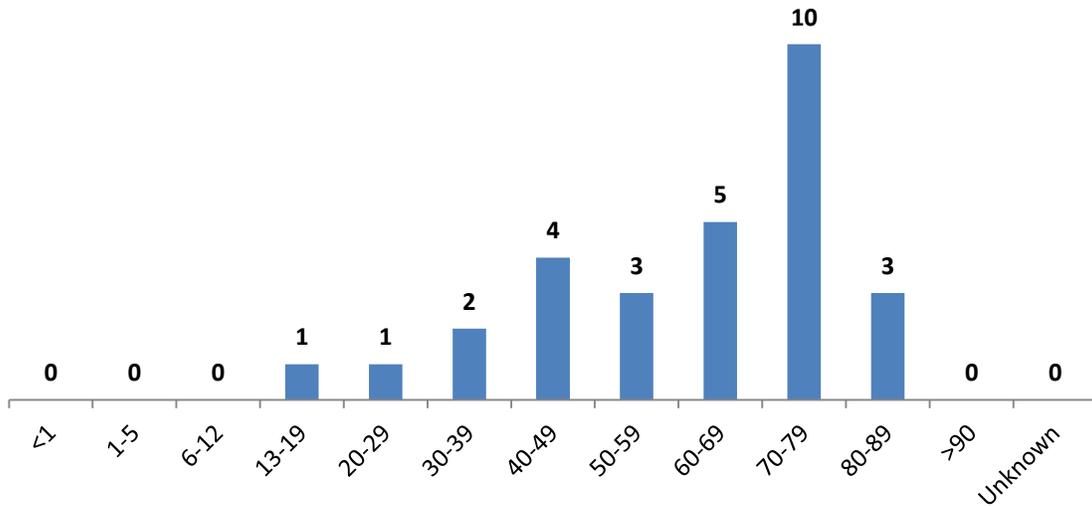
Cochise County Accident by Cause (Top 3) 2014 - 2016



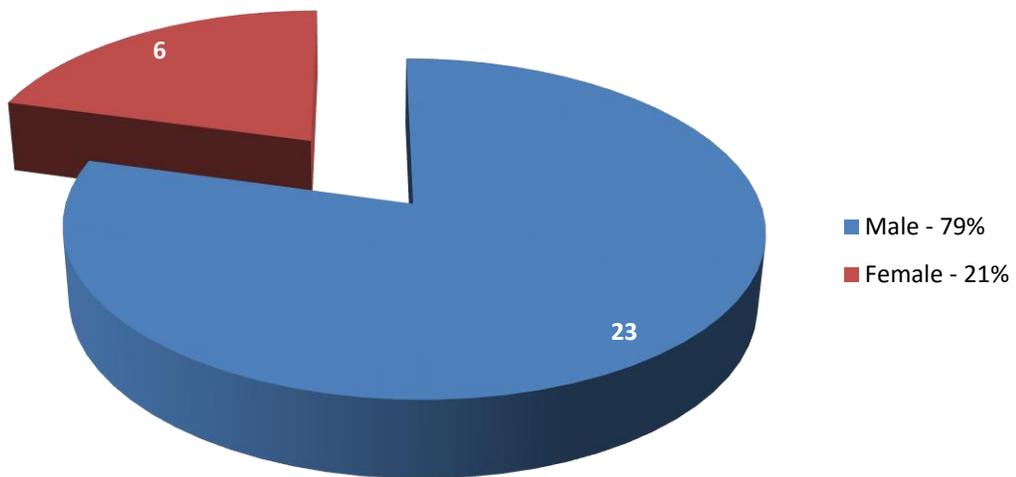
SUICIDE DEATHS

The PCOME examined 29 suicide deaths from Cochise County in 2016; 18% of total Cochise County deaths certified. Suicide victims were most frequently males (79%), between 70-79 years of age (34%) and died as the result of firearms (79%).

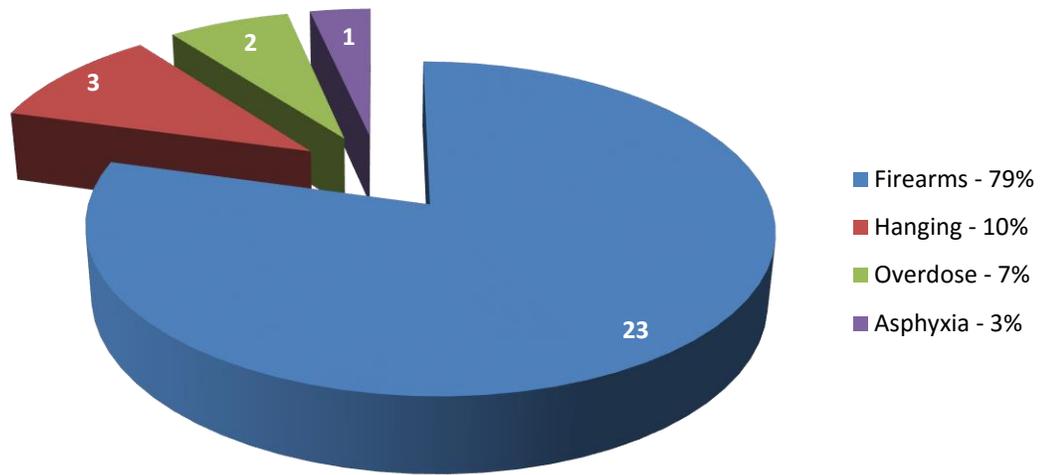
Cochise County Suicide by Age 2016



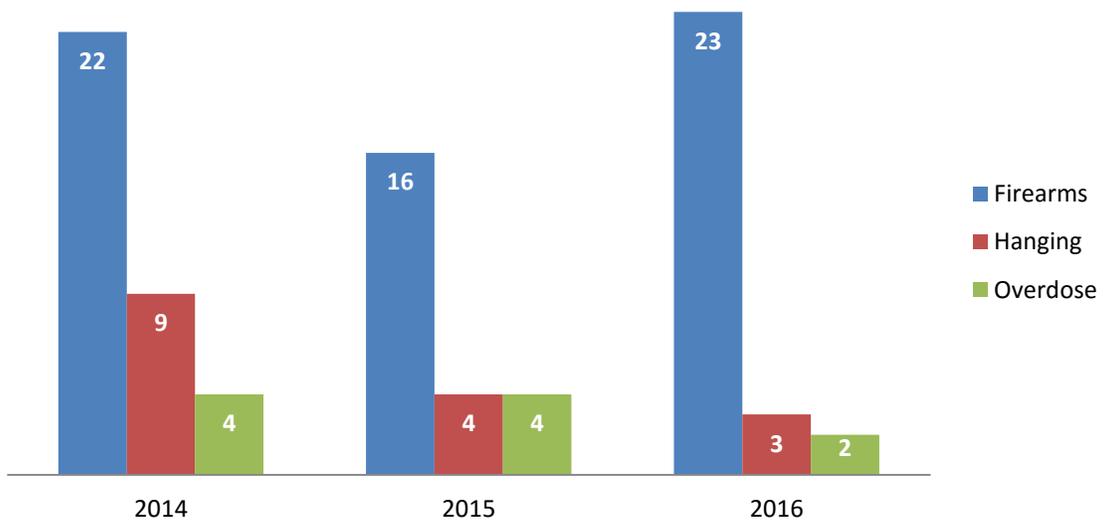
Cochise County Suicide by Sex 2016



Cochise County Suicide by Cause 2016



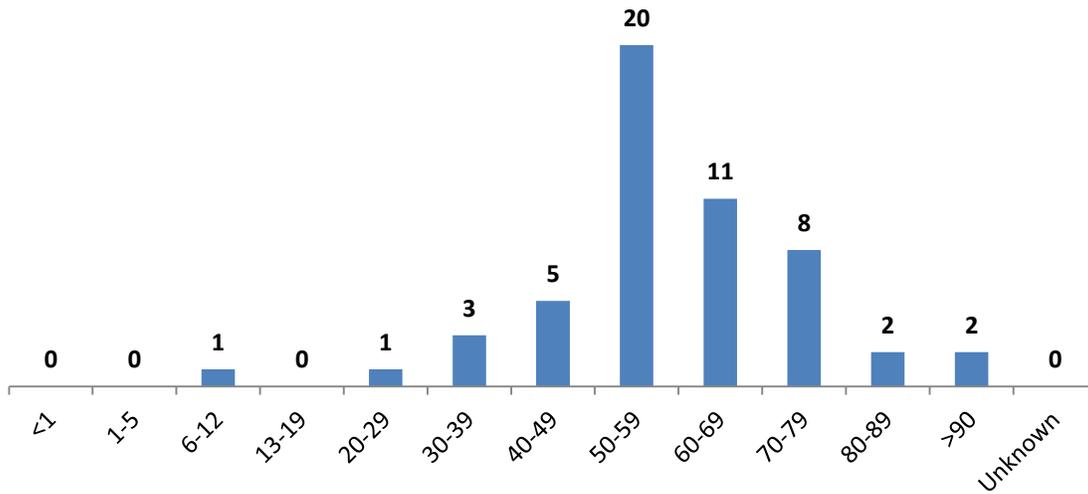
Cochise County Suicide by Cause (Top 3) 2014 - 2016



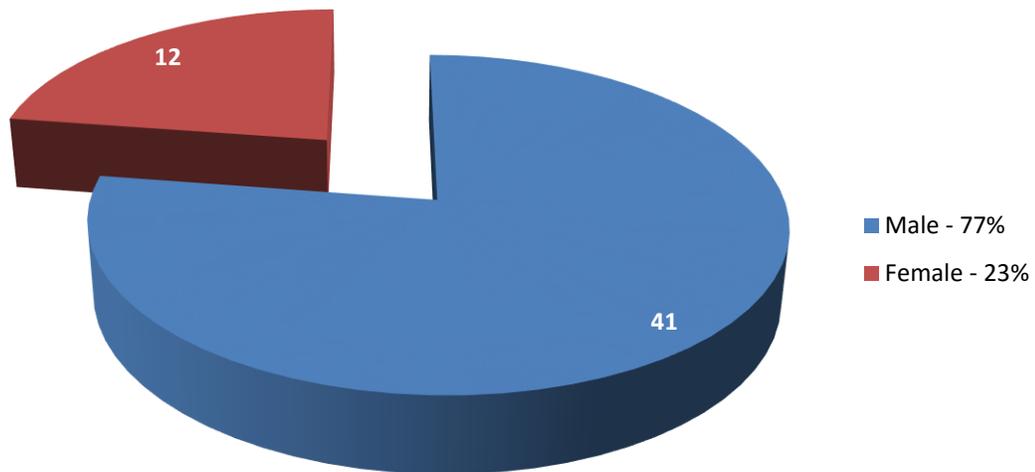
NATURAL DEATHS

The PCOME examined 53 natural deaths from Cochise County in 2016; 33% of total Cochise County deaths certified. Individuals who died from natural causes were most frequently males (77%), between 50-59 years of age (38%) and died as the result of cardiovascular disease (62%).

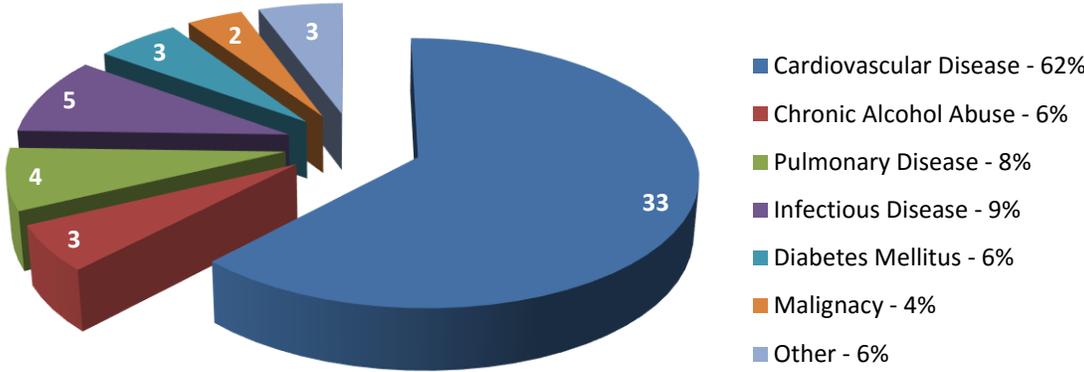
Cochise County Natural Deaths by Age 2016



Cochise County Natural Deaths by Sex 2016



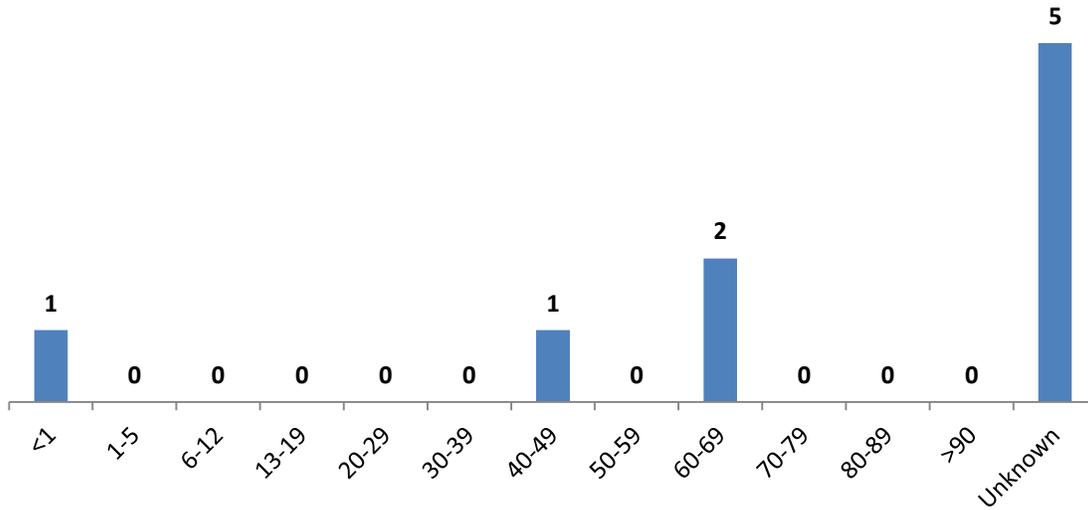
Cochise County Natural Deaths by Cause 2016



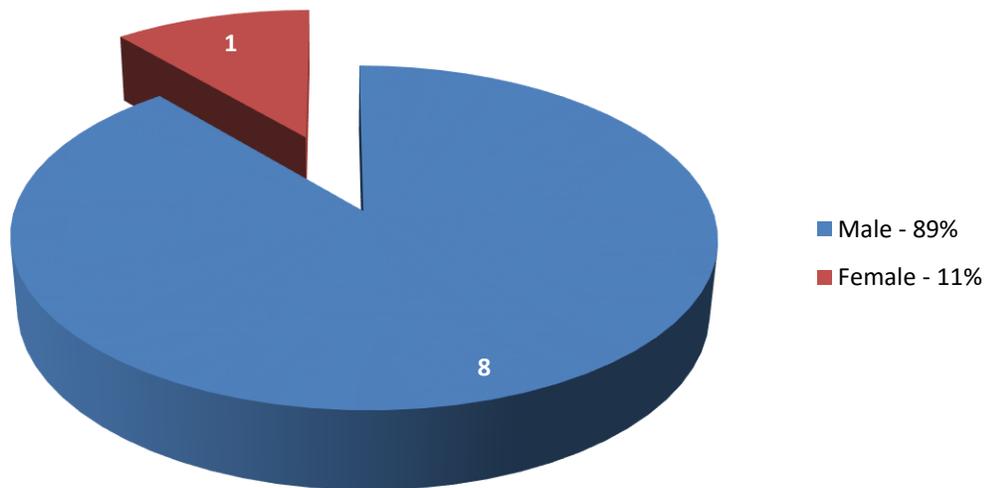
UNDETERMINED MANNER OF DEATH

The PCOME examined 9 undetermined deaths from Cochise County in 2016; 6% of total Cochise County deaths certified. Individuals who died with an undetermined manner were most frequently males (89%), of unknown age (55%) and died from undetermined causes (89%). Many of these deaths represent skeletal remains of UBCs who died in the deserts of southern Arizona.

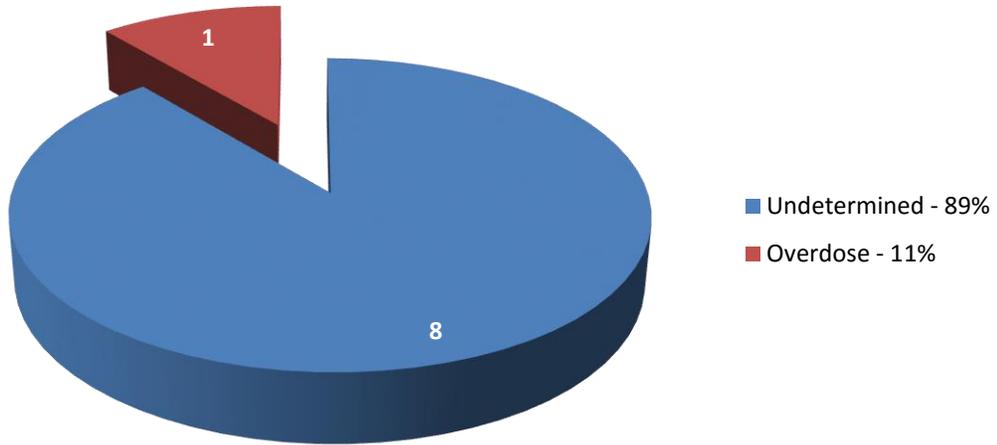
Cochise County Undetermined Manner of Death by Age 2016



Cochise County Undetermined Manner of Death by Sex 2016



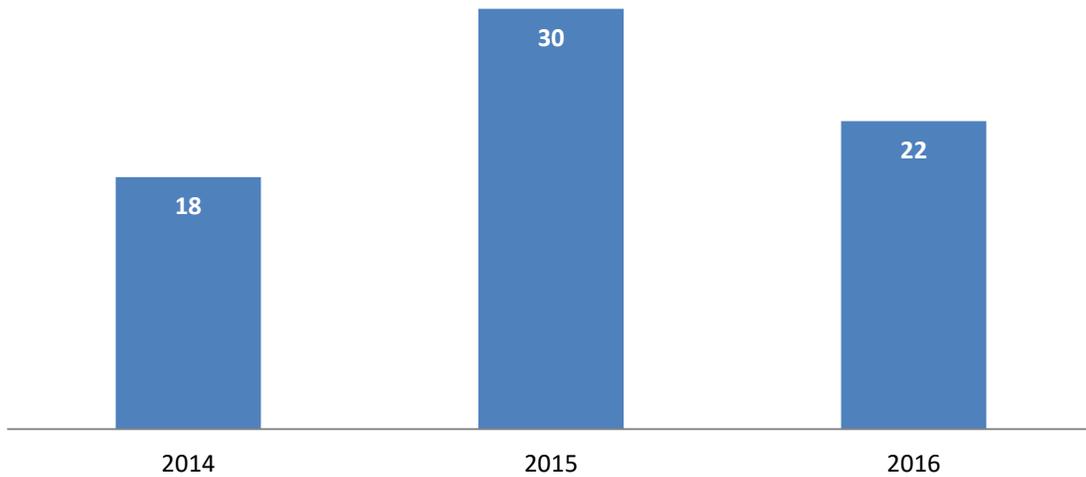
**Cochise County Undetermined Manner of Death by Cause
2016**



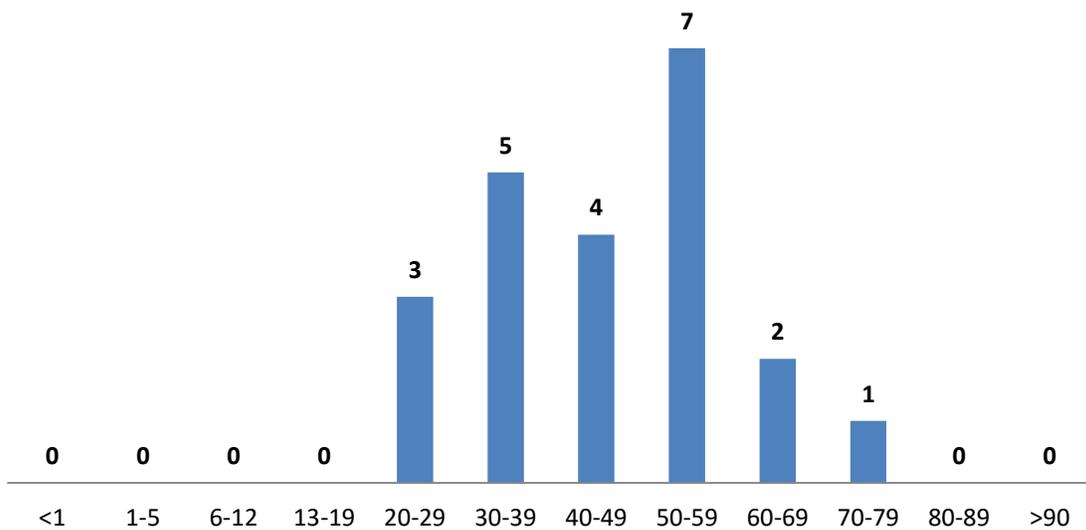
OVERDOSE DEATHS

There were 22 deaths attributed to an overdose of either a single drug (10 deaths, 45%) or a combination of drugs (12 deaths, 55%) in 2016. Overdose deaths commonly involved males (64%) between the ages of 50-59 (32%). The majority of these deaths were classified as accidents (86%).

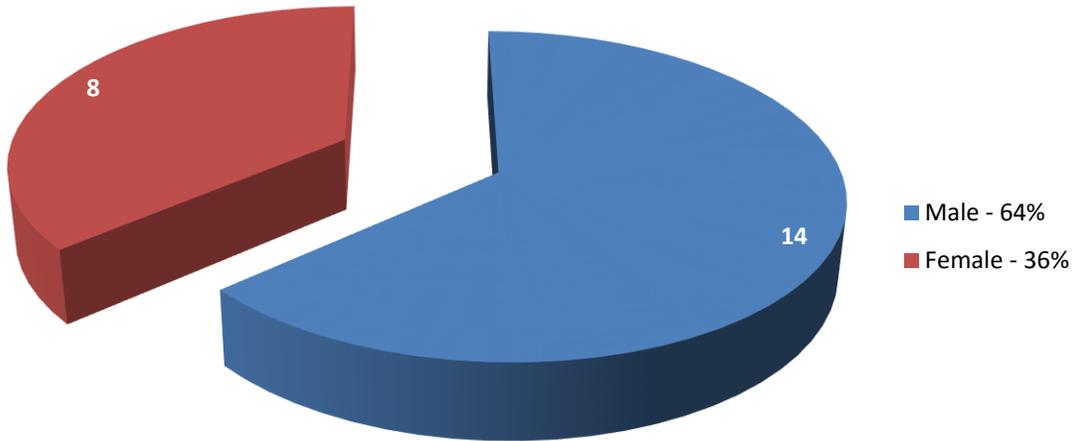
Cochise County Overdose Deaths 2014 - 2016



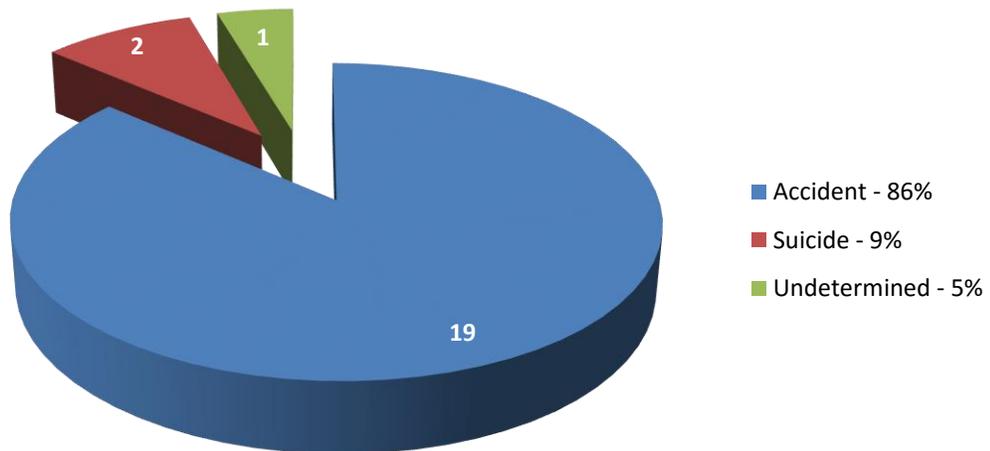
Cochise County Overdose Deaths by Age 2016



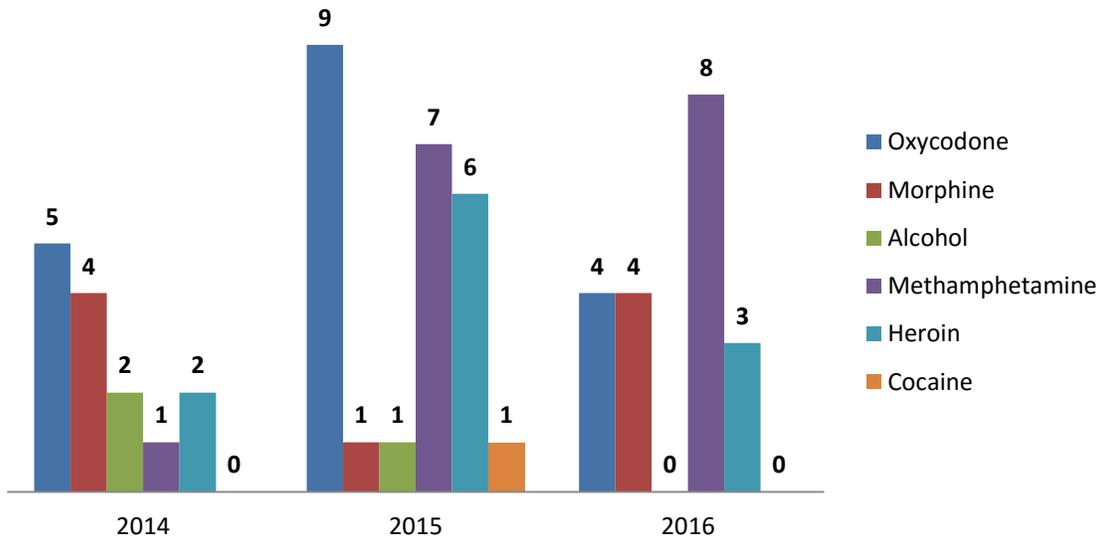
Cochise County Overdose Deaths by Sex 2016



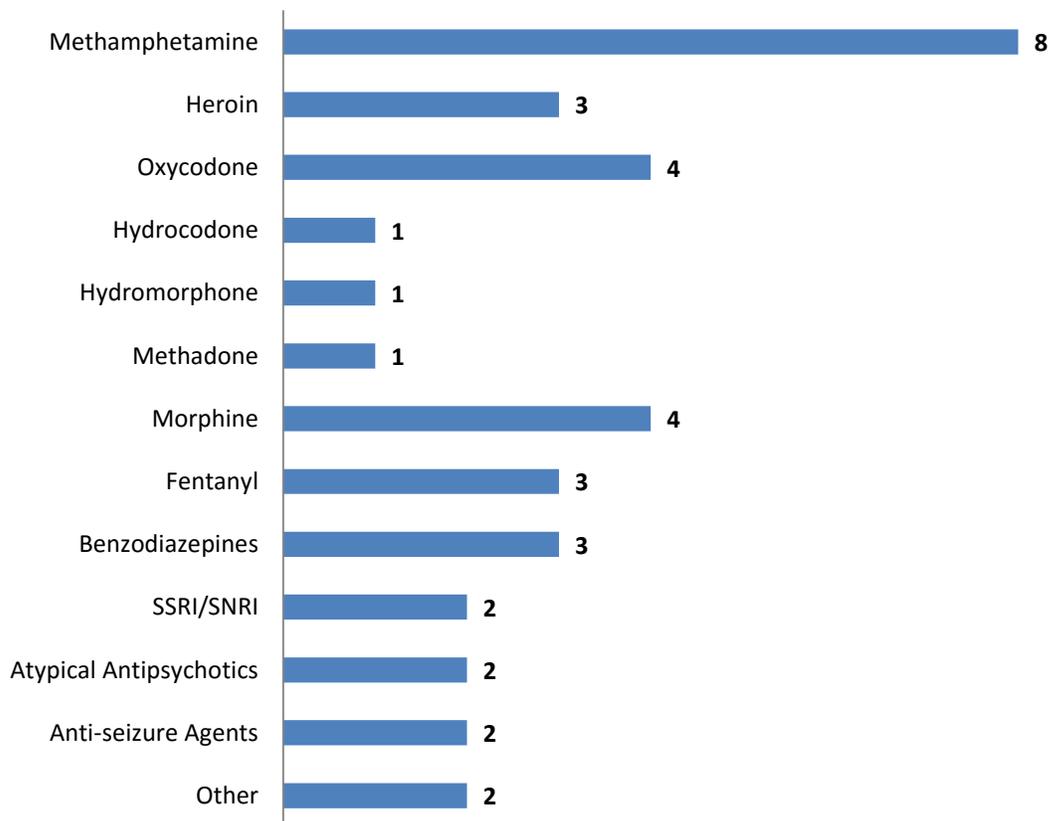
Cochise County Overdose Deaths by Manner 2016



Select Cochise County Drugs by Year 2014 - 2016



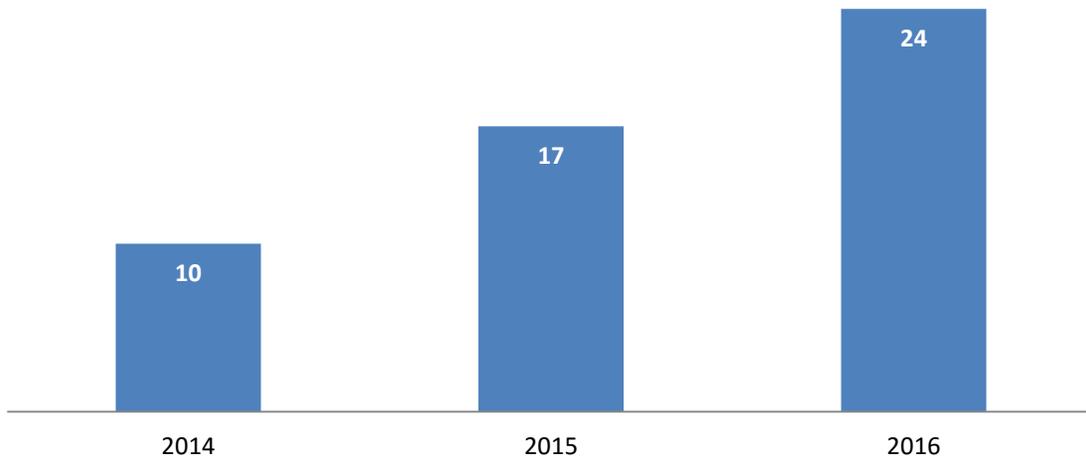
Cochise County Overdose Deaths by Drug 2016



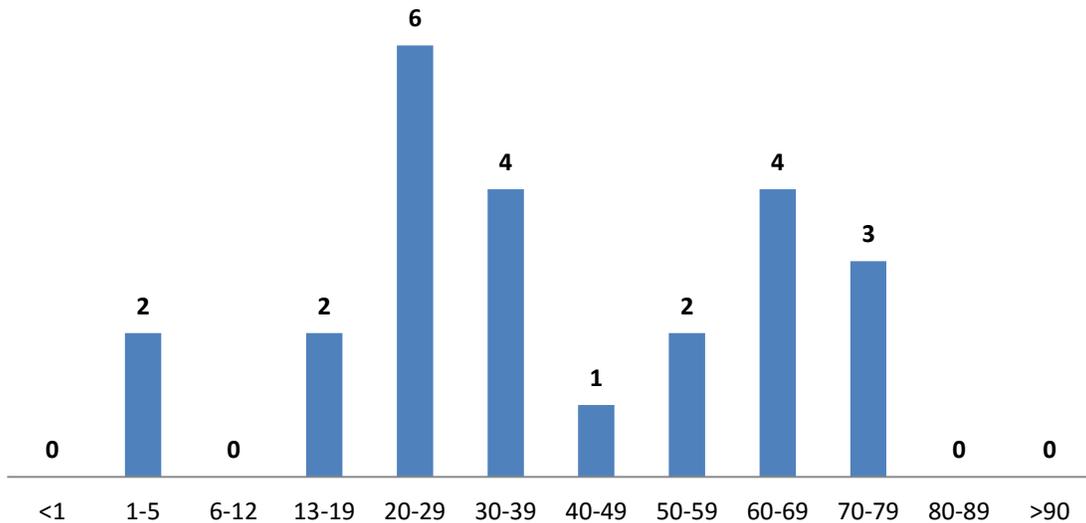
MOTOR VEHICLE RELATED FATALITIES

Motor vehicle related fatalities accounted for 24 total deaths in Cochise County in 2016. The majority, 17 deaths, were occupants of a motor vehicle involved in an accident (MVA). Of the remaining, 3 were motorcycle accidents (MCA), 2 were pedestrians struck by vehicles, and 2 involved all-terrain vehicles (ATV). Individuals who died from motor vehicle related fatalities were most frequently males (71%) and between 20-29 years of age (25%).

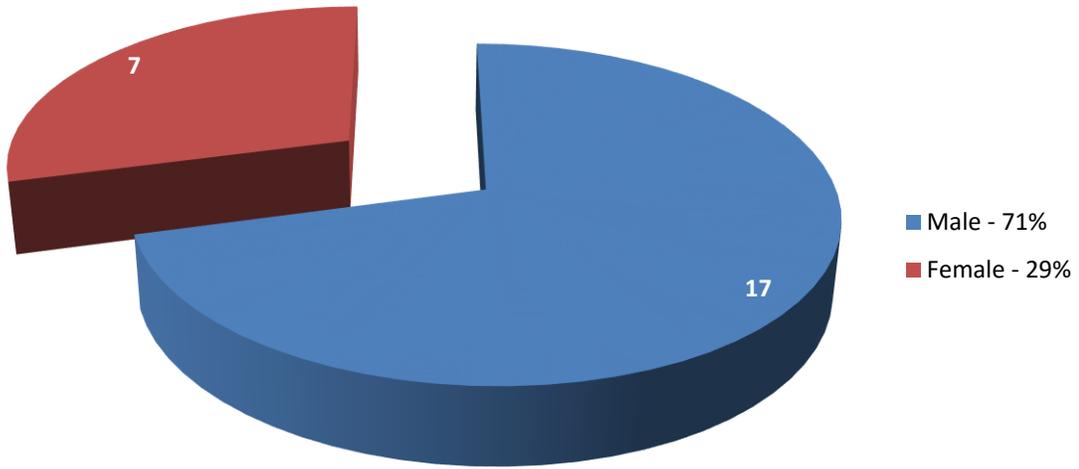
Cochise County Motor Vehicle Fatalities 2014 - 2016



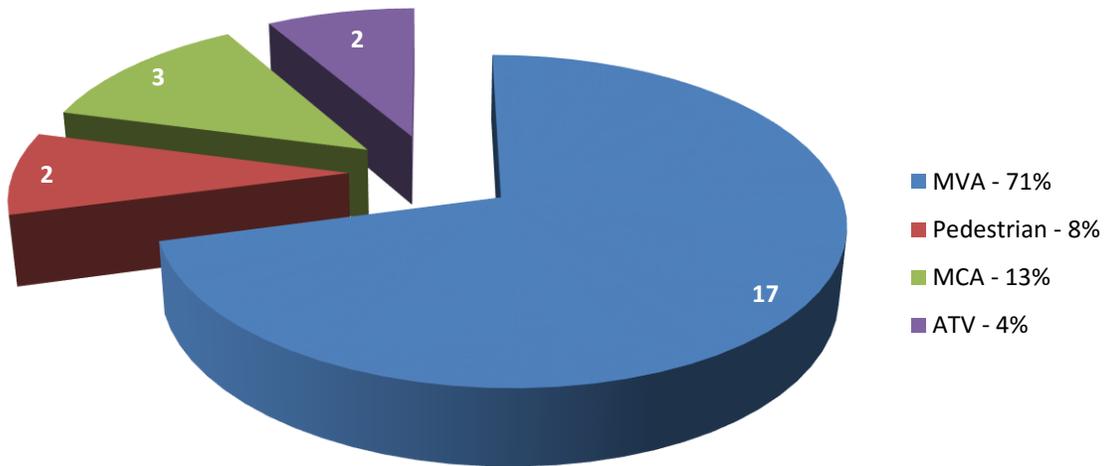
Cochise County Motor Vehicle Fatalities by Age 2016



Cochise County Motor Vehicle Fatalities by Sex 2016



Cochise County Motor Vehicle Fatalities by Type 2016

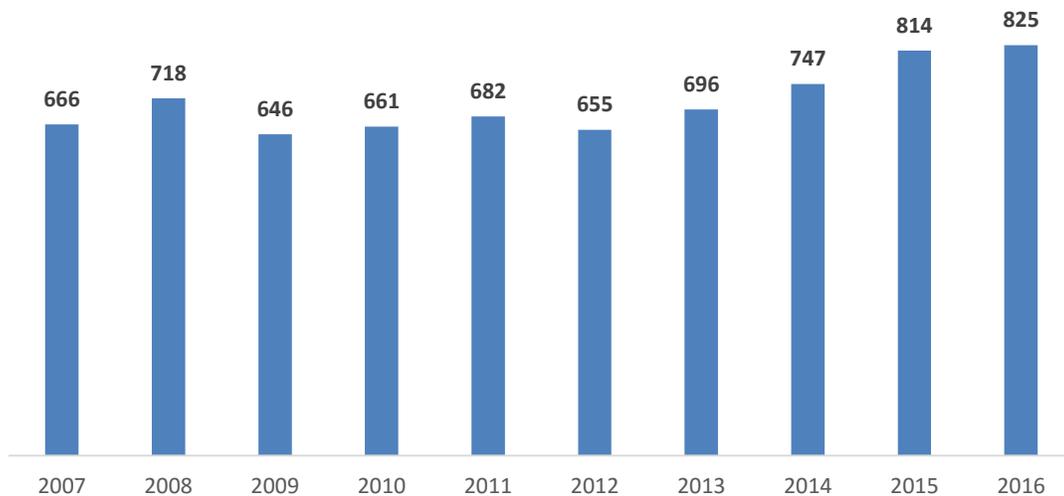


Gila County

Gila County contracts with an appointed Forensic Pathologist Medical Examiner, who triages, investigates and certifies deaths that fall under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner (ME) in Gila County. The Gila County ME performs some autopsy examinations in Payson if the ME deems an autopsy is necessary to certify the cause and manner of death. Additionally, the ME may refer some decedents from southern Gila County to the PCOME for an examination and death certification as necessary. The PCOME is not aware of how many deaths occurring in Gila County are reported to the ME, nor the total number or types of deaths certified by the ME. The PCOME only has a record of deaths reported to, or referred for examination to Pima County. Deaths on Native American tribal lands do not have to be reported through the respective death investigation system of that County and may be reported directly to the PCOME as necessary for the needs of the appropriate agency investigating that death (BIA, FBI or local tribal police departments).

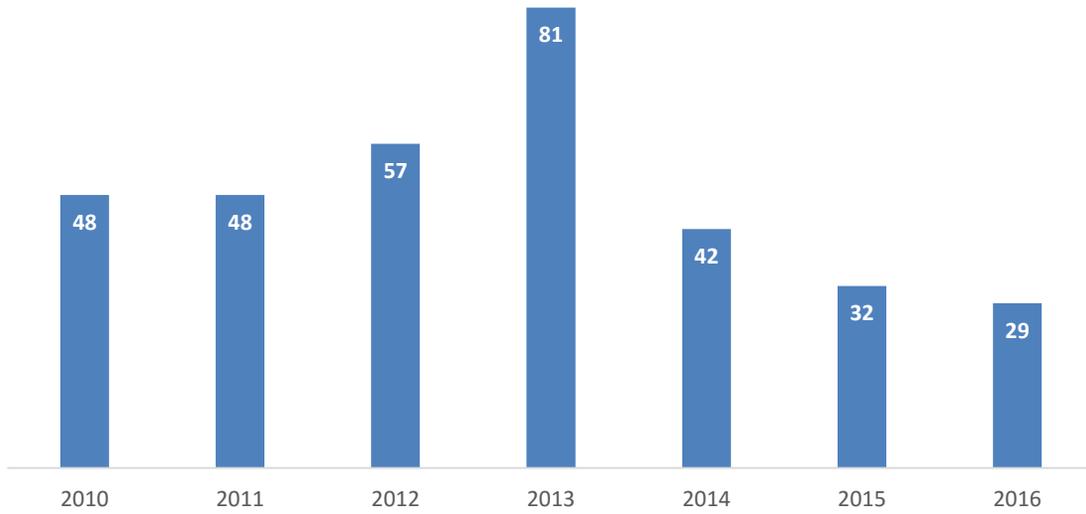
Twenty nine deaths from Gila County were reported to the PCOME in 2016, 28 of which required autopsy examinations. Some pertinent statistics regarding these deaths are detailed in the tables and graphs below.

Gila County Mortality by Year 2007 - 2016*

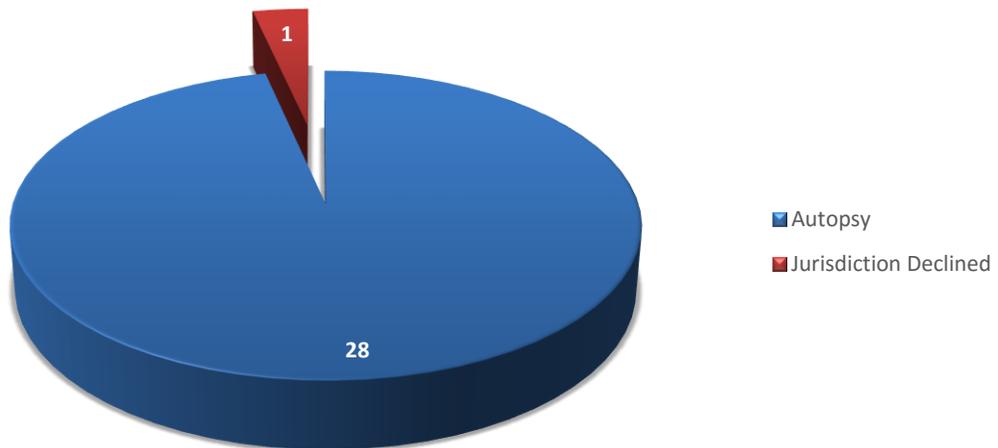


*Arizona Department of Vital Statistics as of 05/22/2017

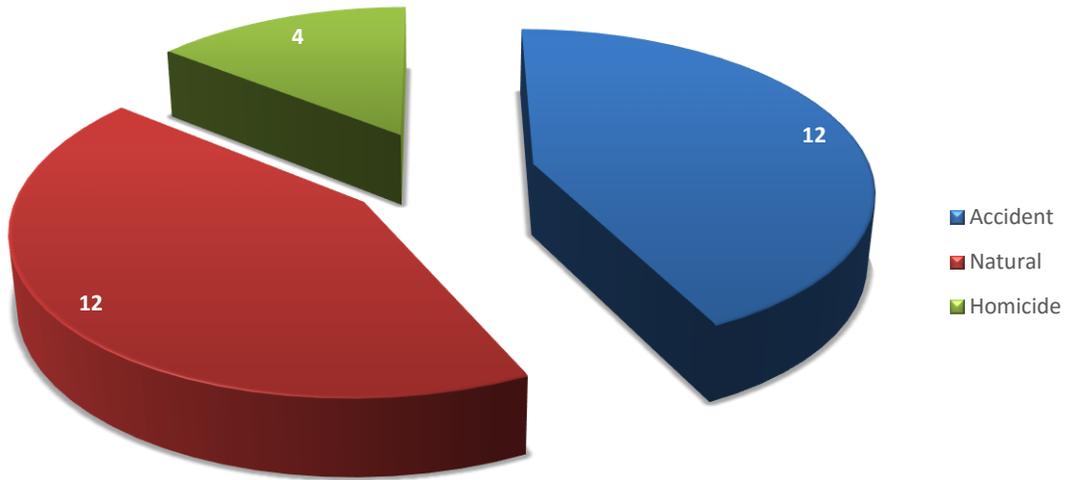
Gila County Deaths Reported to the PCOME 2010 - 2016



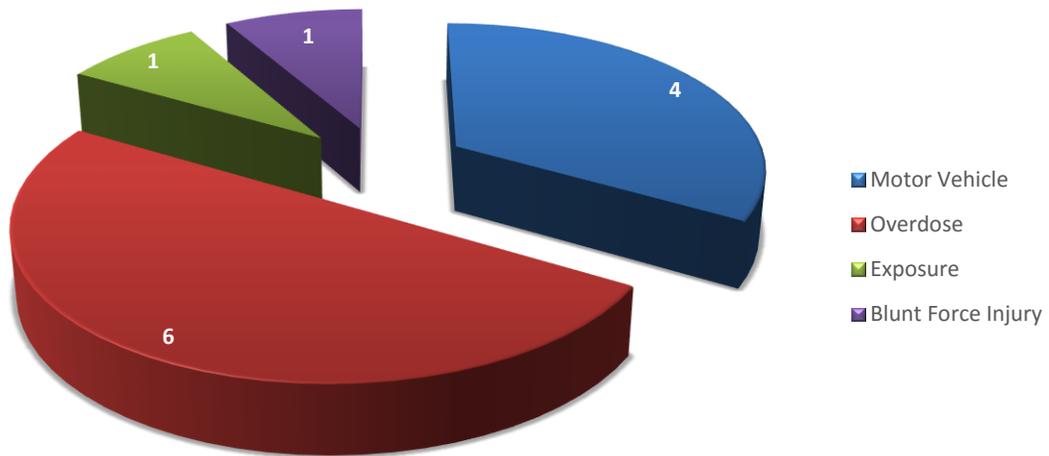
Gila County Deaths by Type of Exam 2016



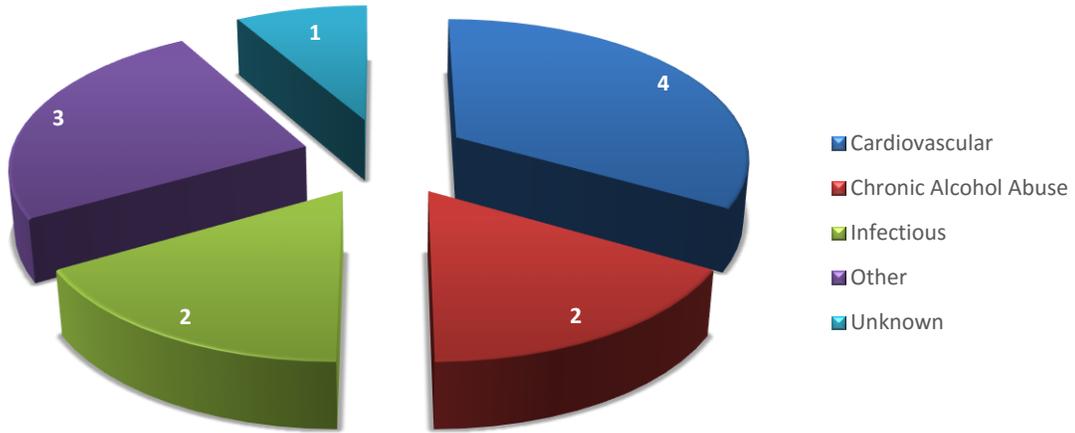
Gila County Deaths by Manner of Death 2016



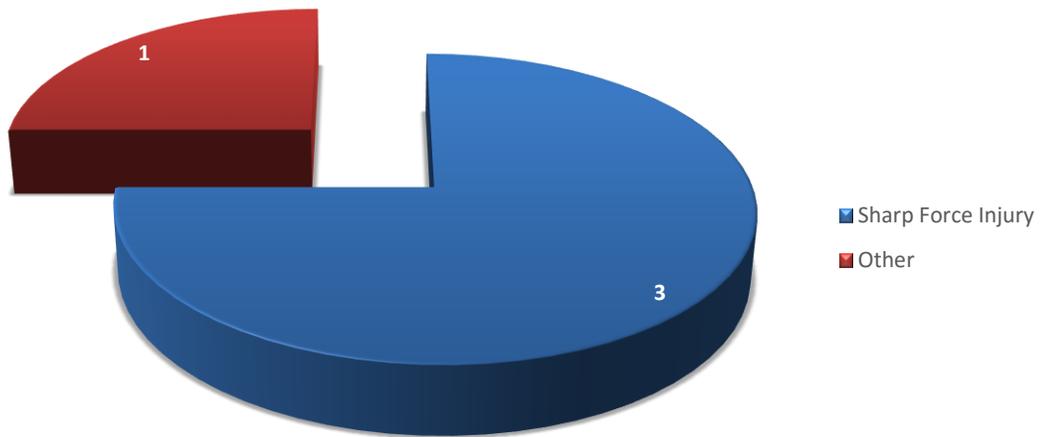
Gila County Accidents by Type 2016



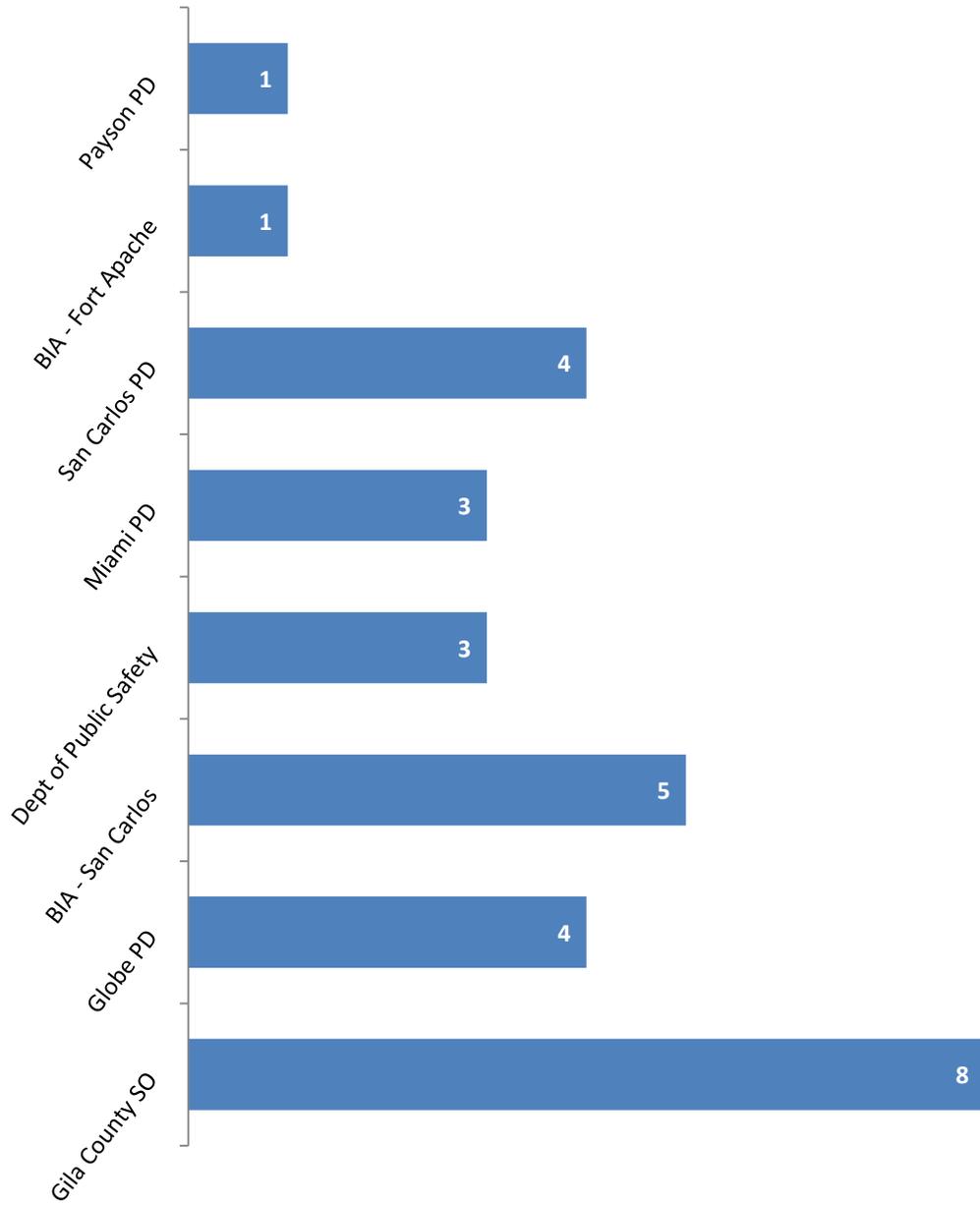
Gila County Naturals by Type 2016



Gila County Homicides by Type 2016



Gila County Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency 2016

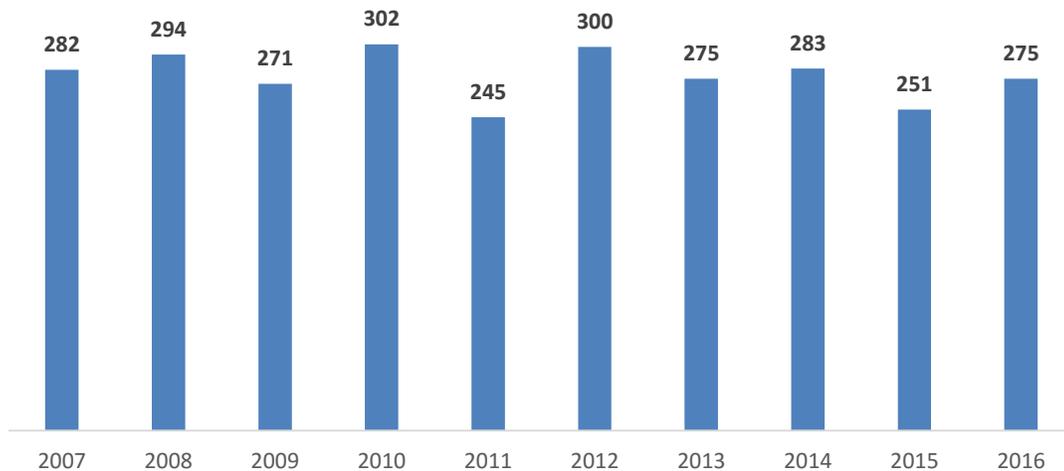


Graham County

Graham County contracts with an appointed non-Forensic Pathologist physician(s), termed an Alternate Medical Examiner(s) (AME) (A.R.S. §11-591), who triages, investigates and certifies deaths that fall under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner in Graham County. The Graham County AME does not perform autopsy examinations and if the AME deems an autopsy is necessary to certify the cause and manner of death, the decedent may be referred to the PCOME for an examination and death certification. The PCOME is not aware of how many deaths occurring in Graham County are reported to the Graham County AME, nor the total number or types of deaths certified by the AME. The PCOME only has a record of deaths reported to, or referred for examination to Pima County. Deaths on Native American tribal lands do not have to be reported through the respective death investigation system of that County and may be reported directly to the PCOME as necessary for the needs of the appropriate agency investigating that death (BIA, FBI or local tribal police departments).

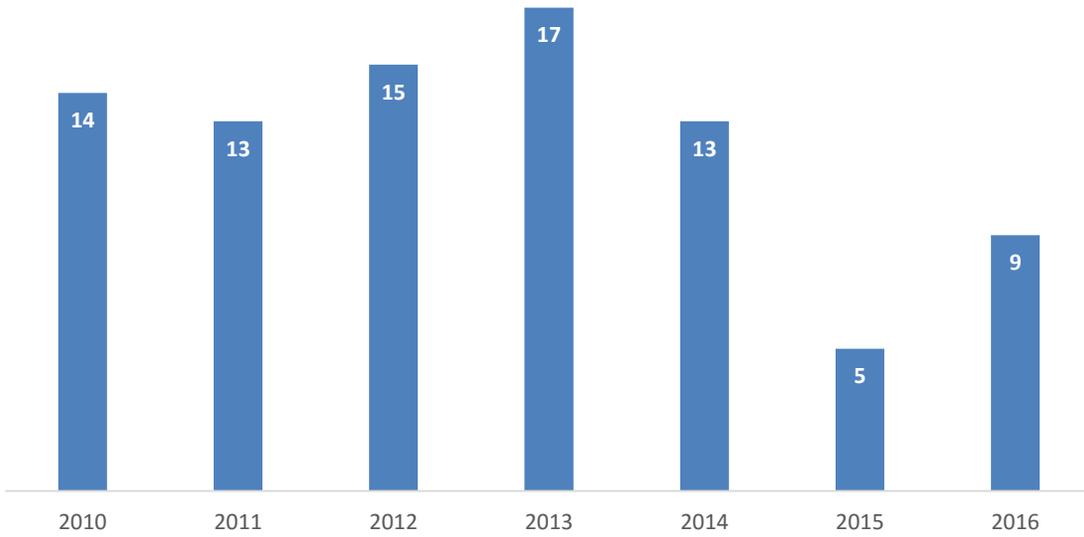
Nine deaths from Graham County were reported to the PCOME in 2016, all of which required autopsy examinations. Some pertinent statistics regarding these deaths are detailed in the tables and graphs below.

Graham County Mortality by Year 2007 - 2016*

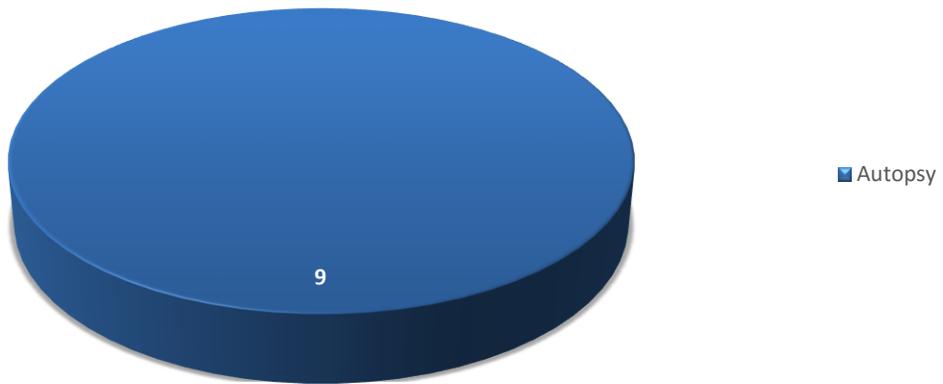


*Arizona Department of Vital Statistics as of 05/22/2017

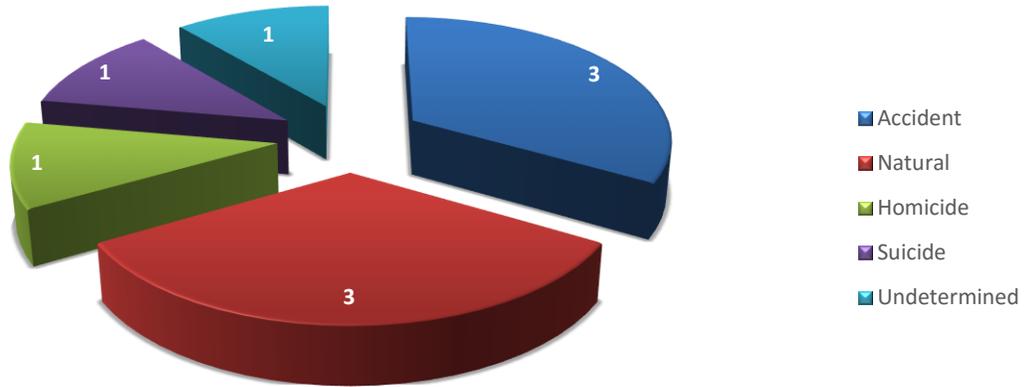
Graham County Deaths Reported to the PCOME 2010 - 2016



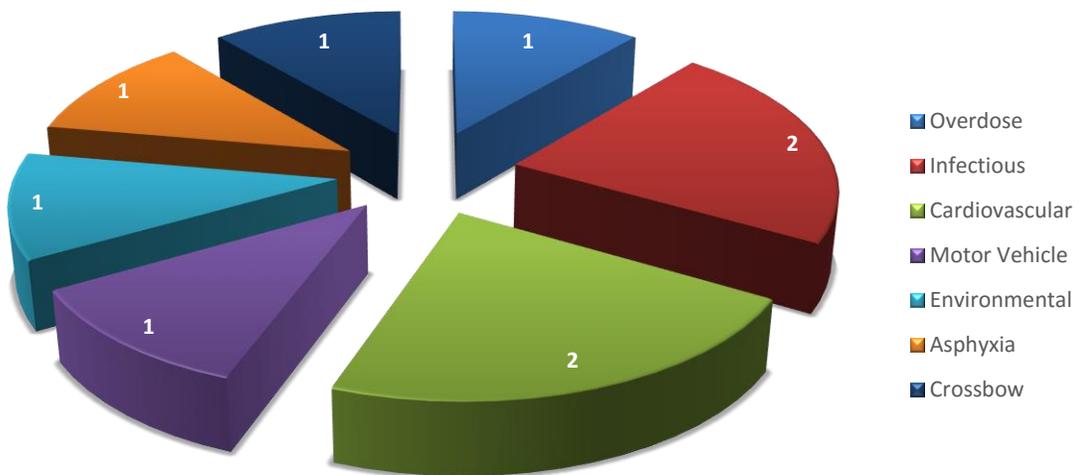
Graham County Deaths by Type of Exam 2016



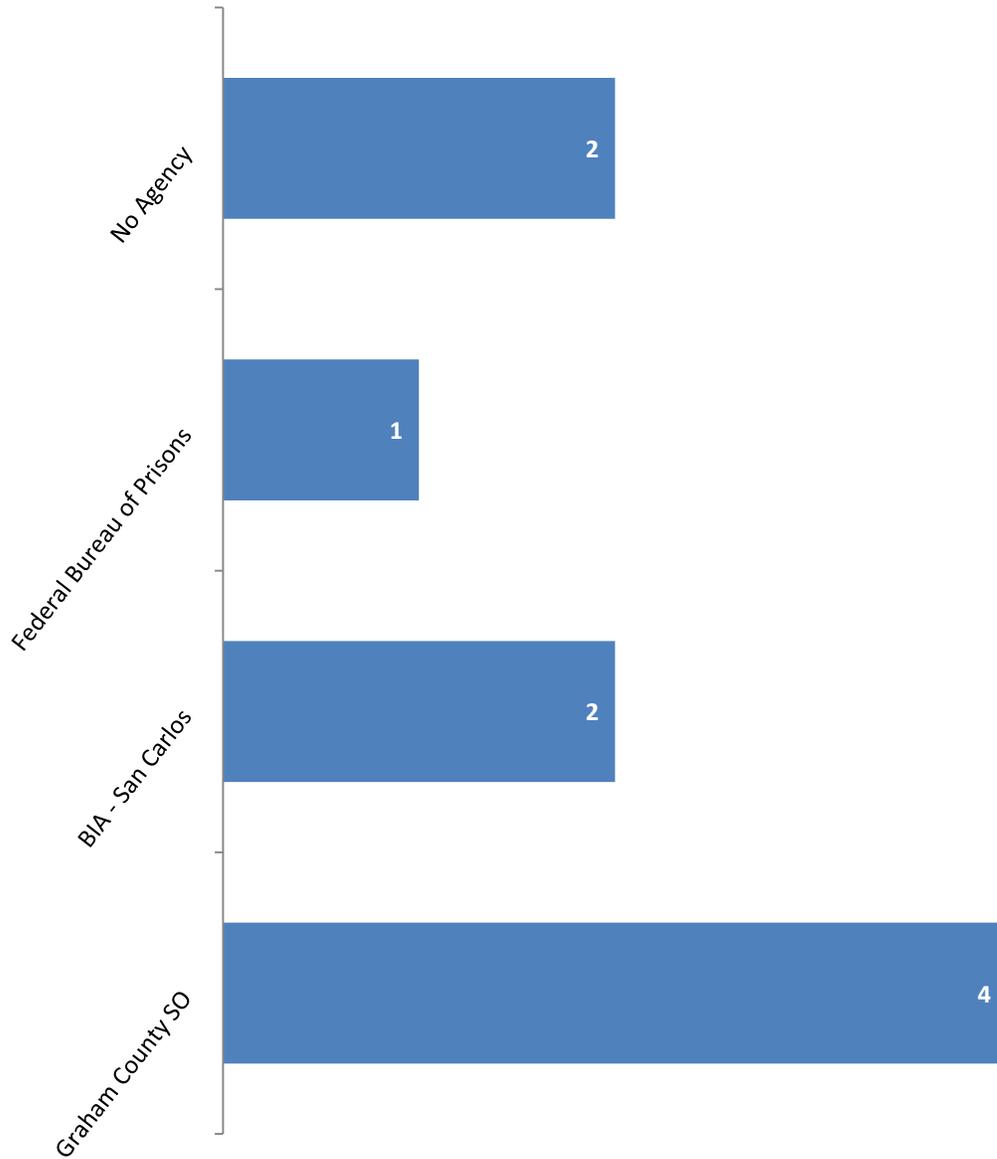
Graham County Deaths by Manner of Death 2016



Graham County Deaths by Type of Death 2016



Graham County Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency 2016

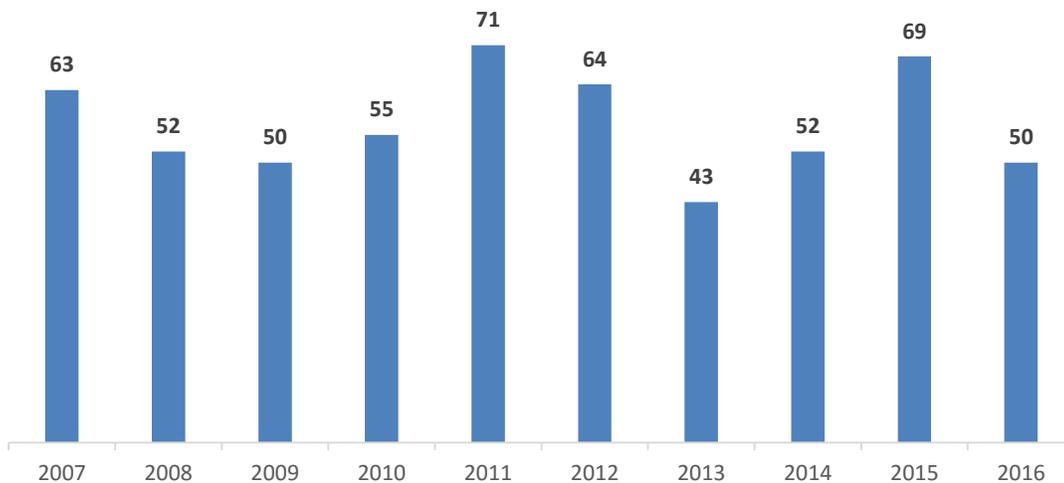


Greenlee County

Greenlee County contracts with an appointed non-Forensic Pathologist physician(s), termed an Alternate Medical Examiner(s) (AME) (A.R.S. §11-591), who triages, investigates and certifies deaths that fall under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner in Greenlee County. The Greenlee County AME does not perform autopsy examinations and if the AME deems an autopsy is necessary to certify the cause and manner of death, the decedent may be referred to the PCOME for an examination and death certification. The PCOME is not aware of how many deaths occurring in Greenlee County are reported to the Greenlee County AME, nor the total number or types of deaths certified by the AME. The PCOME only has a record of deaths reported to, or referred for examination to Pima County. Deaths on Native American tribal lands do not have to be reported through the respective death investigation system of that County and may be reported directly to the PCOME as necessary for the needs of the appropriate agency investigating that death (BIA, FBI or local tribal police departments).

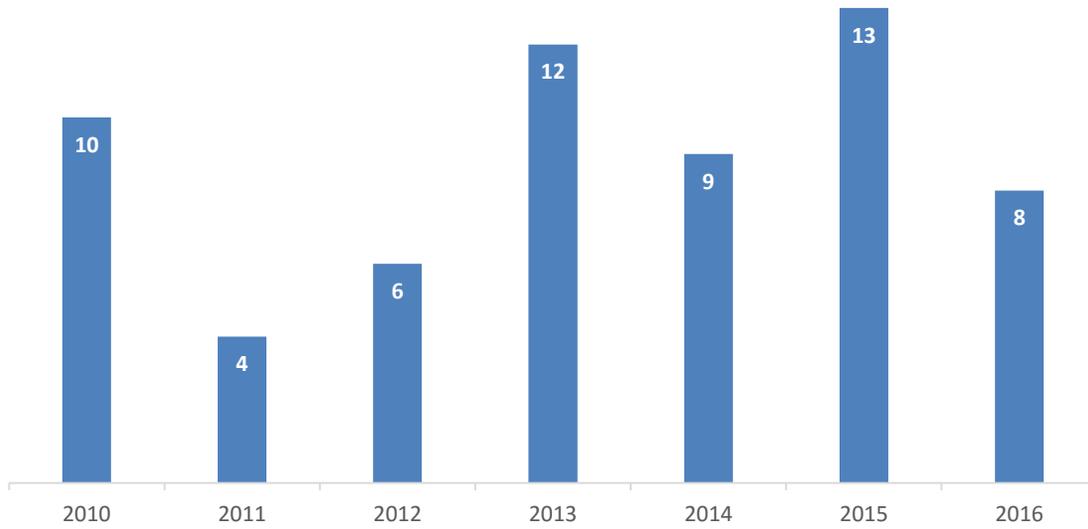
Eight deaths from Greenlee County were reported to the PCOME in 2016, five of which required autopsy examinations. Some pertinent statistics regarding these deaths are detailed in the tables and graphs below.

Greenlee County Mortality by Year 2007 - 2016*

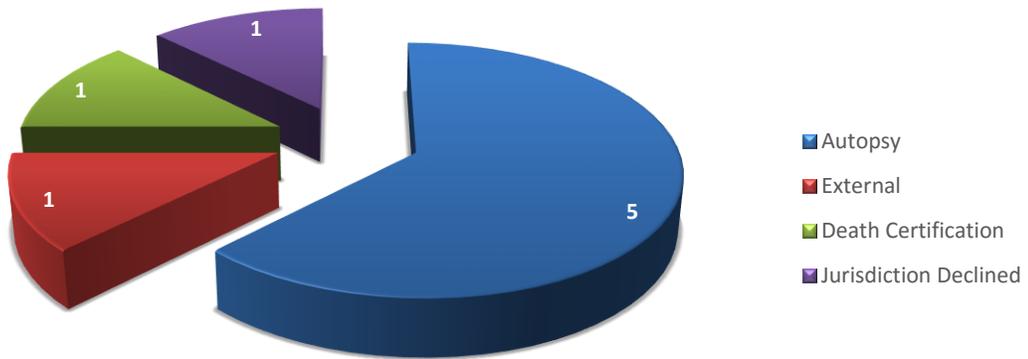


*Arizona Department of Vital Statistics as of 05/22/2017

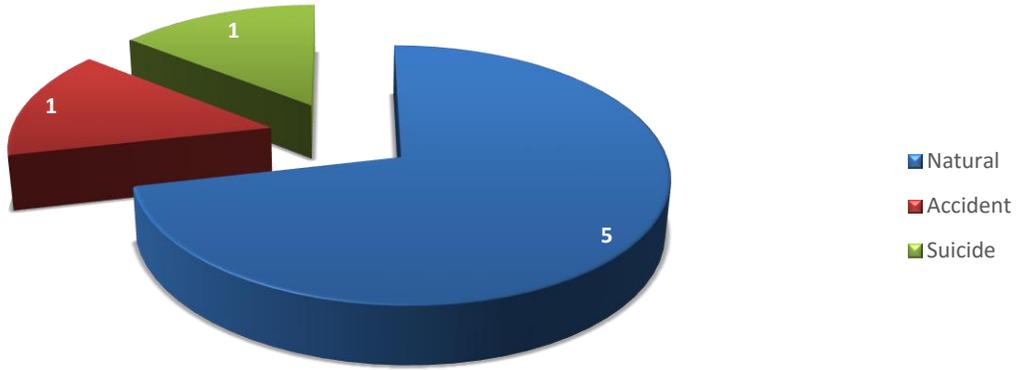
Greenlee County Deaths Reported to the PCOME 2010 - 2016



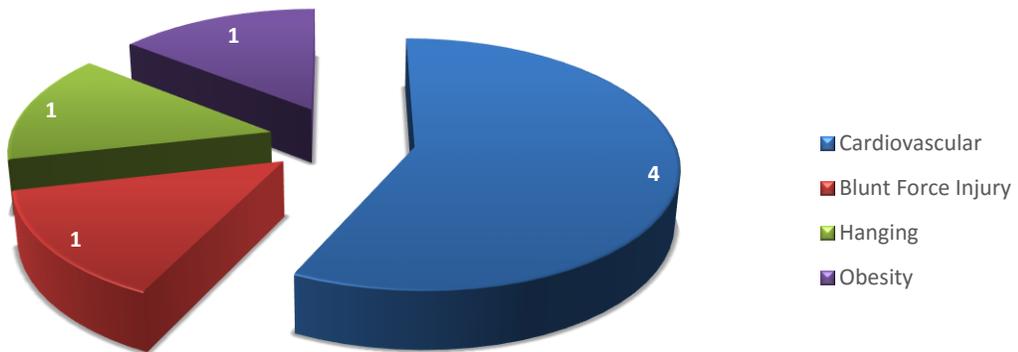
Greenlee County Deaths by Type of Exam 2016



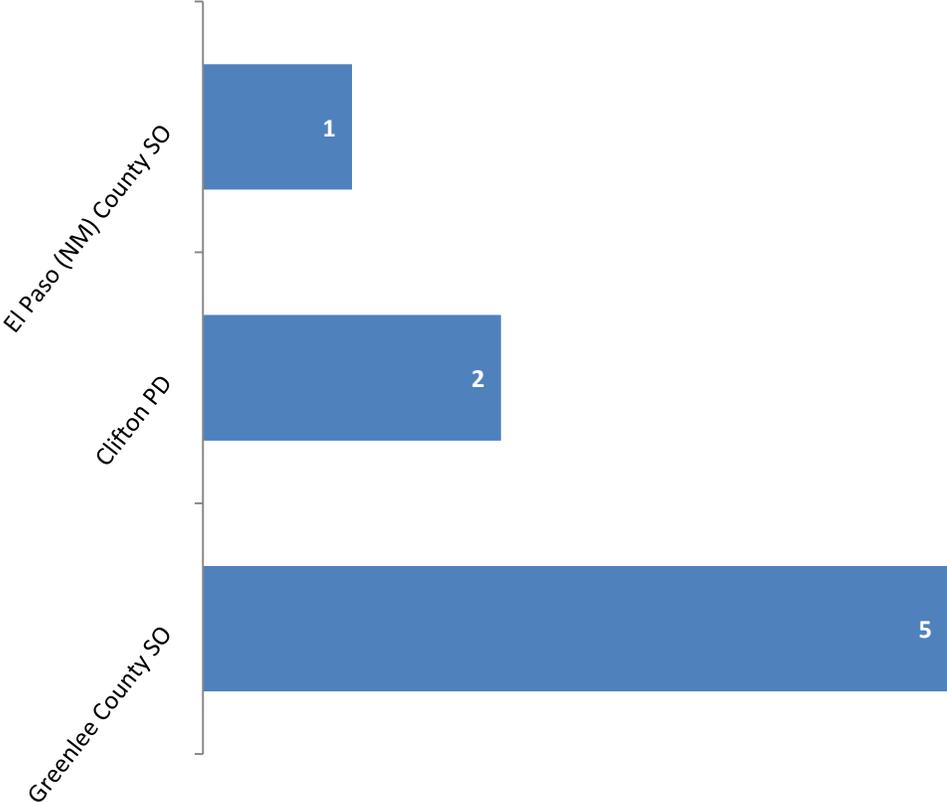
Greenlee County Deaths by Manner of Death 2016



Greenlee County Deaths by Type of Death 2016



Greenlee County Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency 2016

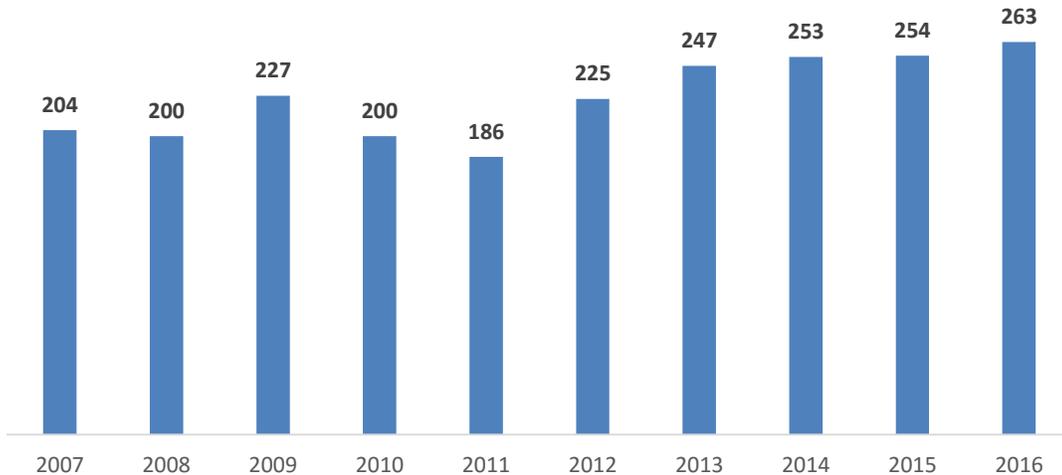


La Paz County

La Paz County contracts with an appointed non-Forensic Pathologist physician(s), termed an Alternate Medical Examiner(s) (AME) (A.R.S. §11-591), who triages, investigates and certifies deaths that fall under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner in La Paz County. The La Paz County AME does not perform autopsy examinations and if the AME deems an autopsy is necessary to certify the cause and manner of death, the decedent may be referred to the PCOME for an examination and death certification. The PCOME is not aware of how many deaths occurring in La Paz County are reported to the La Paz County AME, nor the total number or types of deaths certified by the AME. The PCOME only has a record of deaths reported to, or referred for examination to Pima County. Deaths on Native American tribal lands do not have to be reported through the respective death investigation system of that County and may be reported directly to the PCOME as necessary for the needs of the appropriate agency investigating that death (BIA, FBI or local tribal police departments).

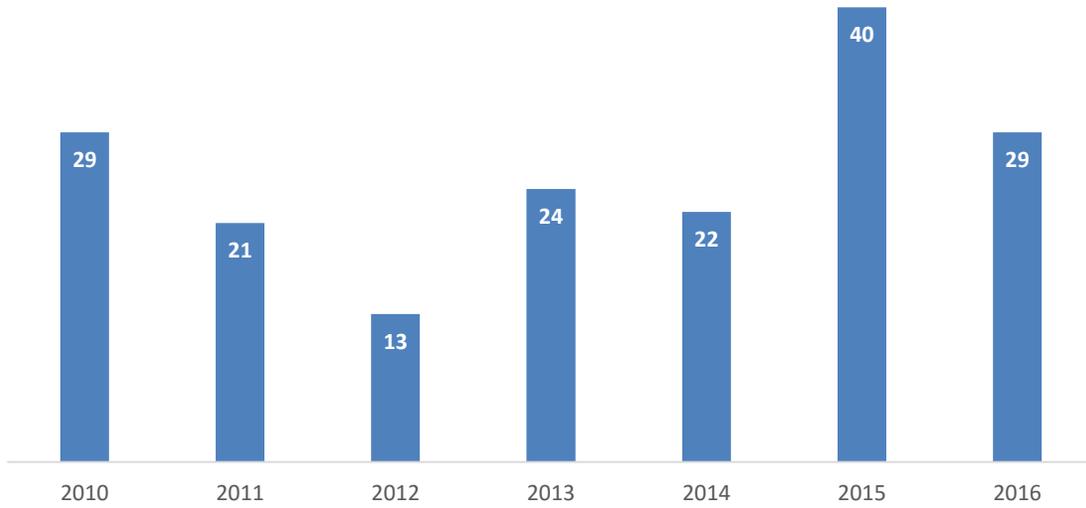
Twenty nine deaths from La Paz County were reported to the PCOME in 2016, 28 of which required autopsy examinations. Some pertinent statistics regarding these deaths are detailed in the tables and graphs below.

La Paz County Mortality by Year 2007 - 2016*

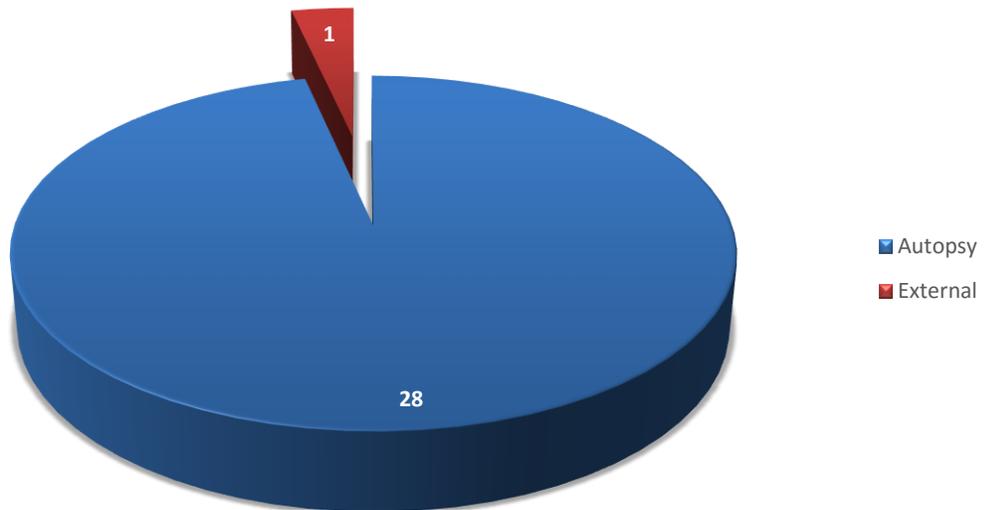


*Arizona Department of Vital Statistics as of 05/22/2017

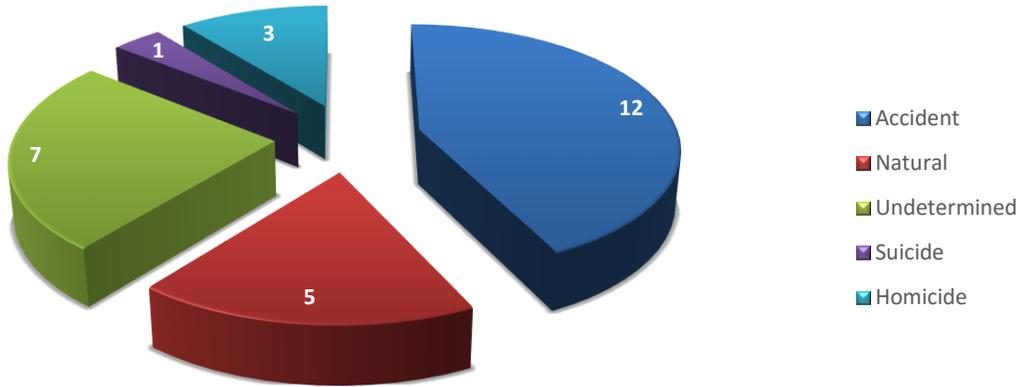
La Paz County Deaths Reported to the PCOME 2010 - 2016



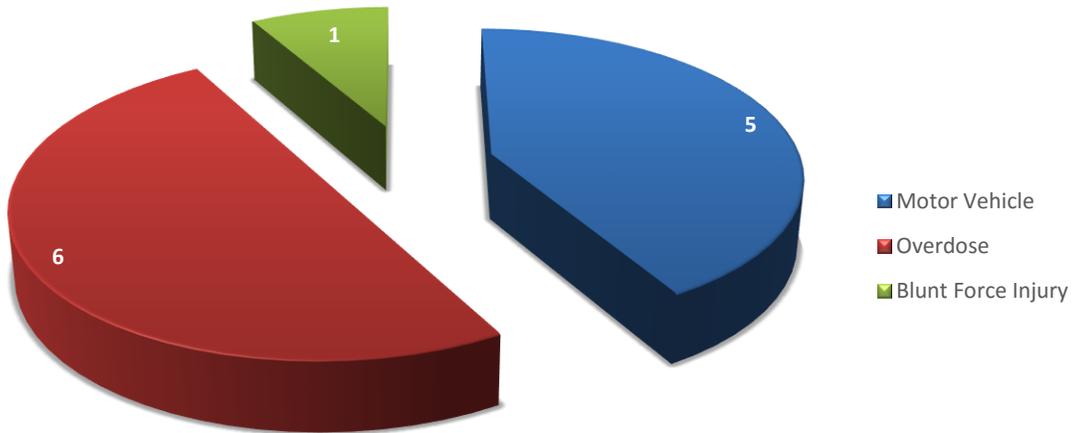
La Paz County Deaths by Type of Exam 2016



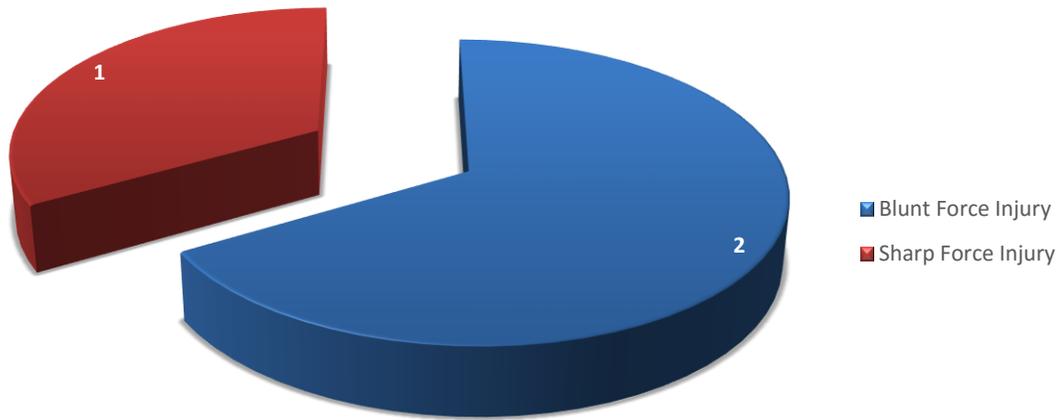
La Paz County Deaths by Manner of Death 2016



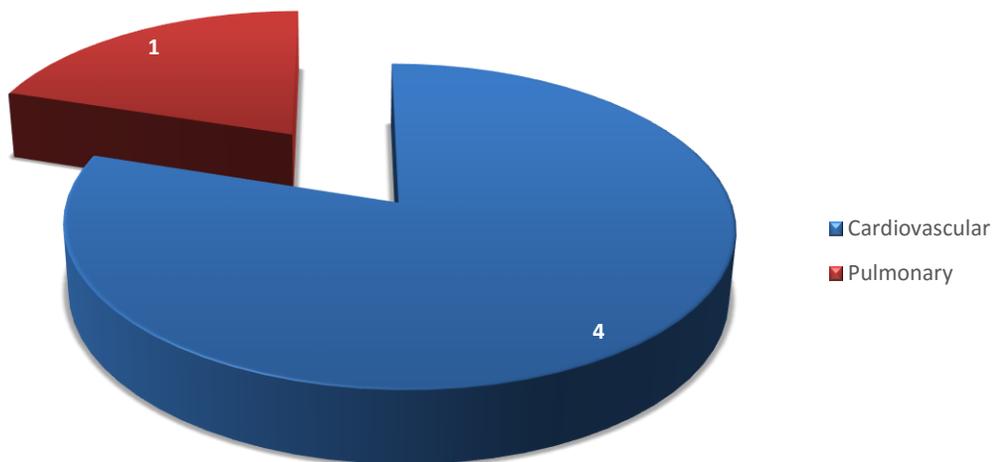
La Paz County Accidents by Type 2016



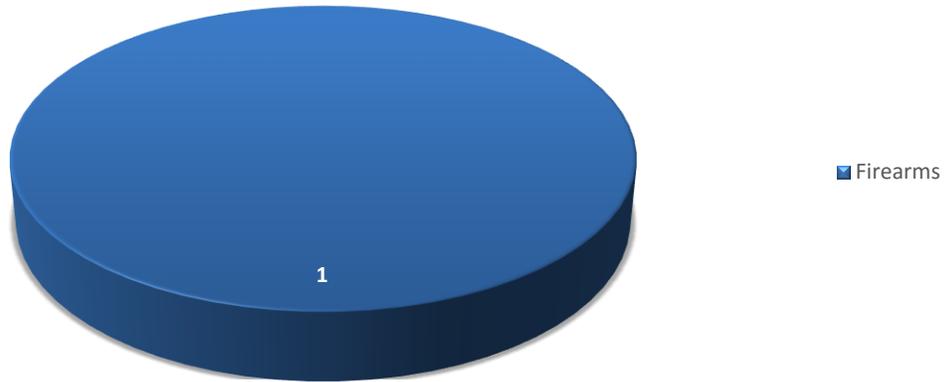
La Paz County Homicides by Type 2016



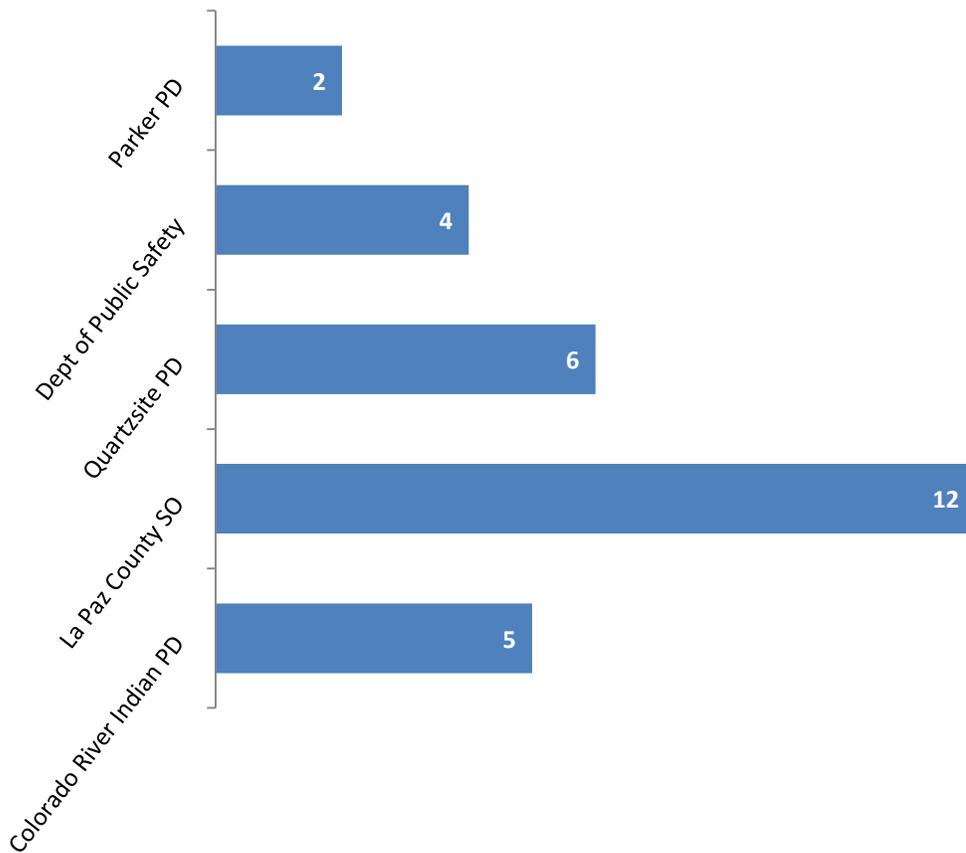
La Paz County Naturals by Type 2016



La Paz County Suicides by Type 2016



La Paz County Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency 2016

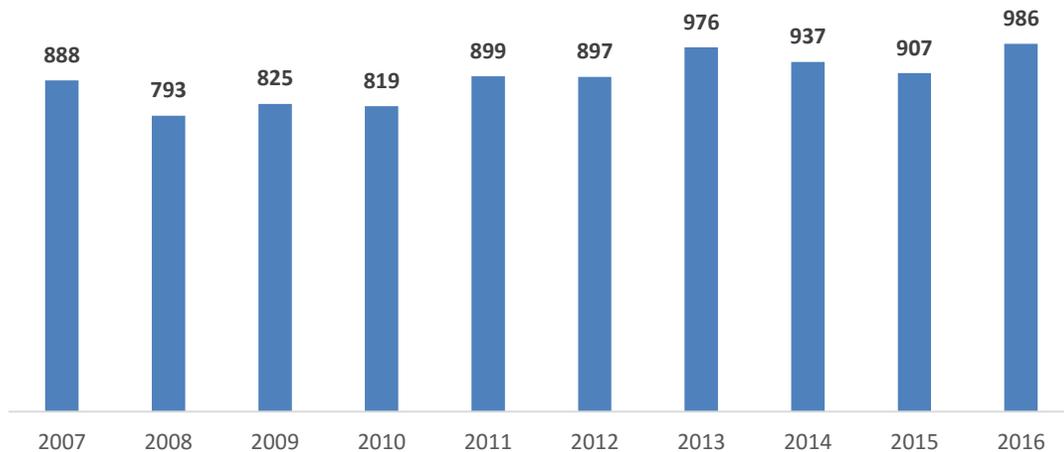


Navajo County

Navajo County contracts with an appointed non-Forensic Pathologist physician(s), termed an Alternate Medical Examiner(s) (AME) (A.R.S. §11-591), who triages, investigates and certifies deaths that fall under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner in Navajo County. The Navajo County AME does not perform autopsy examinations and if the AME deems an autopsy is necessary to certify the cause and manner of death, the decedent may be referred to the PCOME for an examination and death certification. The PCOME is not aware of how many deaths occurring in Navajo County are reported to the Navajo County AME, nor the total number or types of deaths certified by the AME. The PCOME only has a record of deaths reported to, or referred for examination to Pima County. Deaths on Native American tribal lands do not have to be reported through the respective death investigation system of that County and may be reported directly to the PCOME as necessary for the needs of the appropriate agency investigating that death (BIA, FBI or local tribal police departments).

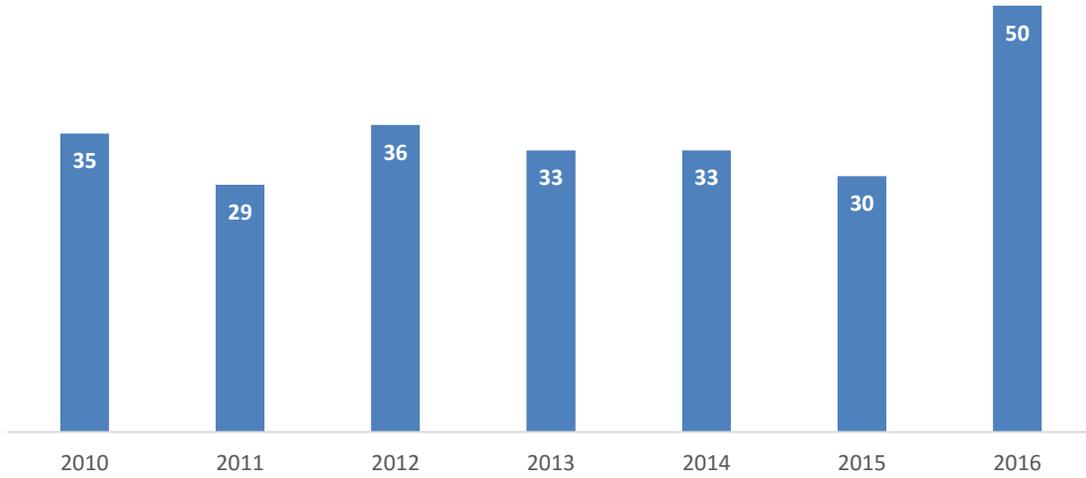
Fifty deaths from Navajo County were reported to the PCOME in 2016, 47 of which required autopsy examinations. Some pertinent statistics regarding these deaths are detailed in the tables and graphs below.

Navajo County Mortality by Year 2007 - 2016*

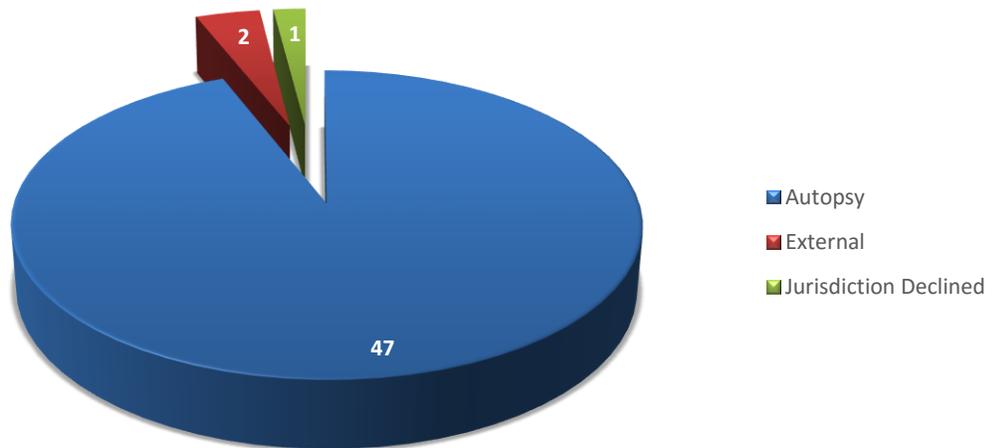


*Arizona Department of Vital Statistics as of 05/22/2017

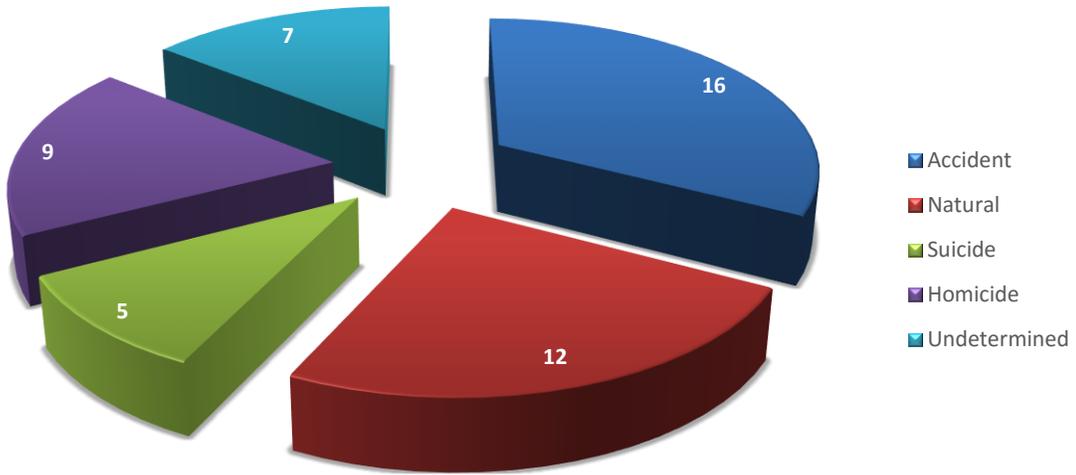
Navajo County Deaths Reported to the PCOME 2010 - 2016



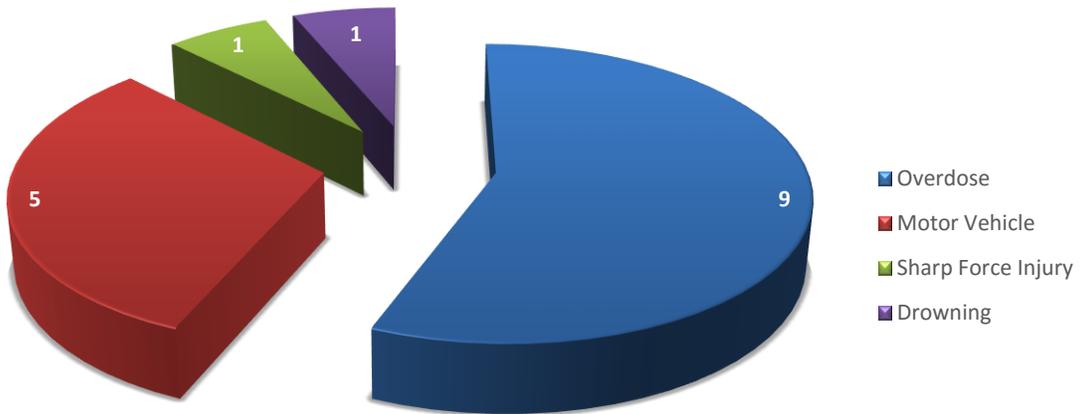
Navajo County Deaths by Type of Exam 2016



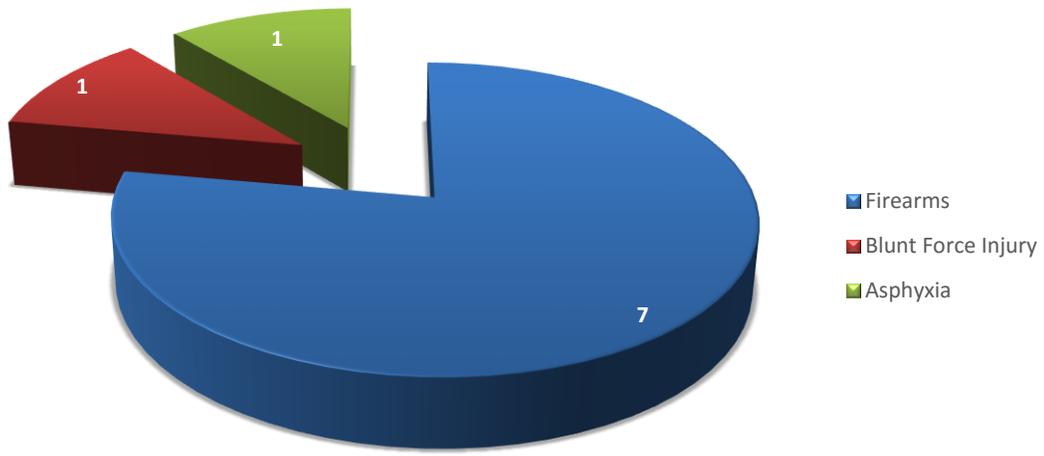
Navajo County Deaths by Manner of Death 2016



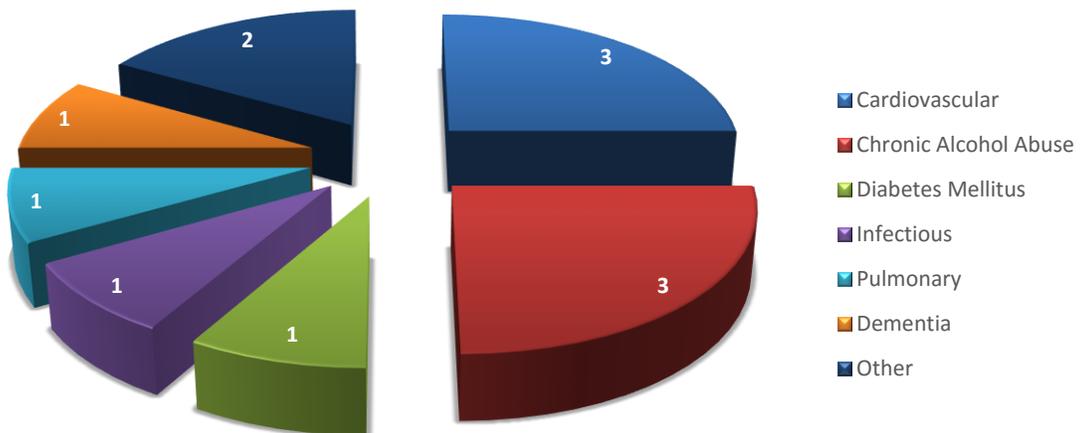
Navajo County Accidents by Type 2016



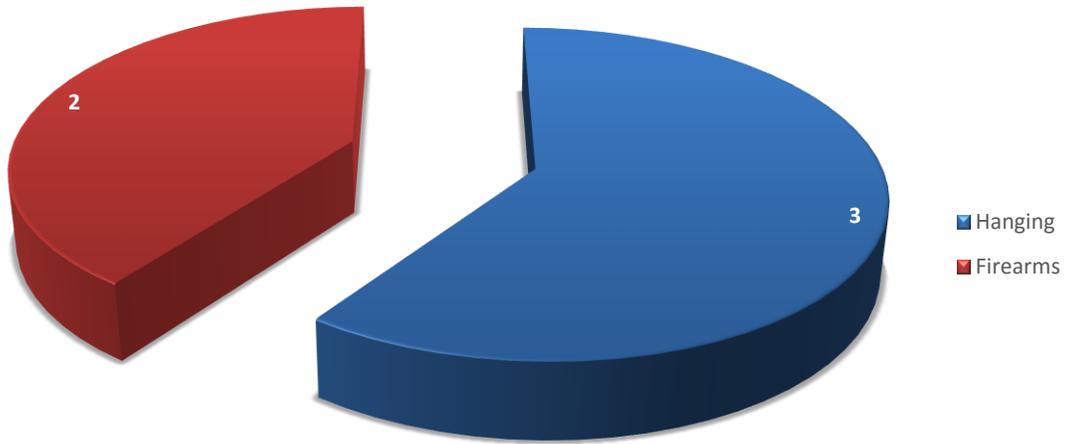
Navajo County Homicides by Type 2016



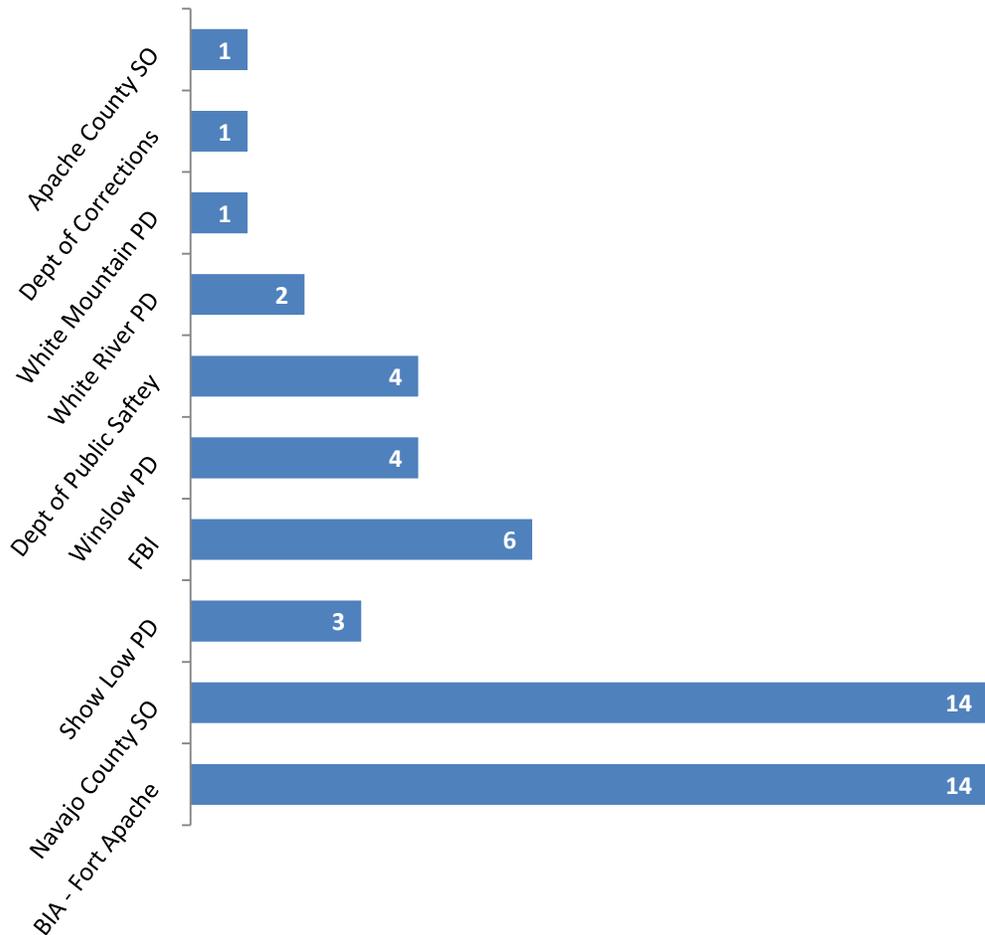
Navajo County Naturals by Type 2016



Navajo County Suicides by Type 2016



Navajo County Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency 2016

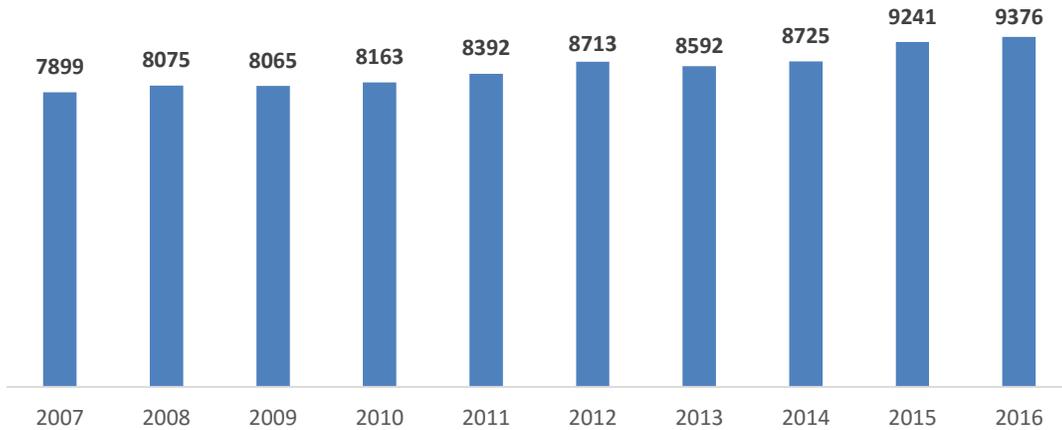


Pima County

TOTAL MORTALITY

The number of deaths reported to the medical examiner’s office in a given time frame is a reflection of the total population that the office serves. In 2016 there were 9,376 deaths in Pima County; of these 2,657 (28%) were reported to the PCOME for investigation.

Pima County Mortality by Year 2007 - 2016*

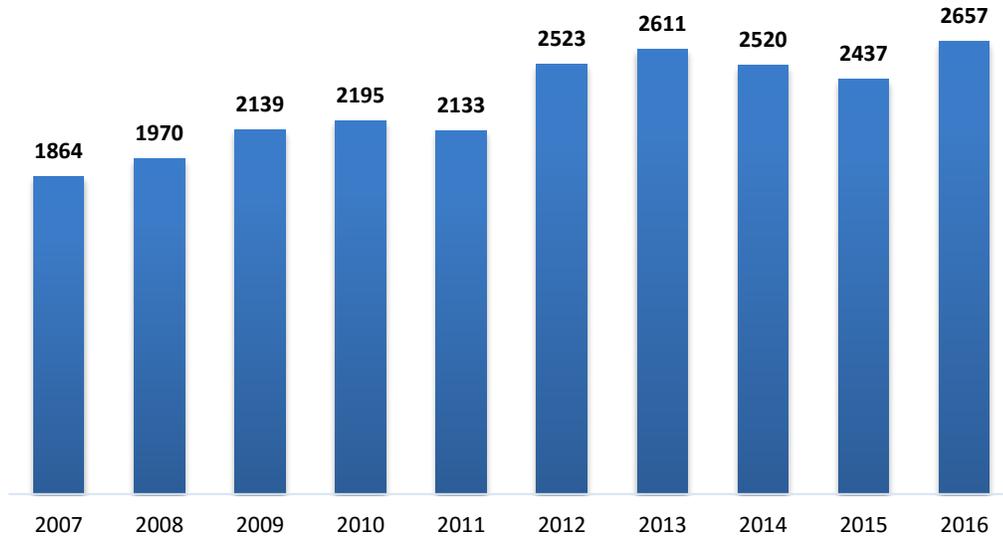


*Arizona Department of Vital Statistics as of 05/22/17

TOTAL CASES

The total cases handled by the PCOME from Pima County in a given year are the sum of the ME cases (autopsies, external examinations, and death certificate cases), cases in which jurisdiction was declined, and the number of cases stored at our facility during the calendar year (storage cases).

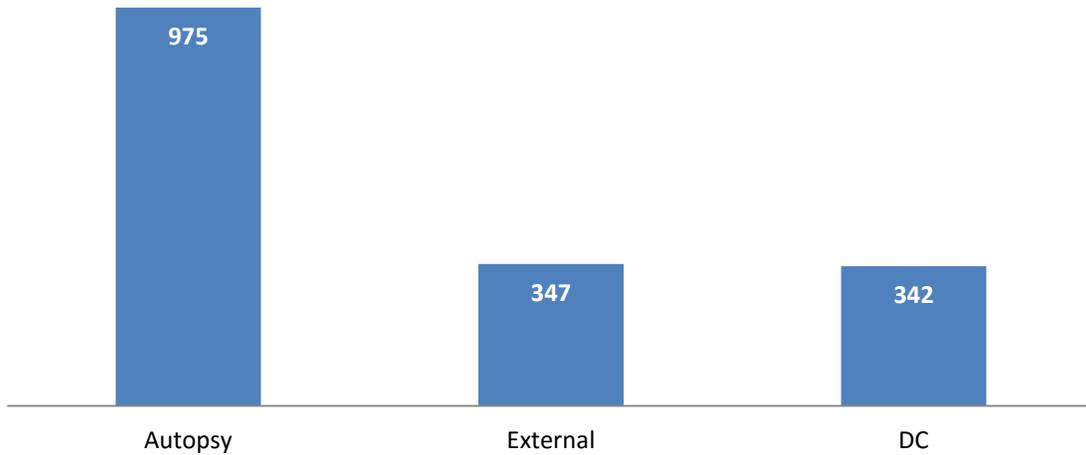
Total Cases from Pima County 2007 - 2016



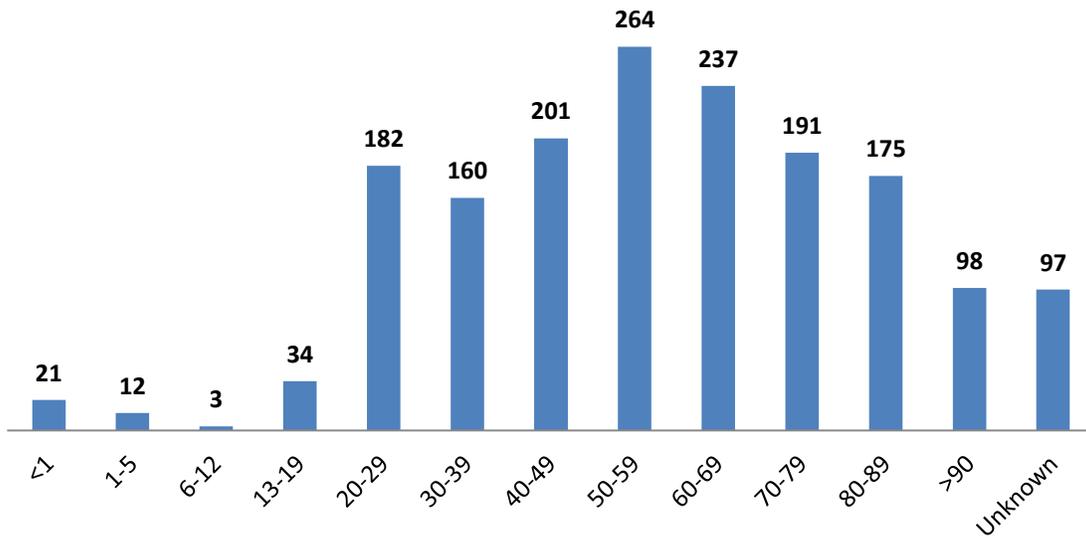
MEDICAL EXAMINER CASES

The PCOME considers all cases in which the cause and manner of death are determined by this office as “medical examiner cases.” Those cases include autopsies, external examinations and death certificate (DC) cases. Autopsies are examinations where a decedent is examined both externally and internally for evidence of injury or natural disease which may have caused or contributed to the individual’s death. External examinations consist of an external examination of the body without the internal examination. A DC case involves review of the medical records, law enforcement reports and any other information that may be necessary to determine the cause and manner of death without physical examination of the decedent. In 2016, 975 autopsies, 347 external examinations and 342 DC cases were performed on deaths from Pima County.

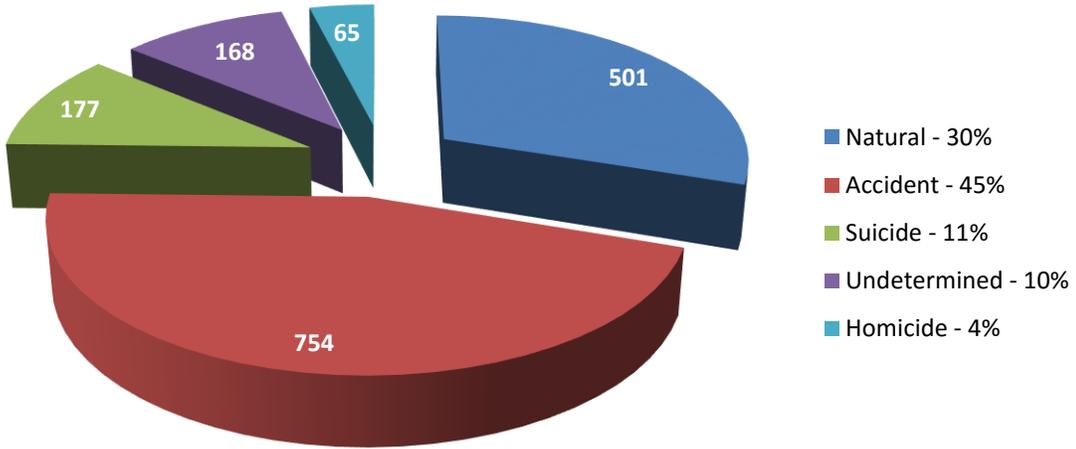
2016 Pima County Medical Examiner Cases



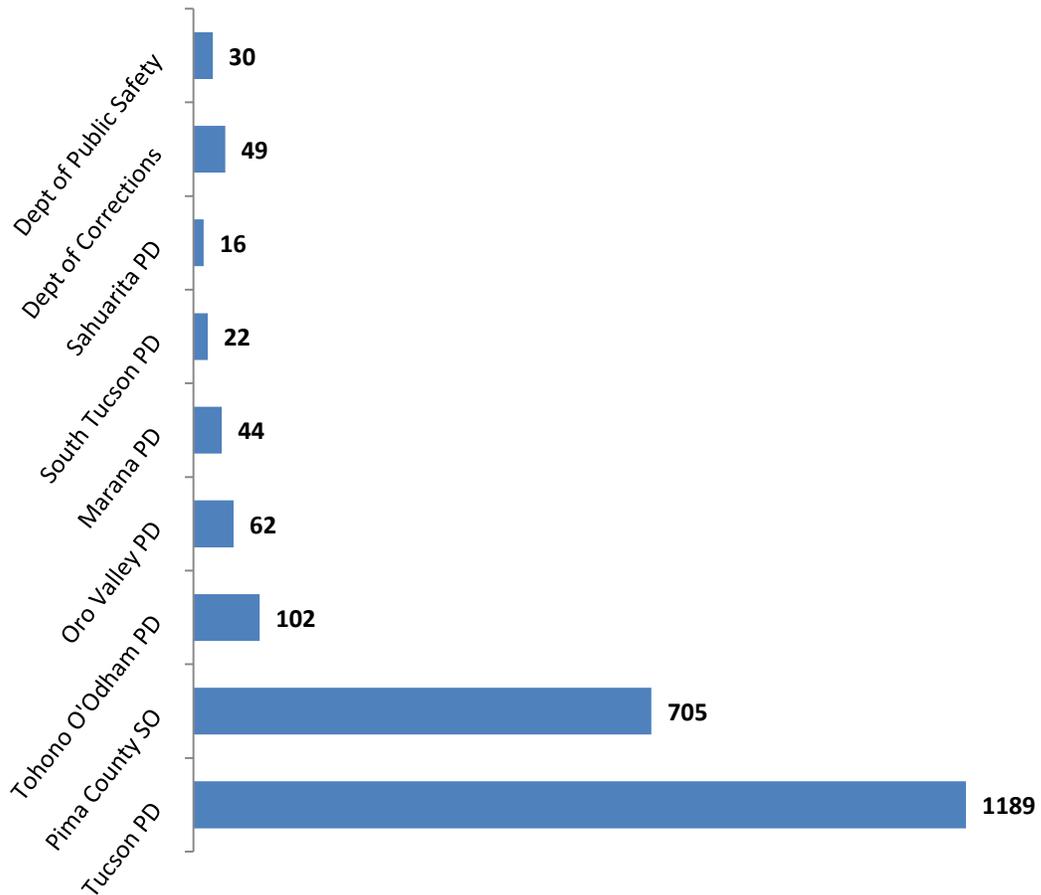
Pima County Medical Examiner Cases by Age 2016



Pima County ME Cases by Manner of Death 2016



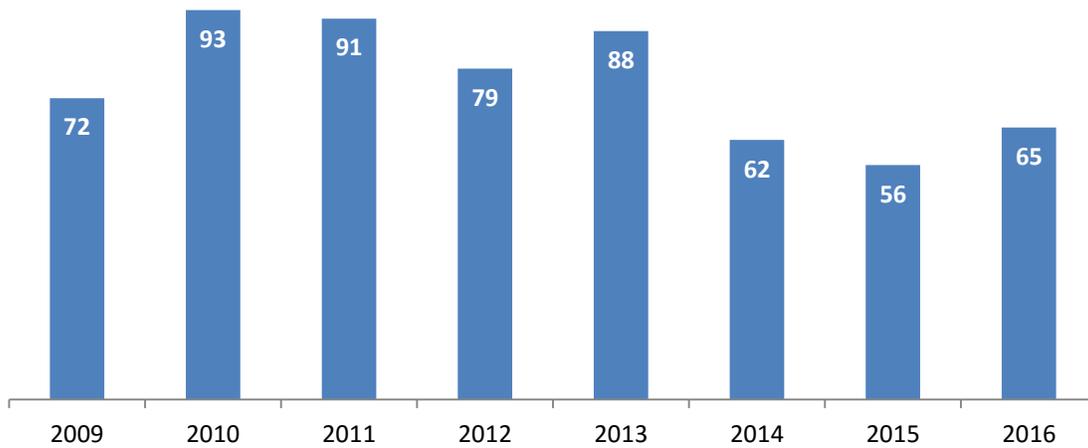
Pima County Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency 2016



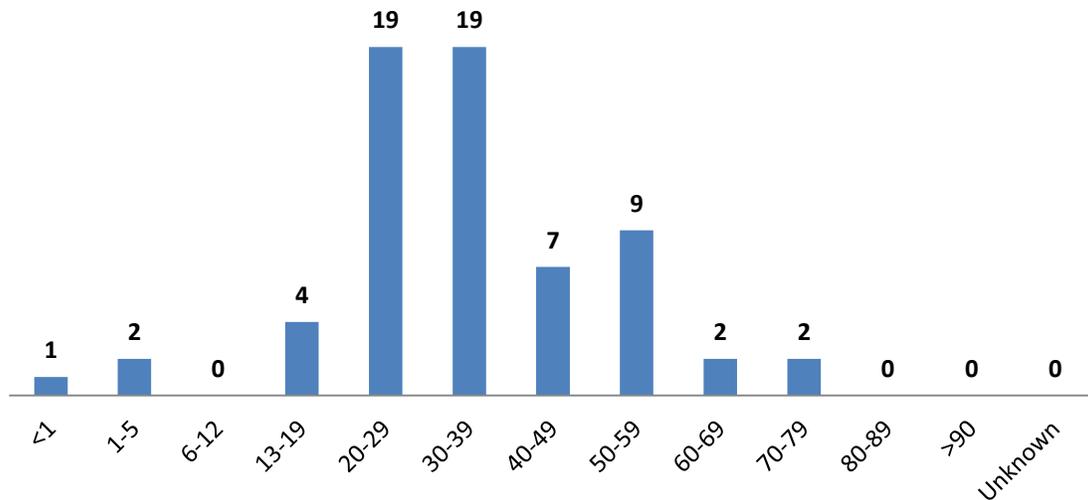
HOMICIDE DEATHS

The PCOME examined 65 homicides from Pima County in 2016; 4% of total Pima County deaths certified. Homicide totals from 2009 – 2016 are compared below. Homicide victims were most frequently male (88%), between 20-39 years of age (43%) and died as the result of firearms (63%).

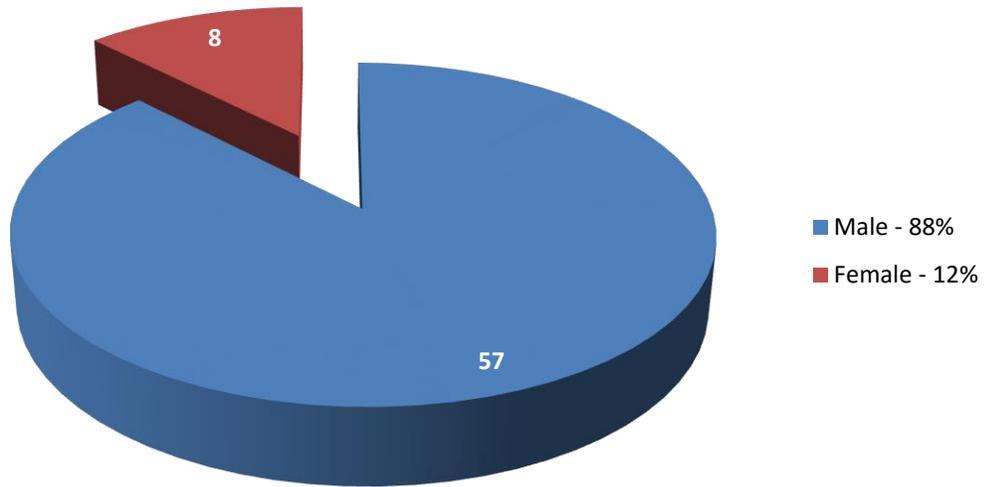
Pima County Homicide 2009 - 2016



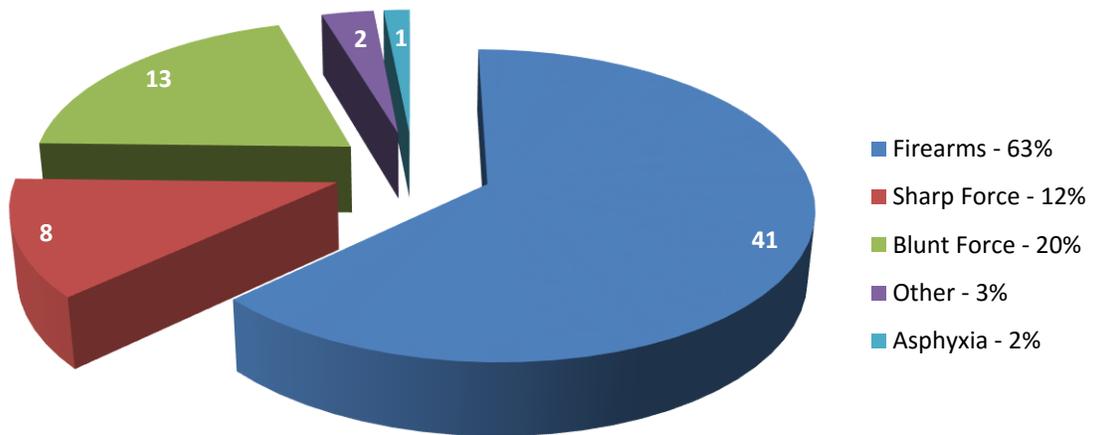
Pima County Homicide by Age 2016



Pima County Homicide by Sex 2016



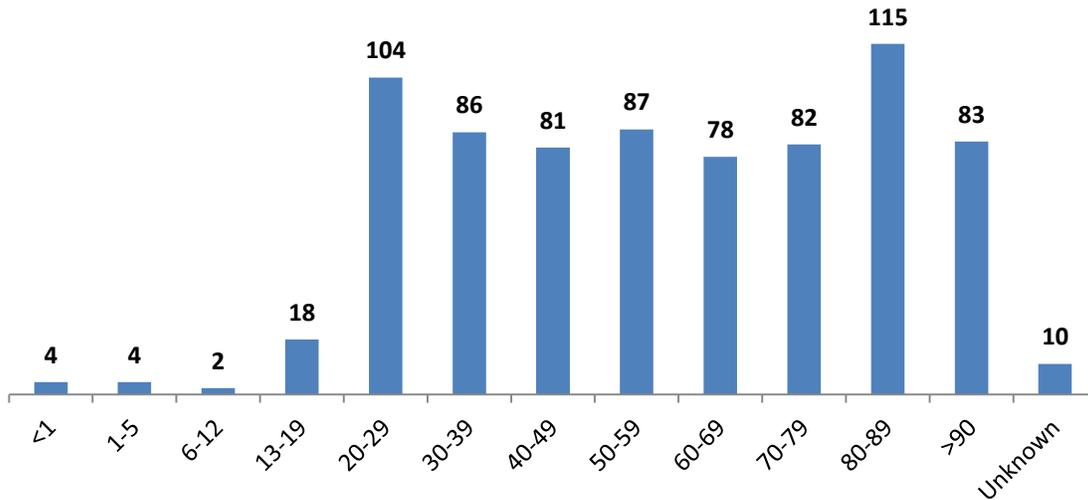
Pima County Homicide by Cause 2016



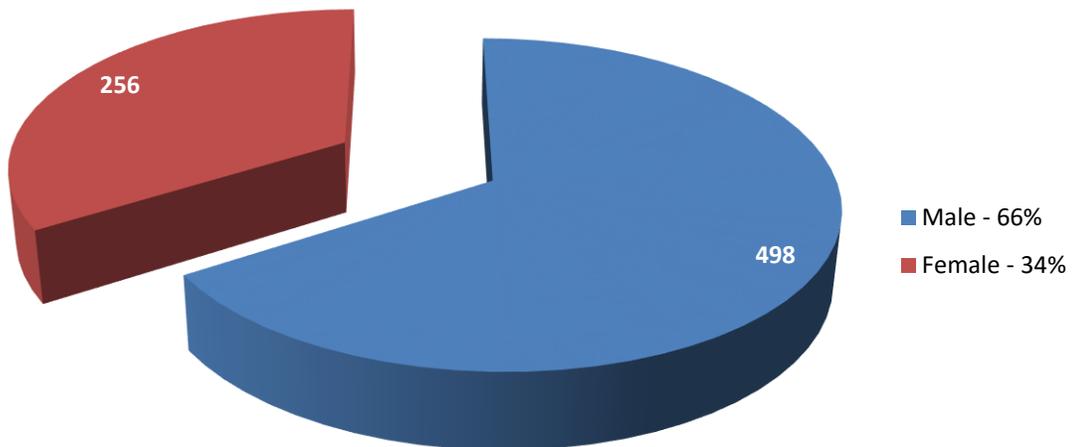
ACCIDENT DEATHS

Deaths due to accidents accounted for 45% of the deaths investigated by the PCOME in 2016. Accident victims were most frequently males (66%), between 80-89 years of age (15%) and died as the result of blunt force injuries (37%) often as the result of such conditions as complications of a hip fracture or intracranial hemorrhage from a fall.

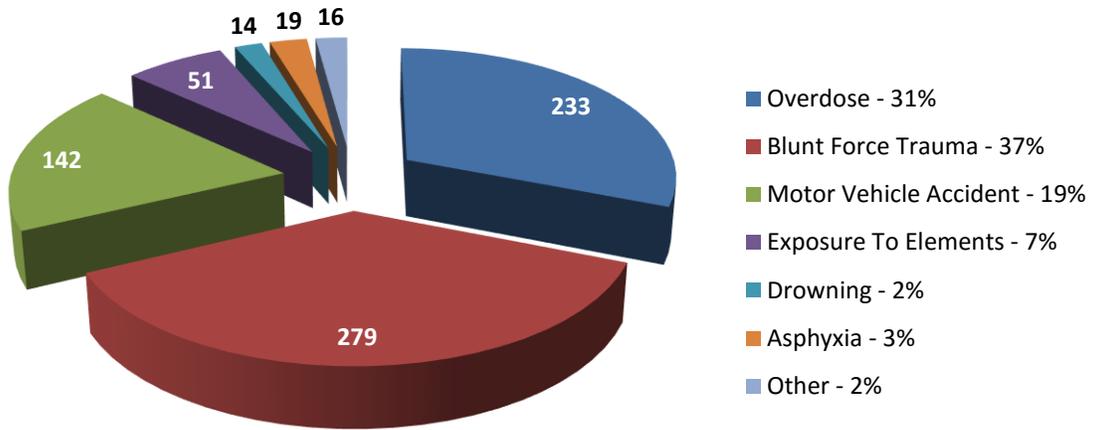
Pima County Accident by Age 2016



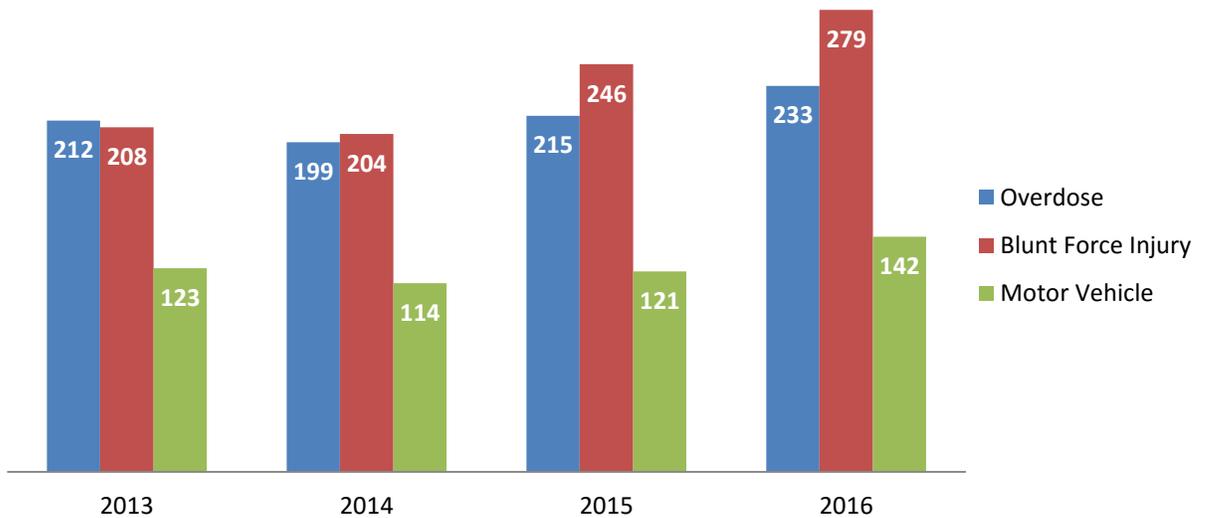
Pima County Accident by Sex 2016



Pima County Accident by Cause 2016



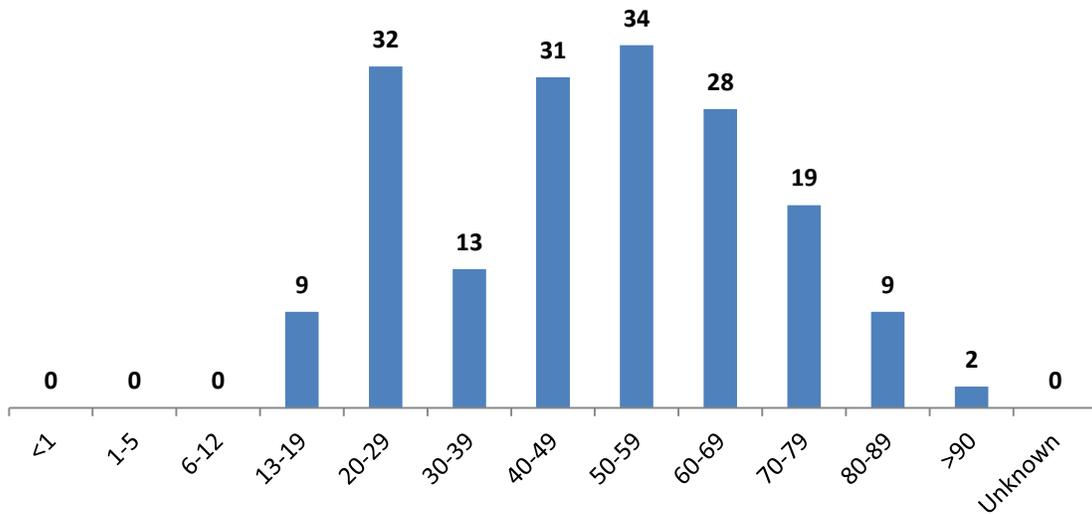
Pima County Accident by Cause (Top 3) 2013 - 2016



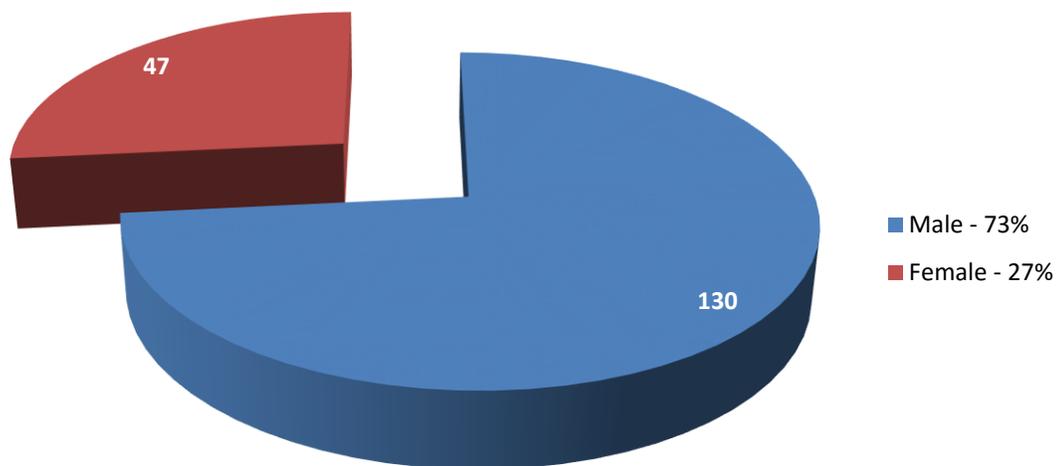
SUICIDE DEATHS

Deaths due to suicide accounted for 11% of the deaths investigated by the PCOME in 2016. Suicide victims were most frequently males (73%), between 50-59 years of age (19%) and died as the result of firearms (59%).

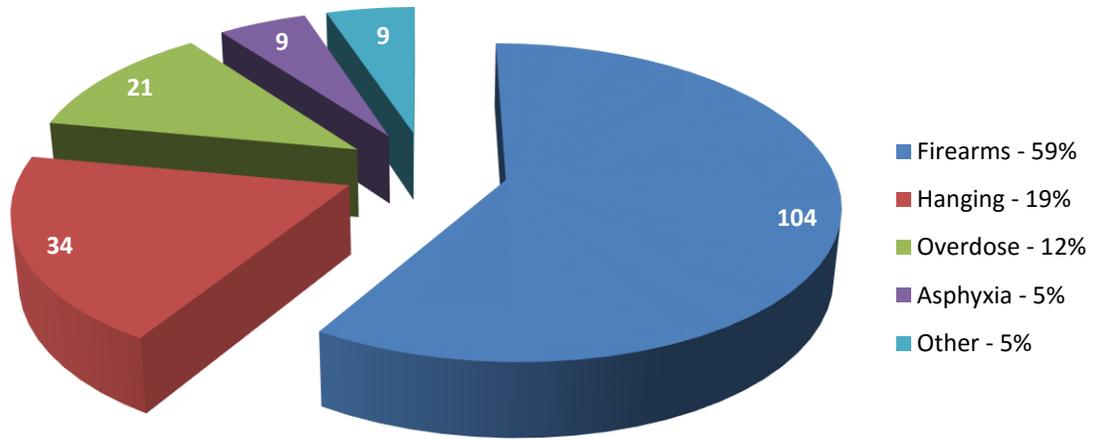
Pima County Suicide by Age 2016



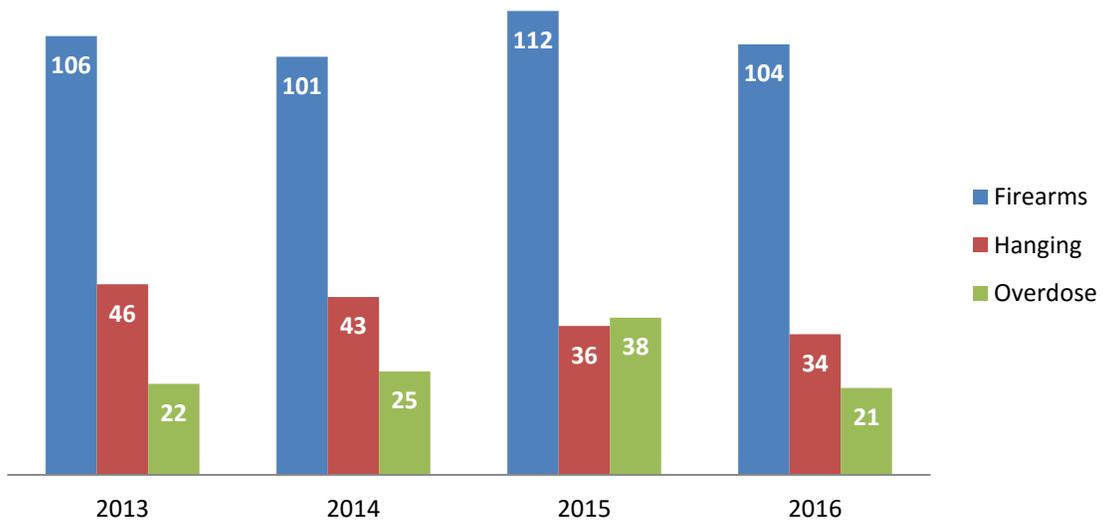
Pima County Suicide by Sex 2016



Pima County Suicide by Cause 2016



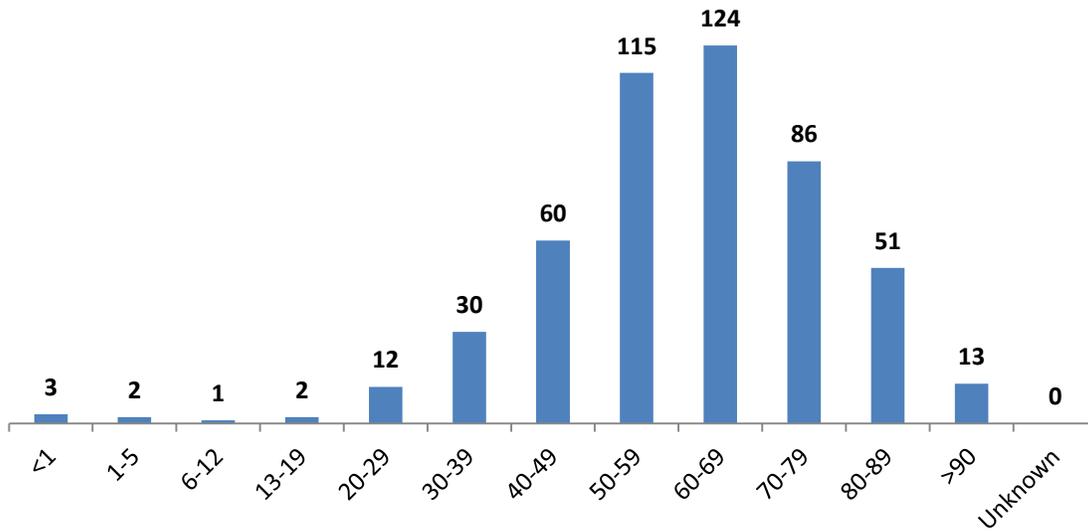
Pima County Suicide by Cause (Top 3) 2013 - 2016



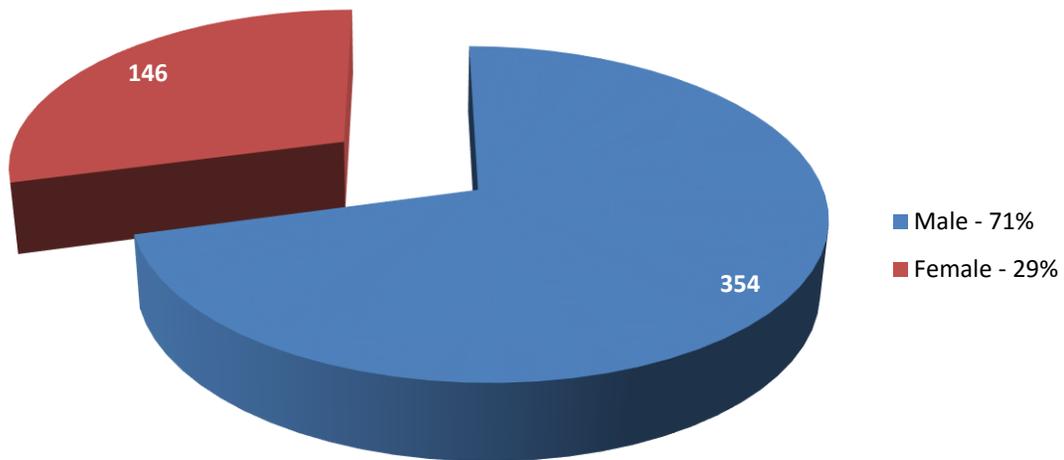
NATURAL DEATHS

Deaths due to natural causes accounted for 30% of the deaths investigated by the PCOME in 2016. Individuals who died from natural causes were most frequently males (71%), between 60-69 years of age (25%) and died as the result of cardiovascular disease (61%).

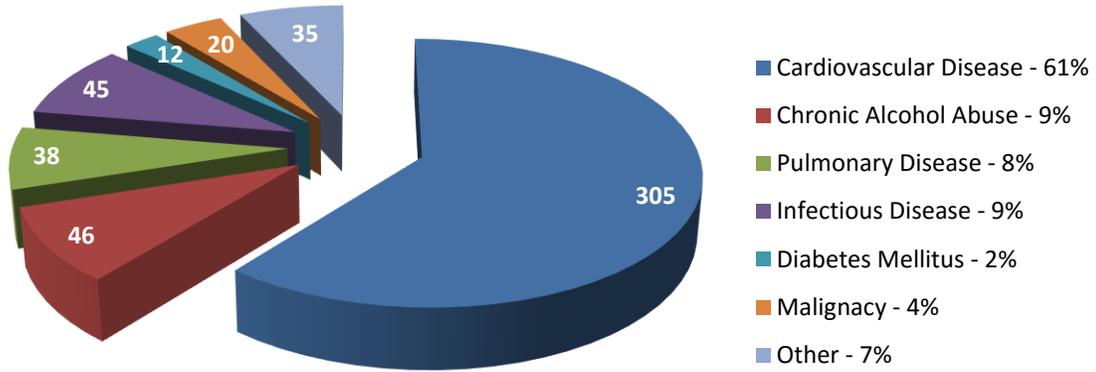
Pima County Natural Deaths by Age 2016



Pima County Natural Deaths by Sex 2016



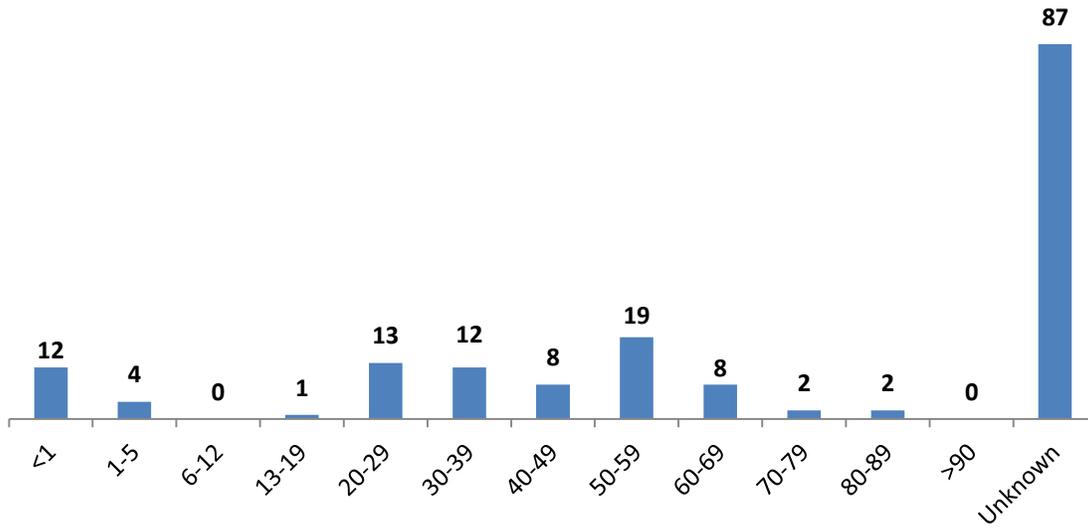
Pima County Natural Deaths by Cause 2016



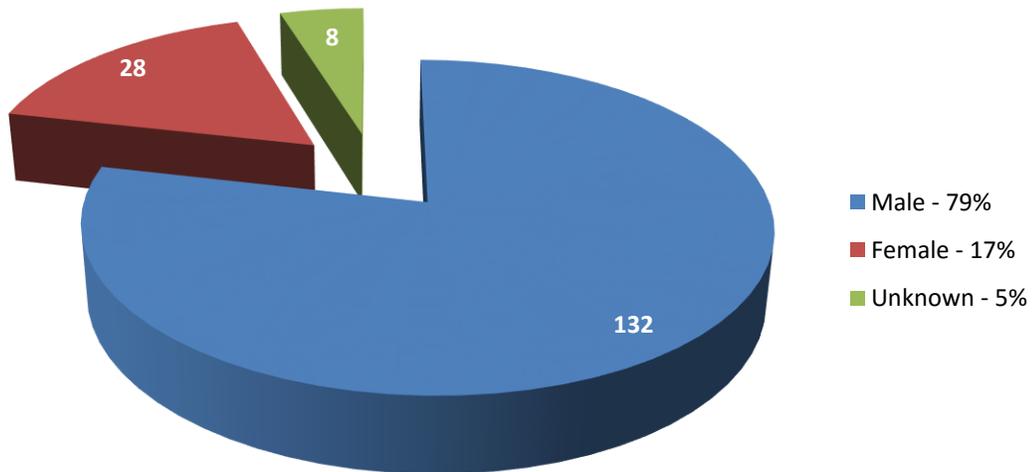
UNDETERMINED MANNER OF DEATH

Deaths of undetermined manner accounted for 10% of the deaths investigated by the PCOME in 2016. Individuals who died with an undetermined manner were most frequently males (77%), of unknown age (53%) and died from undetermined causes (88%). Many of these deaths represent skeletal remains of UBCs who died in the deserts of southern Arizona.

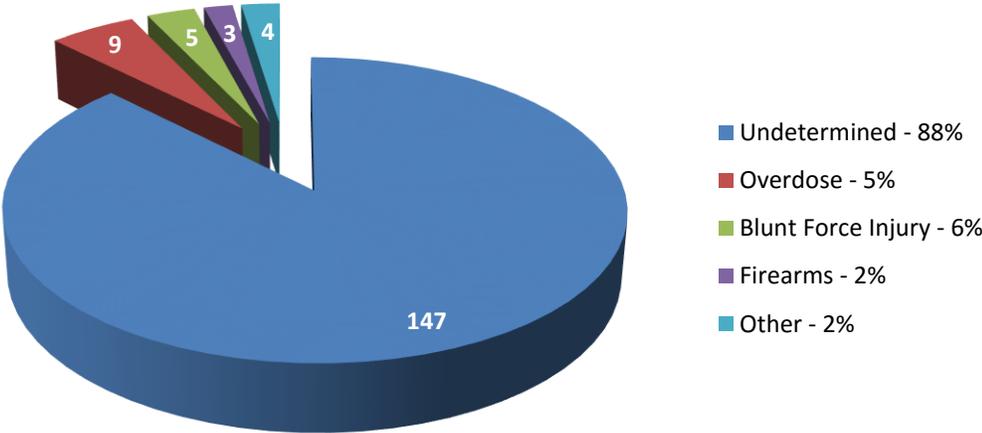
Pima County Undetermined Manner of Death by Age 2016



Pima County Undetermined Manner of Death by Sex 2016



Pima County Undetermined Manner of Death by Cause 2016



OVERDOSE DEATHS

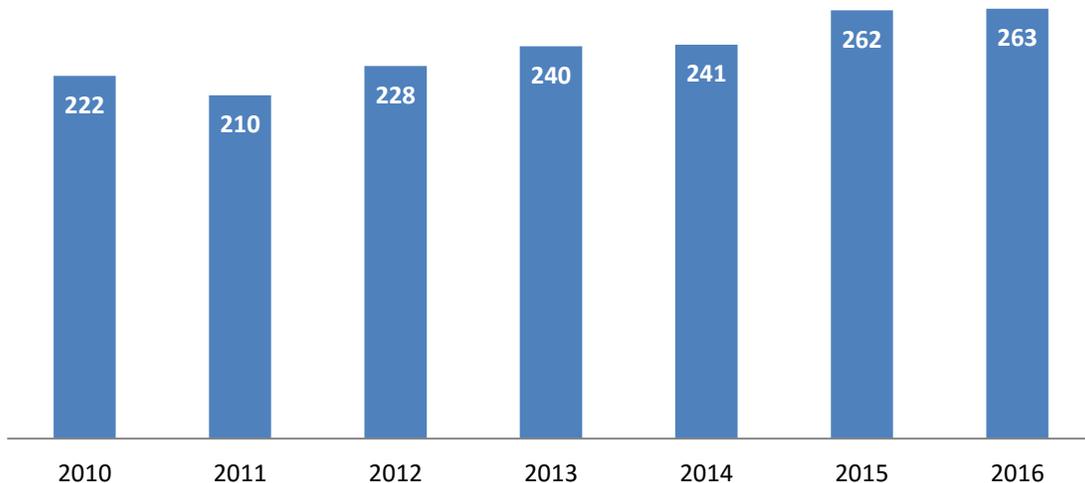
There were 263 deaths attributed to an overdose of either a single drug (133 deaths, 51%) or a combination of drugs (130 deaths, 49%) in 2016. Overdose deaths commonly involved males (66%) between the ages of 20-29 (22%). The majority of these deaths were classified as accidents (89%).

Opiate drugs (heroin, oxycodone, methadone, hydrocodone, morphine, oxymorphone, hydromorphone, tramadol, opiate unspecified) and fentanyl (a synthetic opioid narcotic) accounted for the majority of overdose deaths, either as a single drug or a component of a poly-drug overdose. Methamphetamine was the most commonly abused illicit drug contributing to death in 2016 followed by heroin. Deaths due to methamphetamine were also on the rise in 2016 with a doubling of the number of deaths from 2014 (38 to 79 deaths).

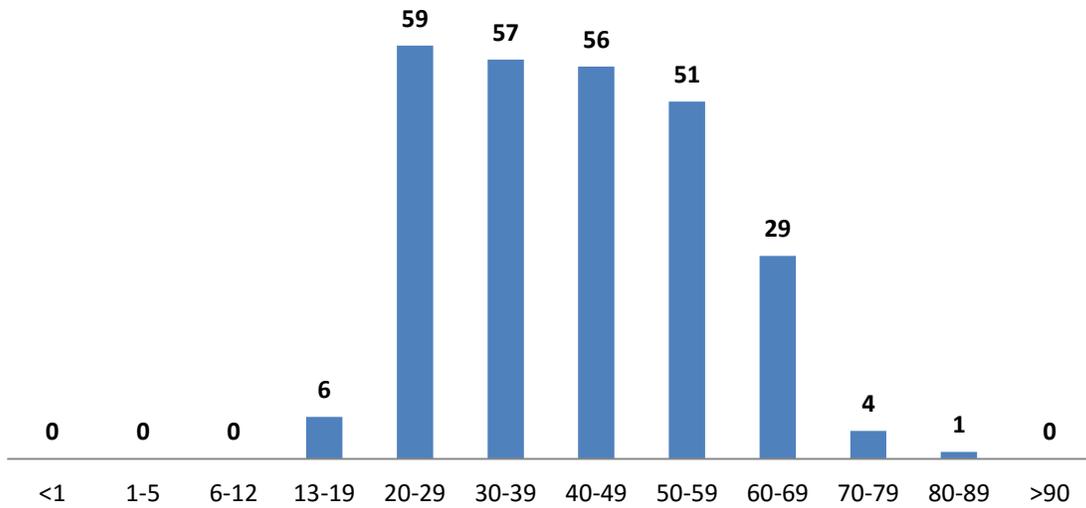
The number of heroin deaths is likely underreported as heroin is rapidly metabolized to morphine by the body and if the parent compound indicative for heroin (6-monoacetylmorphine) is not present on the toxicology report these deaths may be classified as either morphine intoxication or opiate intoxication.

Acute alcohol (ethanol) intoxication alone, not as component of a poly-drug overdose, accounted for 8 overdose (3%) deaths in 2016.

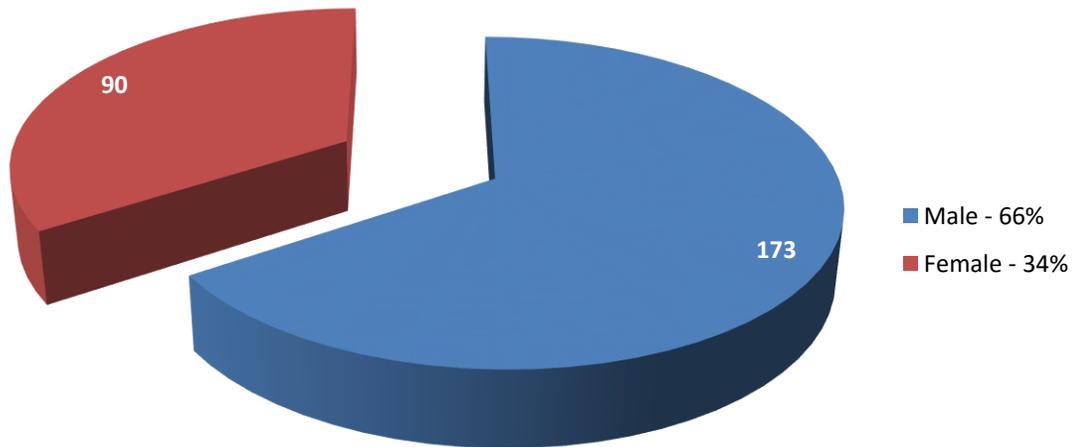
Pima County Overdose Deaths 2010 - 2016



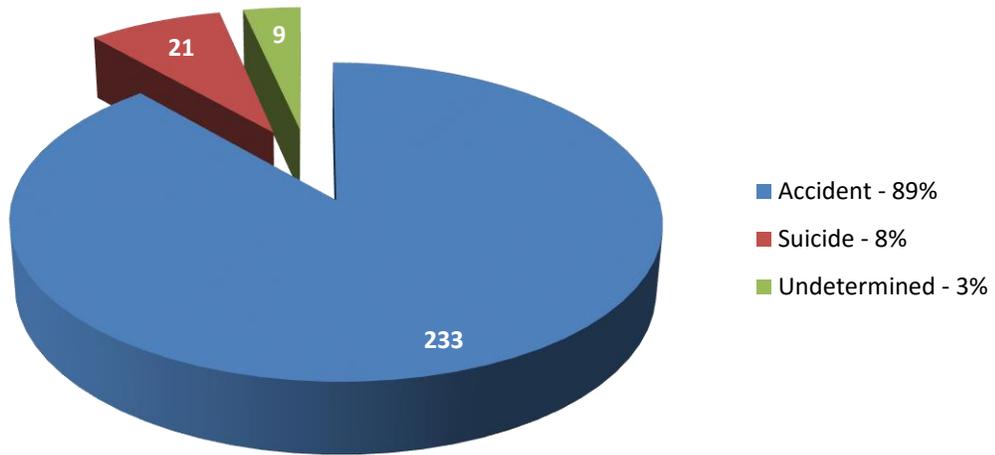
Pima County Overdose Deaths by Age 2016



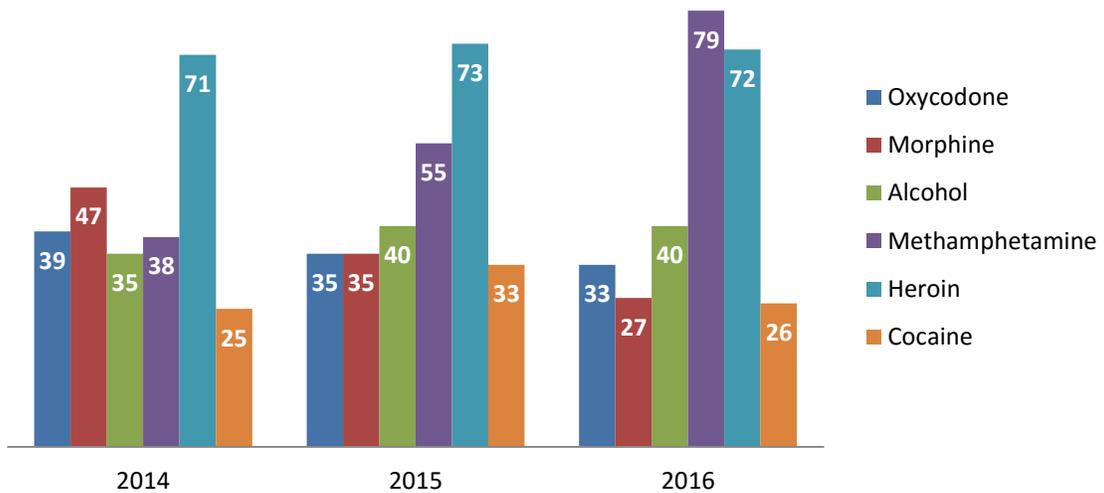
Pima County Overdose Deaths by Sex 2016



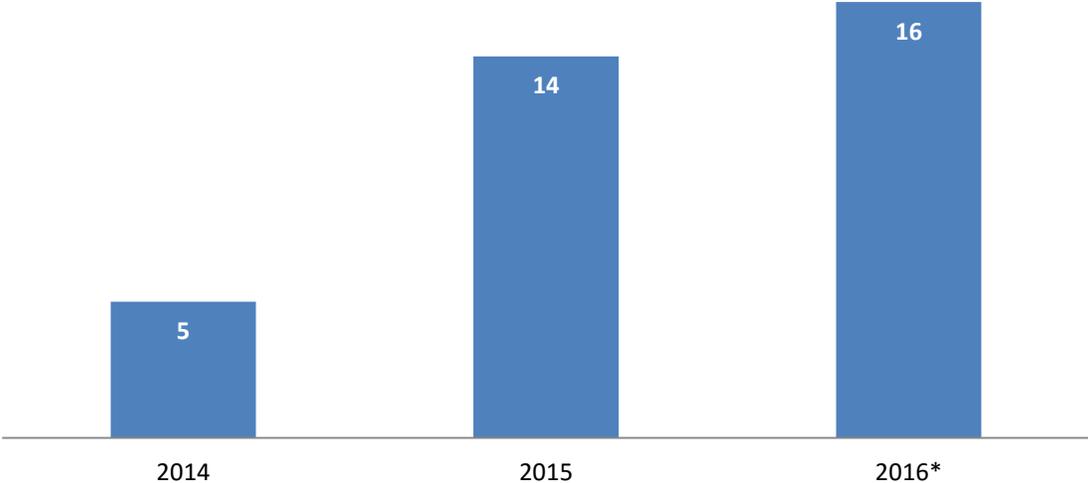
Pima County Overdose Deaths by Manner 2016



Select Pima County Drugs by Year 2014 - 2016

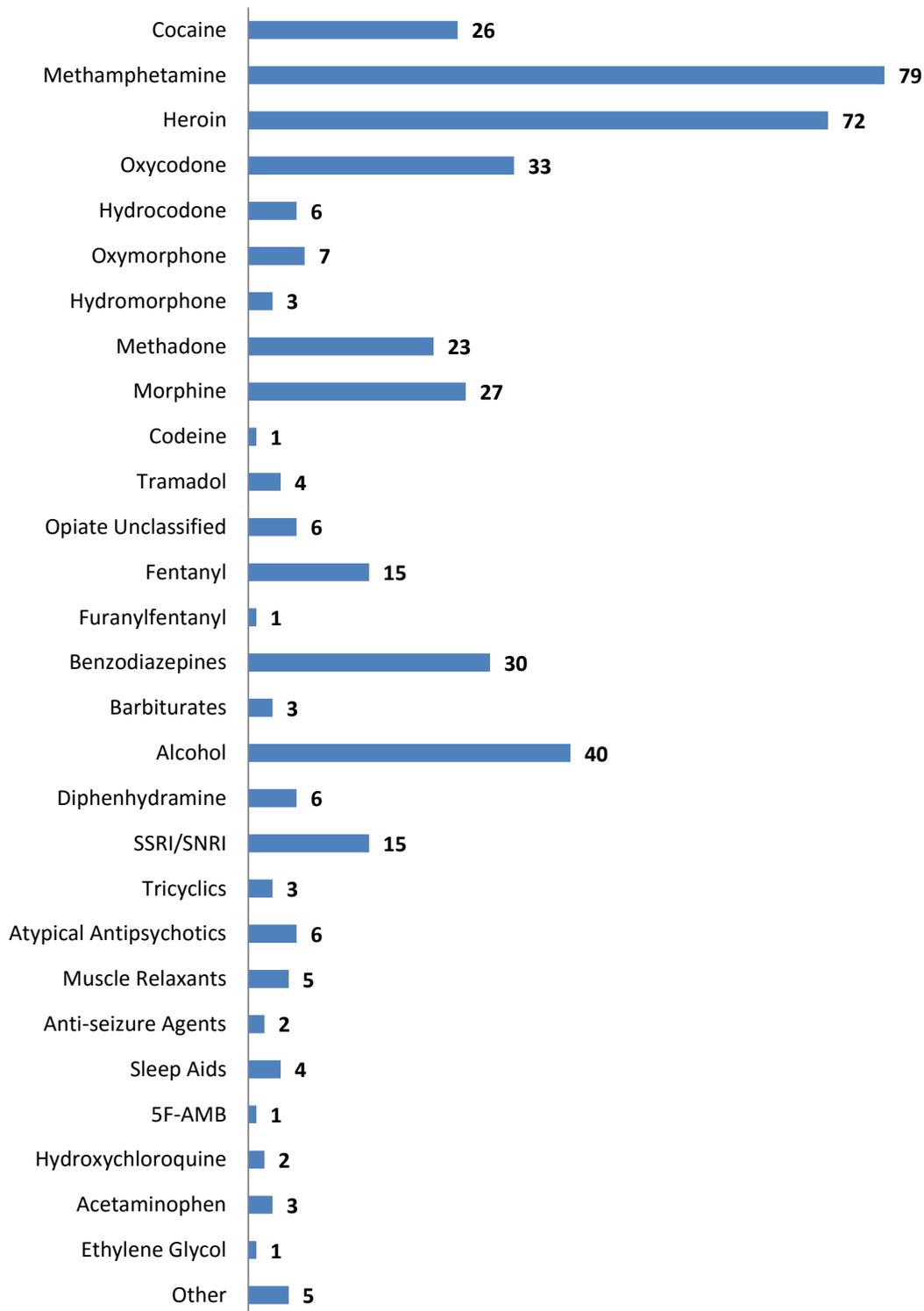


Fentanyl Overdoses 2014 - 2016



*Including one fentanyl analog

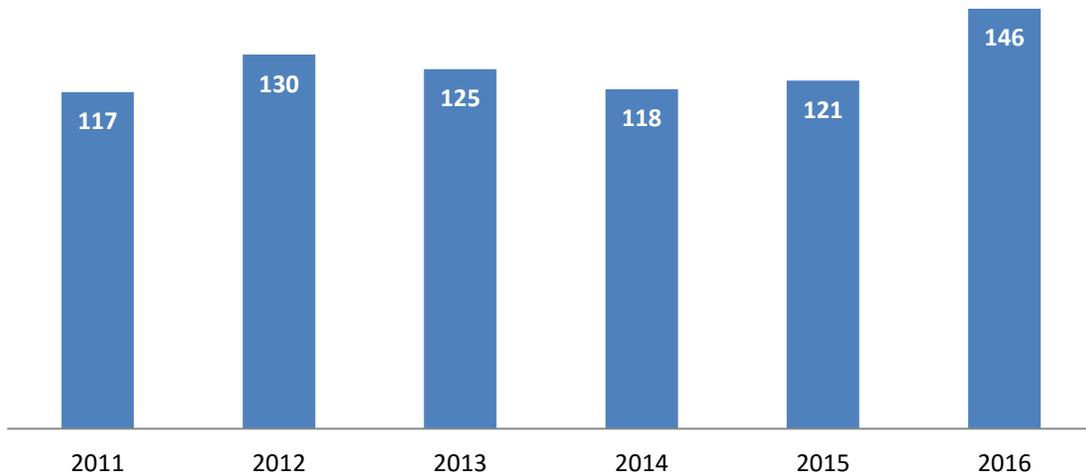
Pima County Overdose Deaths by Drug 2016



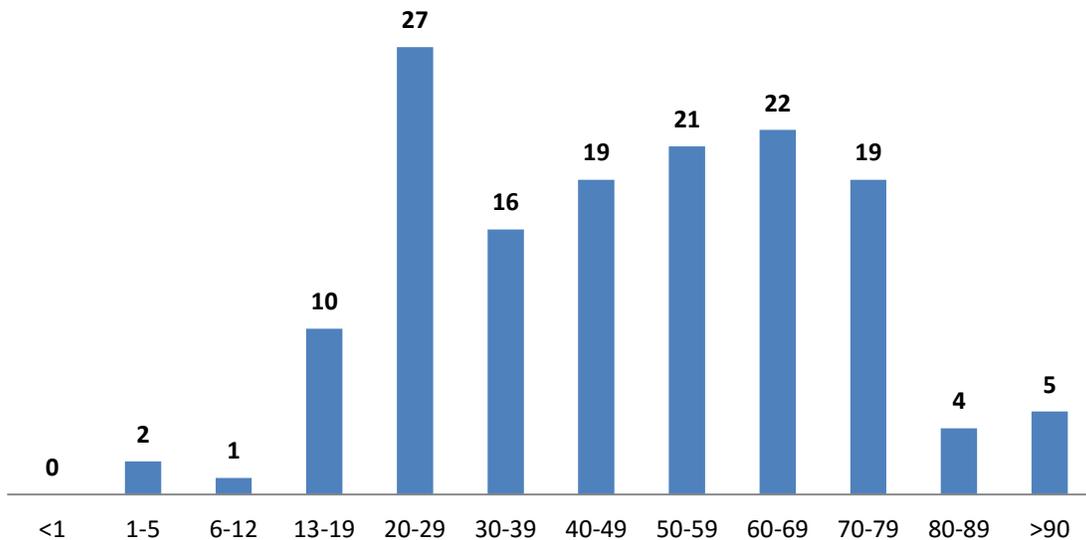
MOTOR VEHICLE RELATED FATALITIES

Motor vehicle related fatalities accounted for 146 total deaths in Pima County in 2016. The majority, 84 deaths, were occupants of a motor vehicle involved in an accident (MVA). Of the remaining, 24 were motorcycle accidents (MCA), 37 were pedestrians or bicyclists struck by vehicles, and 1 was an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) accident. Individuals who died from motor vehicle related fatalities were most frequently males (74%) and between 20-29 years of age (18%).

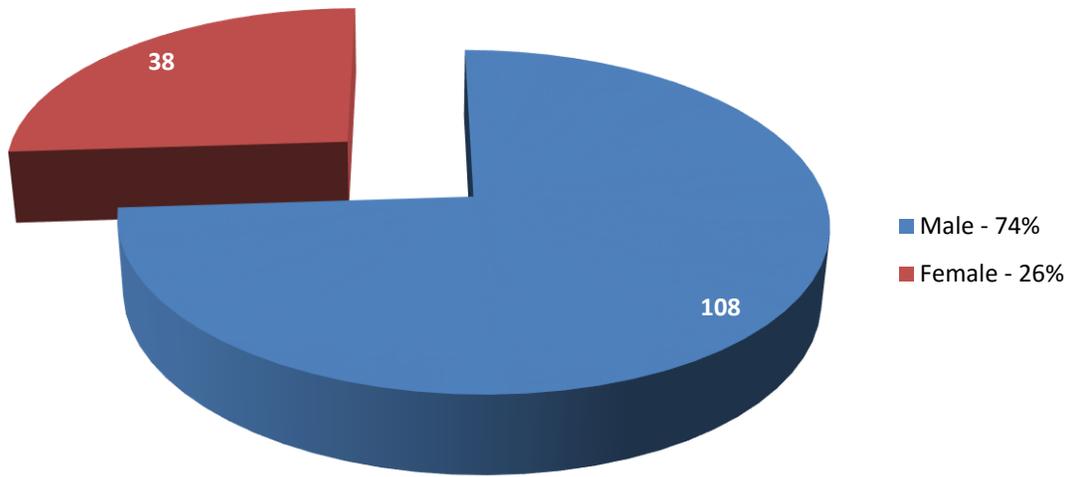
Pima County Motor Vehicle Fatalities by Year 2011 - 2016



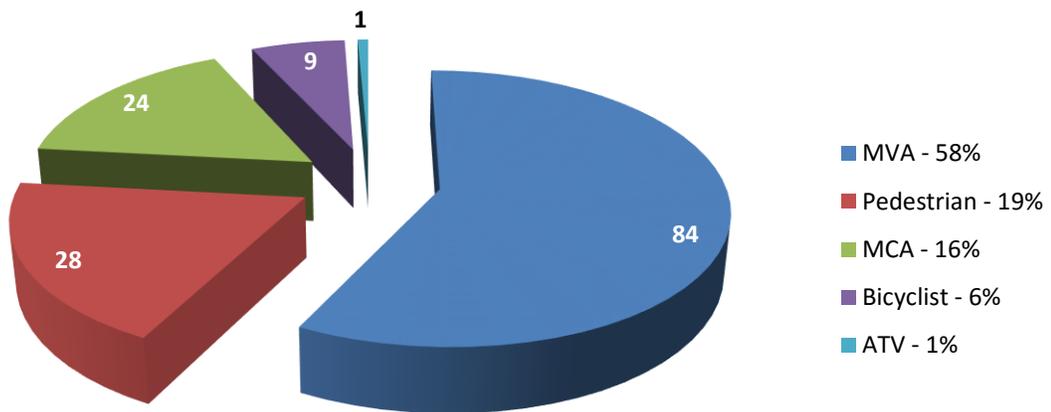
Pima County Motor Vehicle Fatalities by Age 2016



Pima County Motor Vehicle Fatalities by Sex 2016



Pima County Motor Vehicle Fatalities by Type 2016

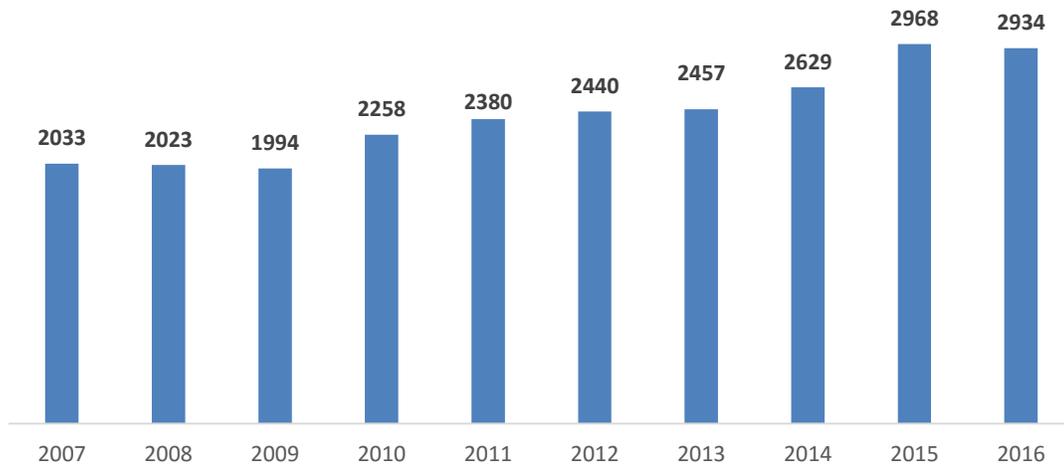


Pinal County

Pinal County contracted with the PCOME to provide examination or other support services beyond what Pinal County provides internally for the majority of 2016. Pinal County maintains its own Medical Examiner’s office staffed to conduct death scene investigations, transport remains, assist with the performance of some external examinations at the OME facility in Pinal County, and triage deaths reportable to the ME as stated in A.R.S §11-593 above. Not all deaths in Pinal County were reported to the PCOME through the Pinal County Medical Examiner’s Office. Deaths on Native American tribal lands do not have to be reported through the respective death investigation system of that County and may be reported directly to the PCOME as necessary for the needs of the appropriate agency investigating that death (BIA, FBI or local tribal police departments). The Pinal County Medical Examiner’s Office historically issues its own annual report. Please reference that report for details concerning deaths occurring in Pinal County that are not referred to the PCOME.

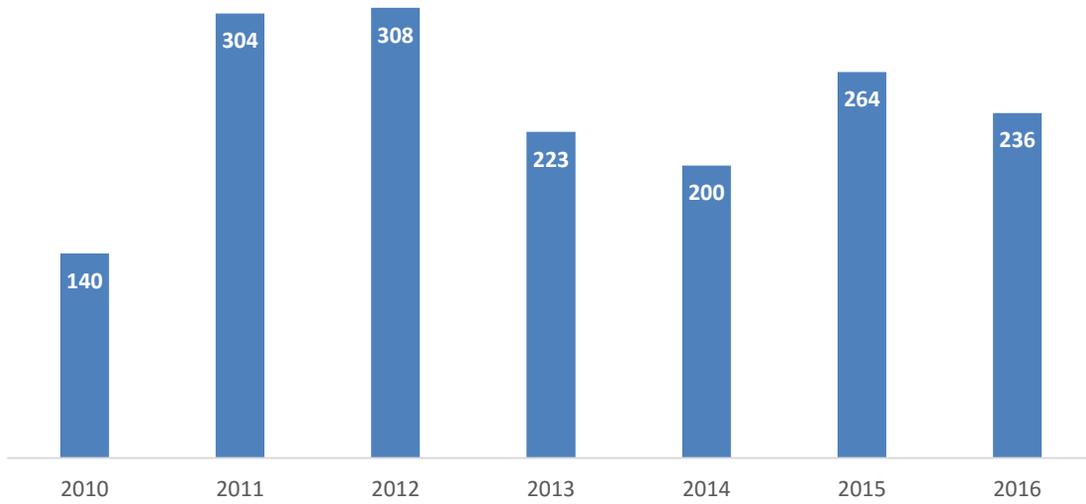
In calendar year 2016 there were 2934 deaths in Pinal County; of these 236 (8%) were reported to the PCOME for examination. Some pertinent statistics regarding these deaths are detailed in the tables and graphs below.

Pinal County Mortality by Year 2007 - 2016*

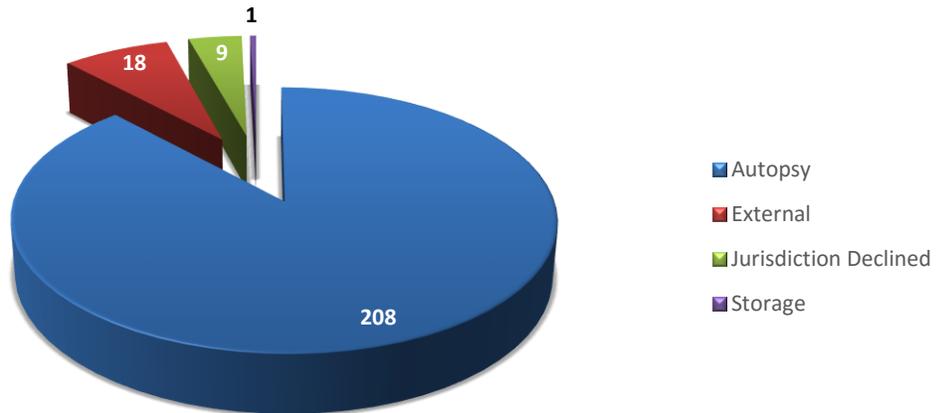


*Arizona Department of Vital Statistics as of 05/22/2017

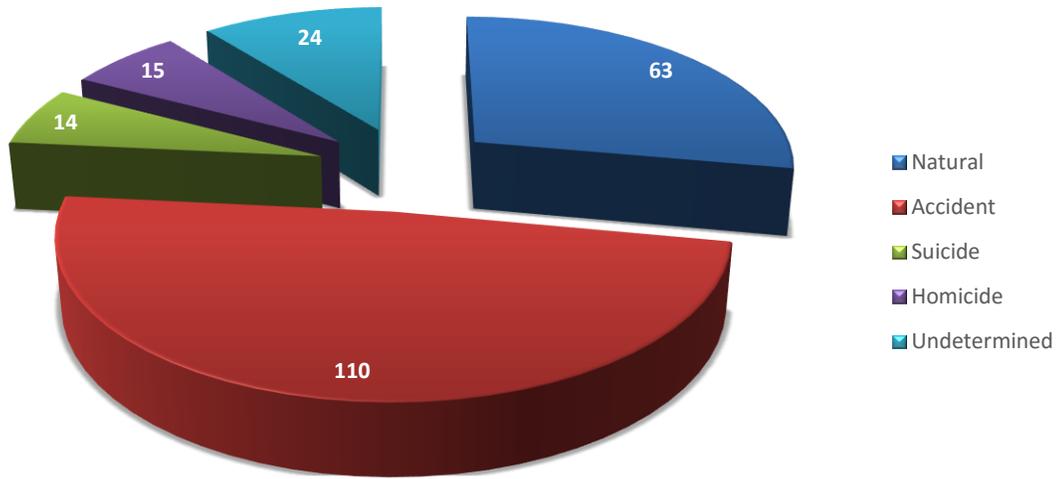
Pinal County Deaths Reported to the PCOME 2010 - 2016



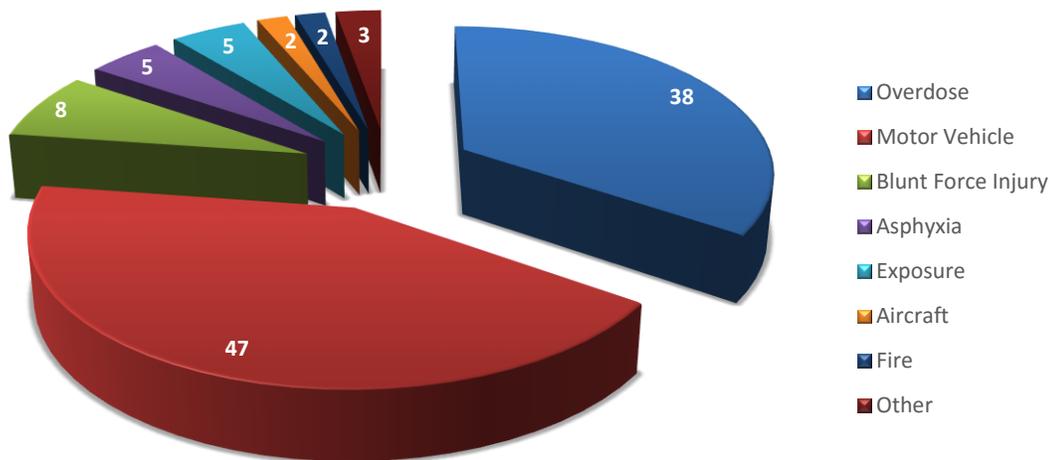
Pinal County Deaths by Type of Exam 2016



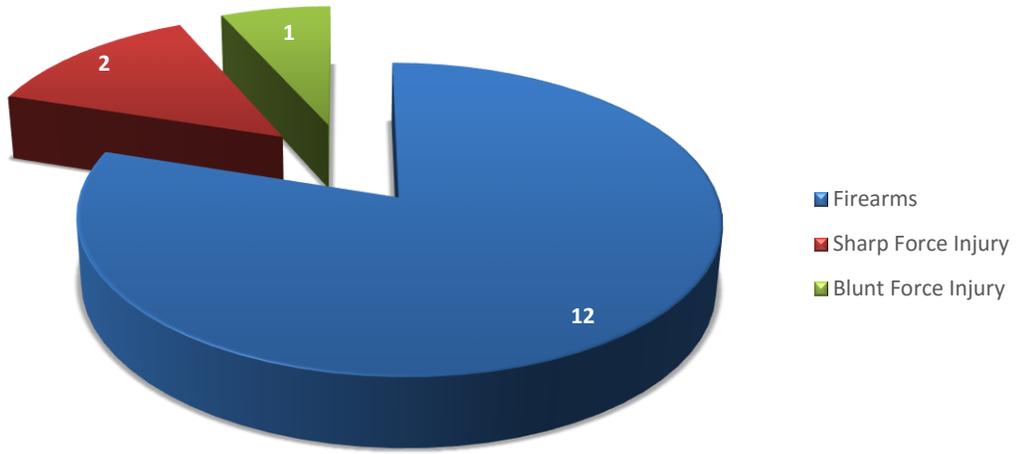
Pinal County Deaths by Manner of Death 2016



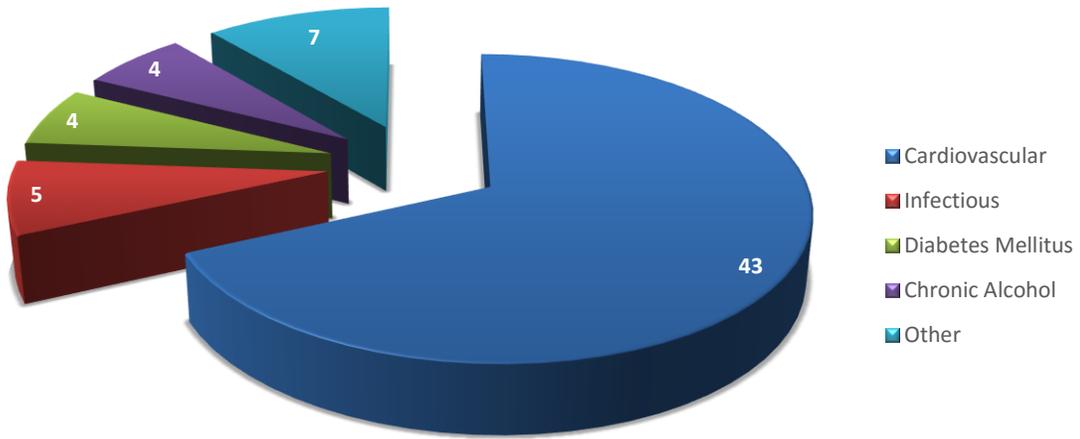
Pinal County Accidents by Type 2016



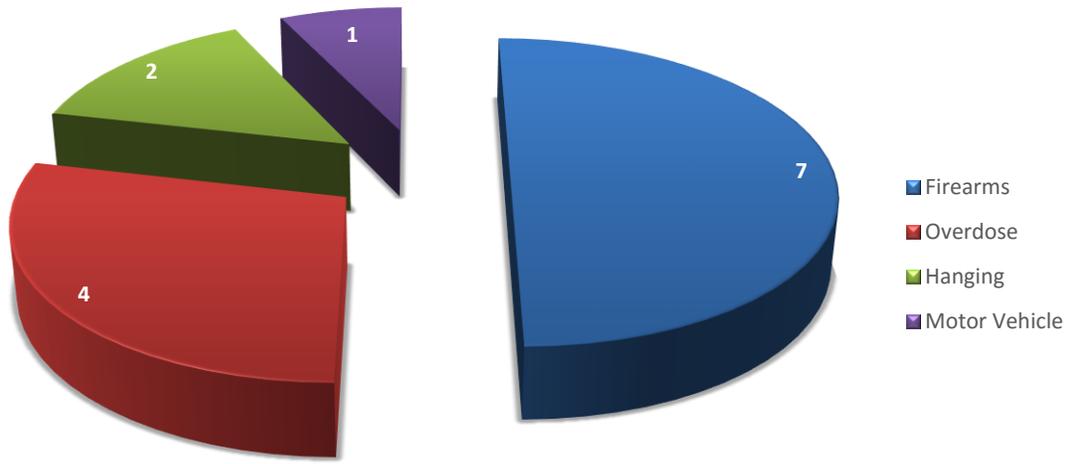
Pinal County Homicides by Type 2016



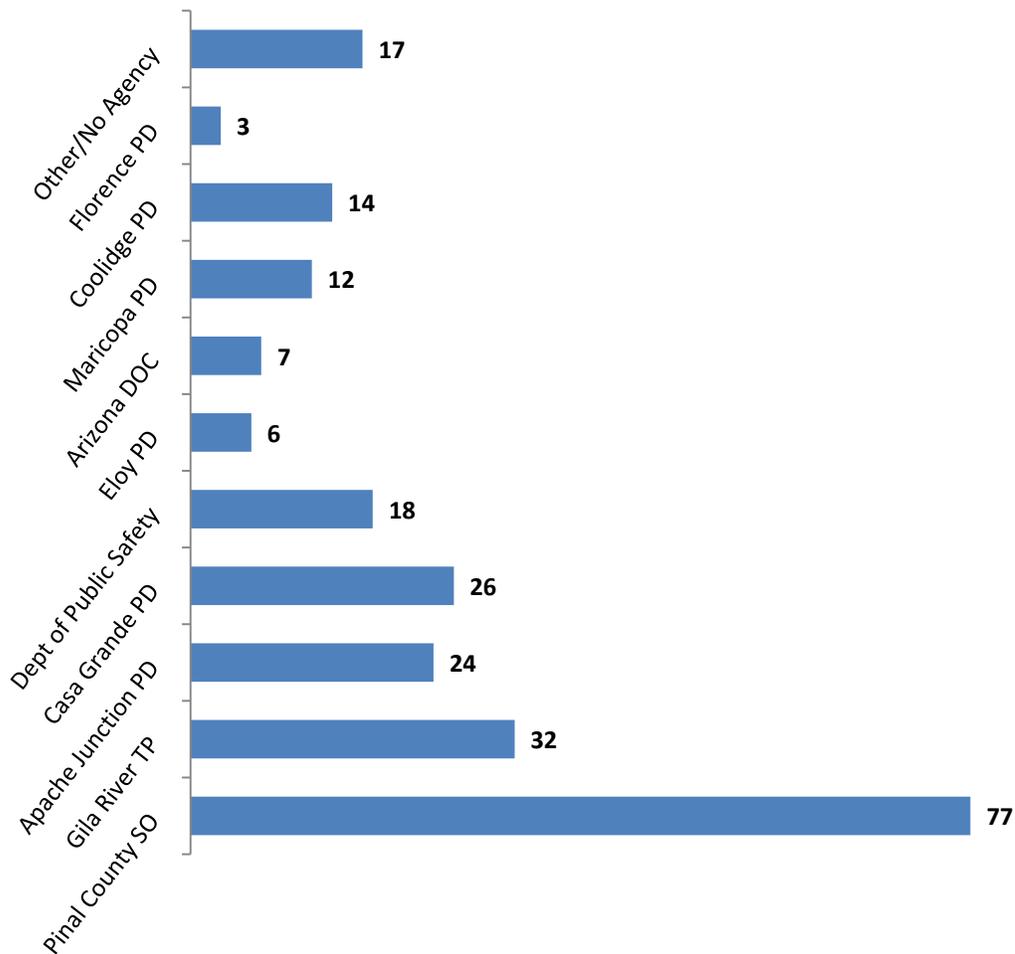
Pinal County Naturals by Type 2016



Pinal County Suicides by Type 2016



Pinal County Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency 2016

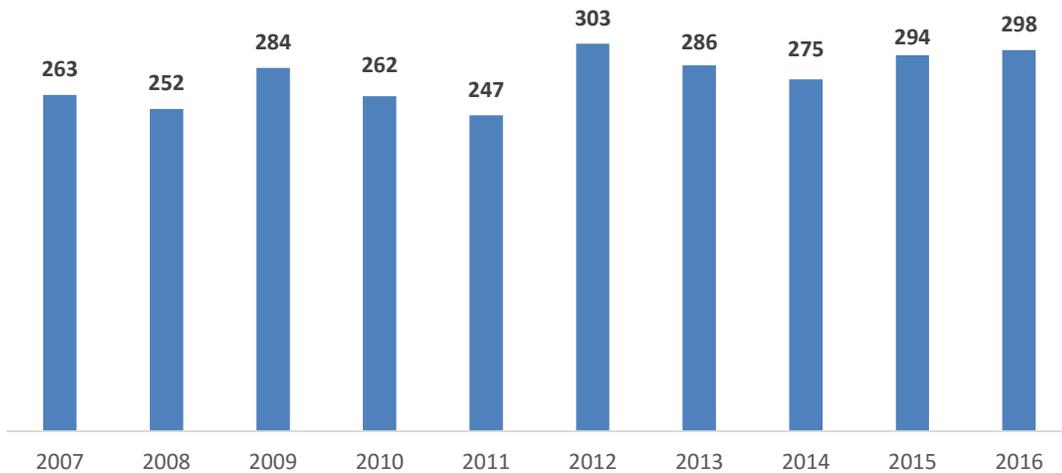


Santa Cruz County

Santa Cruz County does not maintain an in-county Medical Examiner’s office to conduct death scene investigations, transport or examine remains, or certify deaths reportable to the medical examiner. Nor does Santa Cruz County appoint or contract with an Alternate Medical Examiner. The PCOME acts as the de-facto appointed ME for Santa Cruz County. When deaths occur in Santa Cruz County pursuant to A.R.S. §11-593, Santa Cruz County law enforcement agencies investigate the circumstances of the death and notify the PCOME as necessary.

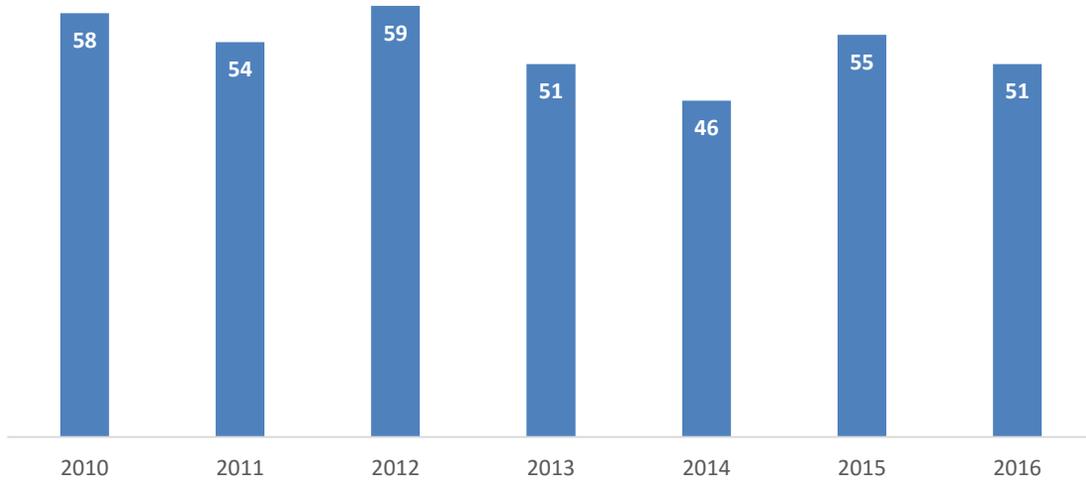
In calendar year 2016 there were 298 deaths in Santa Cruz County; of these 51 (17%) were reported to the PCOME for investigation and/or examination. Some pertinent statistics regarding these deaths are detailed in the tables below.

Santa Cruz County Mortality by Year 2007 - 2016*

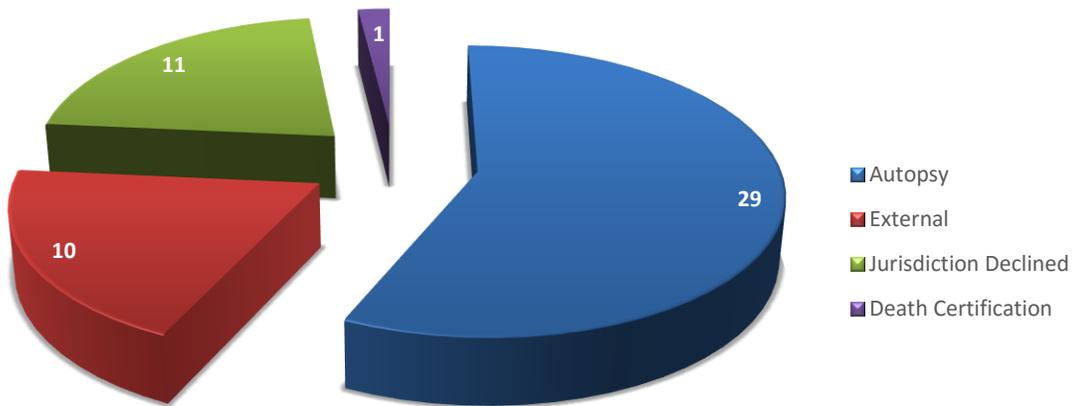


*Arizona Department of Vital Statistics as of 05/22/2017

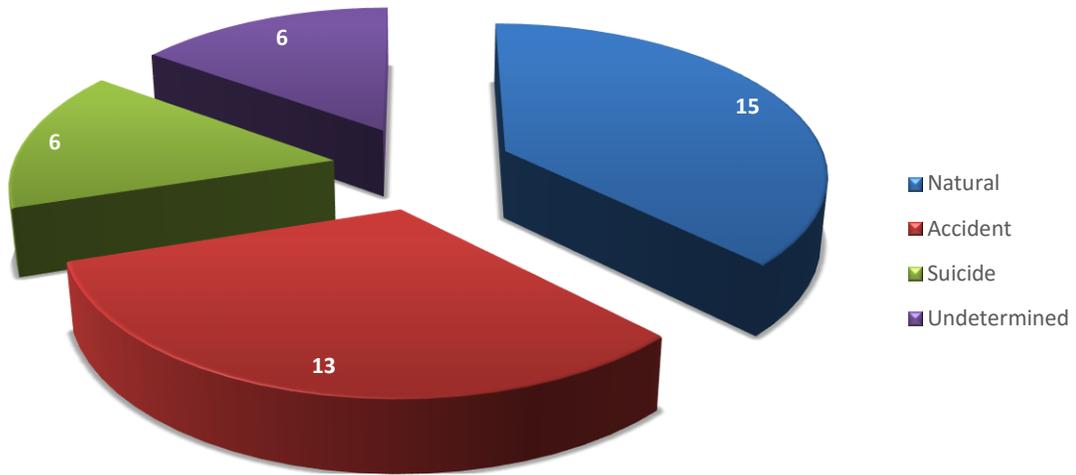
Santa Cruz County Deaths Reported to the PCOME 2010 - 2016



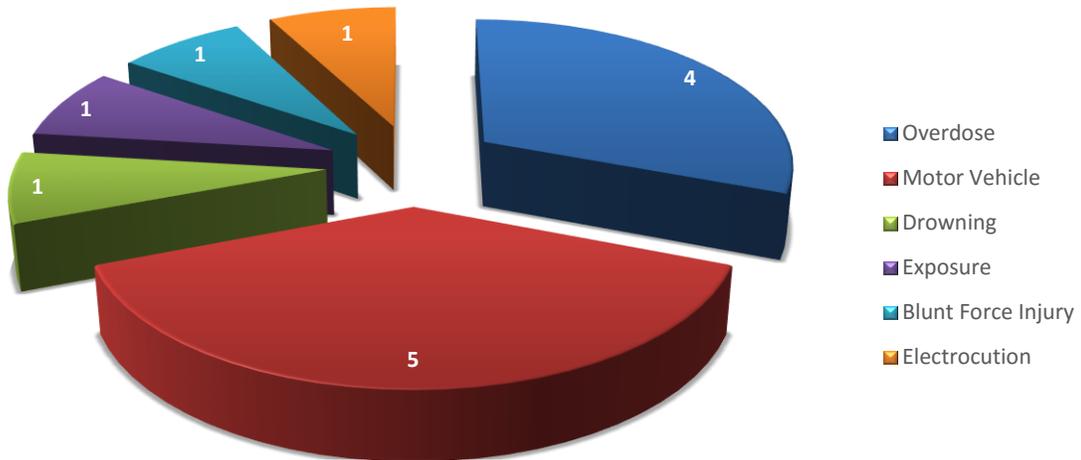
Santa Cruz County Deaths by Type of Exam 2016



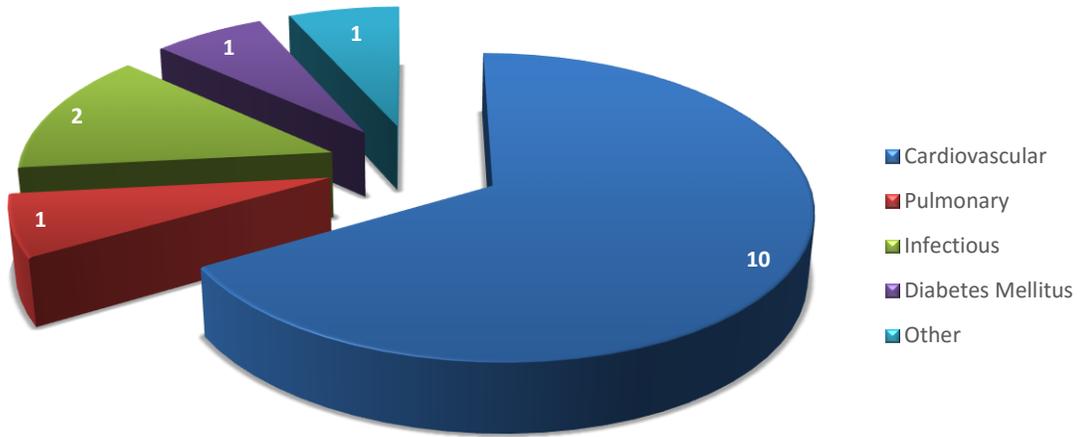
Santa Cruz County Deaths by Manner of Death 2016



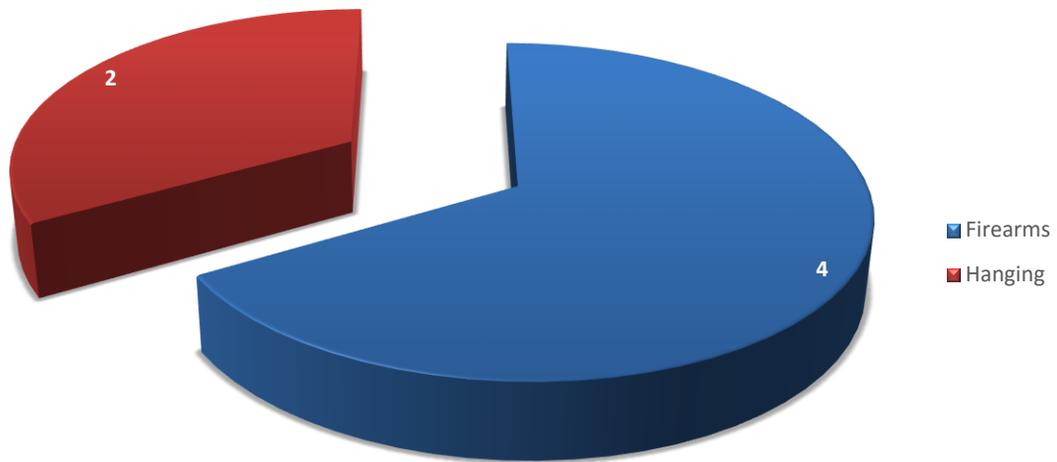
Santa Cruz County Accidents by Type 2016



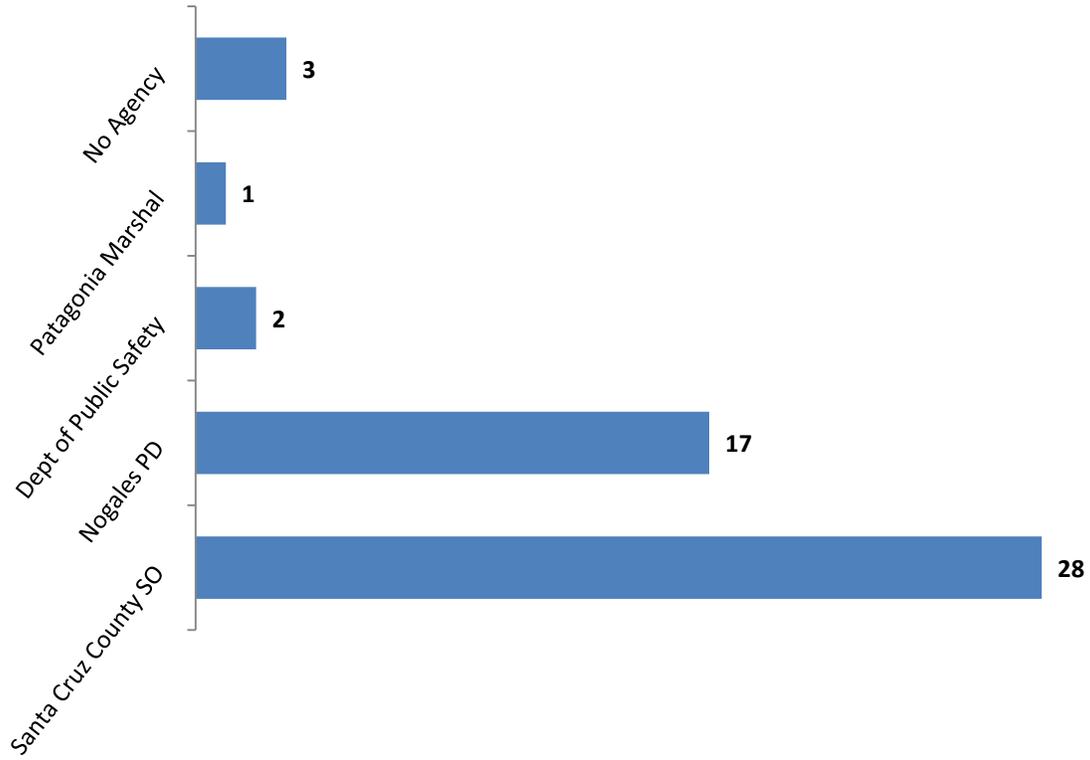
Santa Cruz County Naturals by Type 2016



Santa Cruz County Suicides by Type 2016



Santa Cruz County Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency 2016

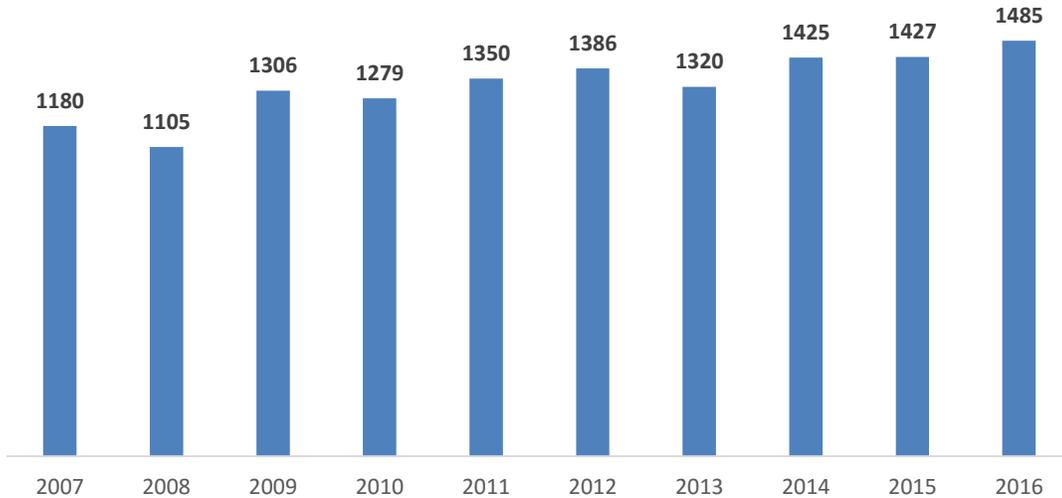


Yuma County

Yuma County contracts with, and appoints the pathology group at Yuma Regional Medical Center, as Medical Examiner for Yuma County. Some decedents (typically suspected homicides) are referred to the PCOME for an examination and death certification at the discretion of the Yuma County Medical Examiner’s Office. The Yuma County Medical Examiner’s Office issues its own Annual Report. Please reference that report for details concerning deaths occurring in Yuma County that are not referred to the PCOME.

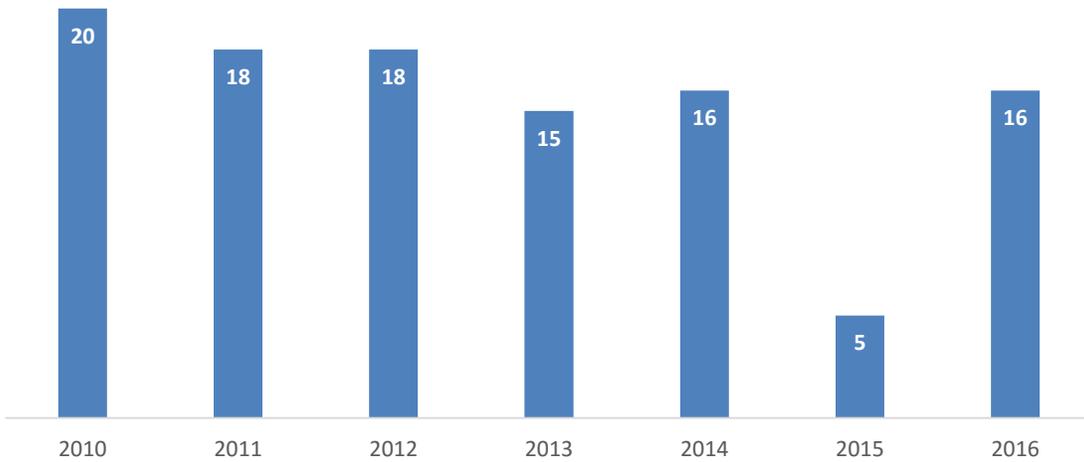
Sixteen deaths from Yuma County were reported to the PCOME in 2016, all 16 of which required autopsy examinations. Some pertinent statistics regarding these deaths are detailed in the tables below.

Yuma County Mortality by Year 2007 - 2016*

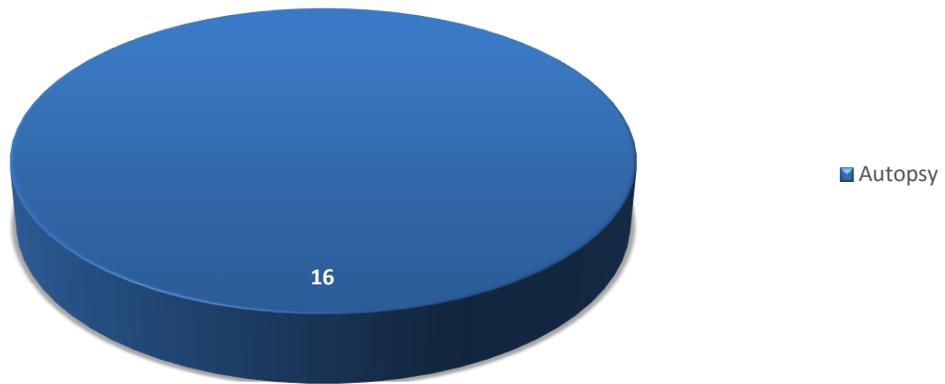


*Arizona Department of Vital Statistics as of 05/22/2017

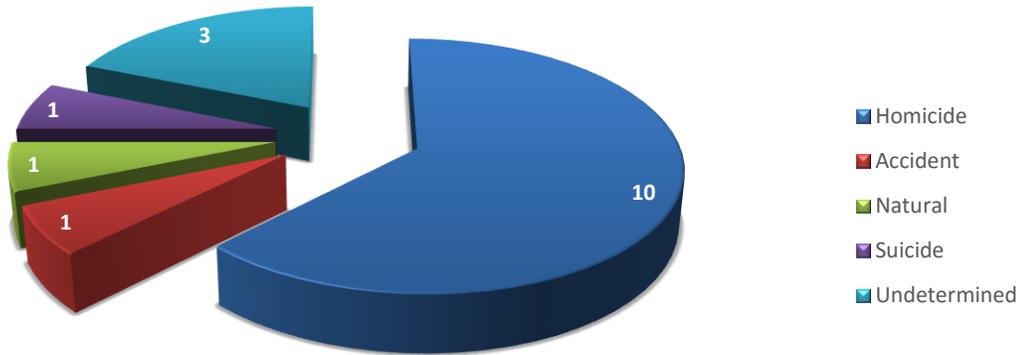
Yuma County Deaths Reported to the PCOME 2010 - 2016



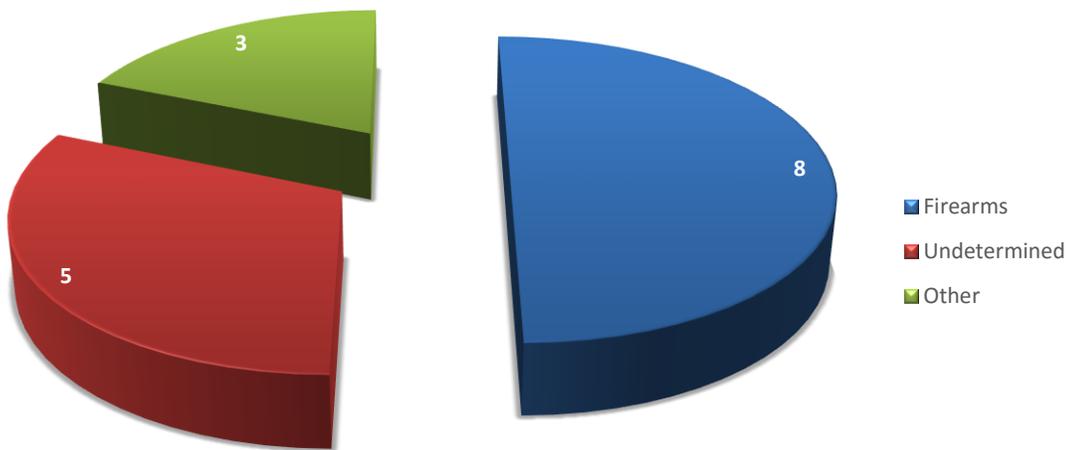
Yuma County Deaths by Type of Exam 2016



Yuma County Deaths by Manner of Death 2016



Yuma County Deaths by Type of Death 2016



Yuma County Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency 2016

