

John Pullinger CB CStat | National StatisticianMike Wood MP
House of Commons
London
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Dear Mr Wood,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am replying to your Parliamentary Question asking what estimate has been made of the number of deaths attributable to the inhalation of nitrous oxide **(67408)**.

Table 1 provides the number of drug-related deaths where nitrous oxide was mentioned on the death certificate in England and Wales, for deaths registered between 2011 and 2015.

These figures are taken from our drug-related deaths database, which includes accidents and suicides involving drug poisonings, as well as deaths from drug abuse and drug dependence (see Box 1). Drug related deaths involve a broad spectrum of substances, including legal and illegal drugs, prescription-type drugs (either prescribed to the individual or obtained by other means) and over-the-counter medications.

Table 1: Number of deaths involving nitrous oxide, England and Wales, 2011 to 2015 registrations^{1, 2, 3}

Year	Deaths
2011	1
2012	0
2013	3
2014	3
2015	4

Yours sincerely

**John Pullinger**

¹ Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes shown in Box 1. Deaths were included where the underlying cause was related to drug poisoning and nitrous oxide was mentioned on the death certificate.

² Figures include deaths of non-residents who died in England or Wales

³ Figures are for deaths registered, rather than deaths occurring, in each calendar year. Due to the length of time it takes to complete a coroner's inquest, it can take months or even years for a drug-related death to be registered. More information on registration delays can be found in the annual drug-related deaths bulletin: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsrelatedtodrugpoisoninginenglandandwales/previousReleases

Box 1. International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes used to define deaths related to drug poisoning

Description	ICD 10 Codes
Mental and behavioural disorders due to drug use (excluding alcohol and tobacco)	F11–F16, F18–F19
Accidental poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances	X40–X44
Intentional self-poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances	X60–X64
Assault by drugs, medicaments and biological substances	X85
Poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biological substances, undetermined intent	Y10–Y14