OVERDOSE IN PLAIN SIGHT

Understanding the Challenge and Building the Case for Action

29 August 2025

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MAST-RU
MENTAL HEALTH, ALCOHOL, SUBSTANCE USE AND TOBACCO RESEARCH UNIT

SANPUD
South African Network of People Who Use Drugs

AGENDA OVERVIEW

01 Nadine Harker -SA MRC MAST-RU

02 Dr. Andrew Scheibe - TB HIV Care

03 **Kalvanya Padayachee - SANAC**

04 Lekgaba Reginald Kgoedi

05 Question and Answer

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NACOSA

STRUCTURE

Deploying Overdose Interventions: Naloxone Access and Community-Led Rapid Response

This will look at how the pilot study that collected overdose information from people who use drugs. The objective is to show how the study was carried out as a way of gathering information about overdoses from the community.

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OVERDOSE MANAGEMENT PILOT

- In July 2024, NACOSA conducted an overdose survey across eight districts in South Africa using a 25-question Microsoft Form, completed via outreach.

- Based on the survey findings, NACOSA launched the Overdose management Pilot Programme in two of the eight districts—Nelson Mandela Bay (Eastern Cape) and uMgungundlovu (KwaZulu-Natal).

- Running from December 2024 to June 2025, the pilot aimed to reduce opioid overdoses by:
  - Distributing overdose Prevention kits,
  - Providing overdose training, and
  - Raising community awareness.

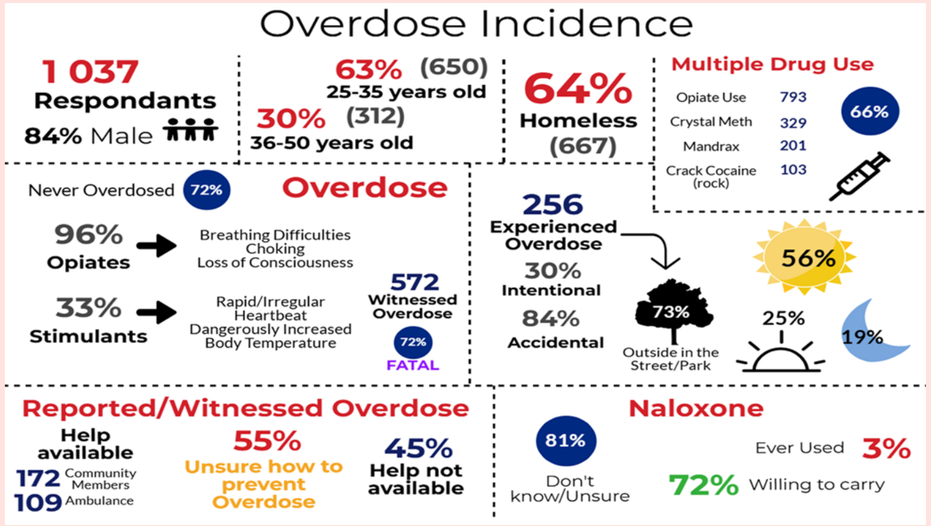
- The programme targeted 25 OAT clients and 26 NSP (Needle and Syringe Programme) clients, with a dedicated Treatment Buddy in each district.

- Staff Training and Capacity Building
  - Service providers were appointed to conduct First Aid-CPR training to OST nurses, outreach nurses, and site coordinators.
  - Staff were trained on the updated Overdose Management SOP to ensure standardized responses to opioid overdoses.

- Client and Peer Education

Programme staff conducted training for clients and treatment buddies on:

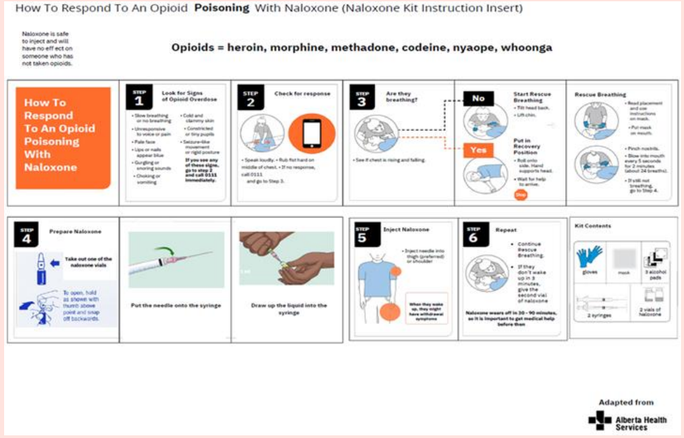
- Overdose prevention
- First Aid-CPR
- Naloxone administration



OVERDOSE MANAGEMENT PILOT

Overdose Prevention Kits contained the following:

- Single use Mouth Resuscitator
- Gloves
- Needle and syringe
- Naloxone ampule as scripted by OST Doctor- SR to procure from Pharmacy through doctors Script.
- Naloxone to be stored within a container (sputum container could be used)
- NACOSA Overdose IEC
- Alcohol swab
- Naloxone insert
- Sputum bag



OVERDOSE MANAGEMENT PILOT

As part of the structured implementation of the Overdose Management Pilot, NACOSA developed this Overdose Kits Distribution Register to systematically capture critical data on client interactions, kit usage, and outcomes.

The register serves as a source document to:

1. Track Distribution
2. Monitor Usage
3. Evaluate outcome
4. Ensure Accountability

OVERDOSE KITS DISTRIBUTION REGISTER

Gender:
F = Female
M = Male
TGF = Transgender - Female
TGM = Transgender - Male

Overdose Kit status
Used
Unused
Confiscated
Stolen

	SR NAME		DISTRICT	
	SUB DISTRICT		SITE	
	ACTIVITY DATE		STAFF RESPONSIBLE/ ROLE	

	FIRST NAME	SURNAME	DATE OF BIRTH	GENDER	PHONE NUMBER	PLACE	OST/Non OST	Training provided	Naloxone kits distributed	Treatment supporter/Buddy Name & Surname	Kit status	If used on Self/Other	If used Fatal/Non Fatal	SIGNATURE
1			YYYY-MM-DD					Y/N	Y/N					
2			YYYY-MM-DD					Y/N	Y/N					
3			YYYY-MM-DD					Y/N	Y/N					
4			YYYY-MM-DD					Y/N	Y/N					
5			YYYY-MM-DD					Y/N	Y/N					
6			YYYY-MM-DD					Y/N	Y/N					
7			YYYY-MM-DD					Y/N	Y/N					
8			YYYY-MM-DD					Y/N	Y/N					
9			YYYY-MM-DD					Y/N	Y/N					
10			YYYY-MM-DD					Y/N	Y/N					

119 kits distributed

2 kits used

Total trained
NMB = 50
UMG = 69

82 Male

37 Female

Total Overdosed

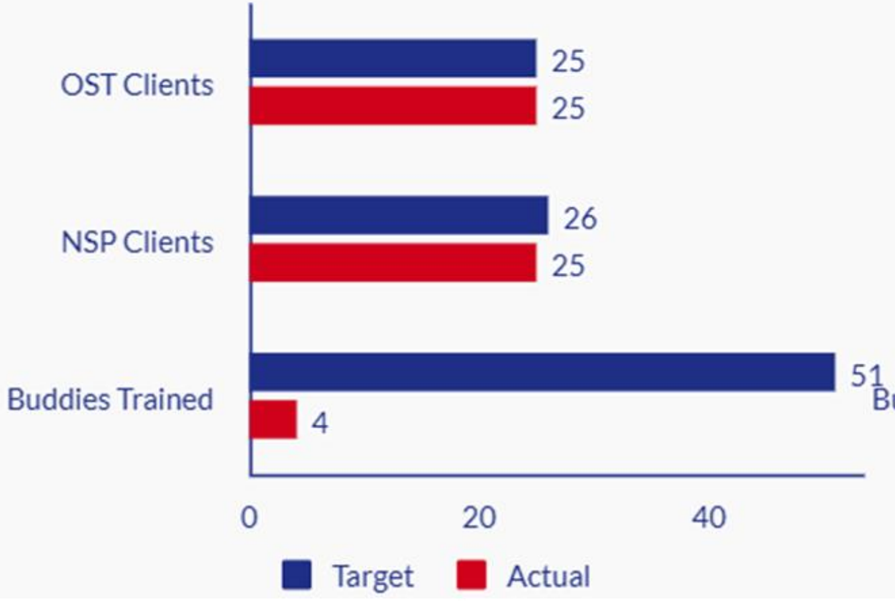
uMgungundlovu

Nelson Mandela Bay

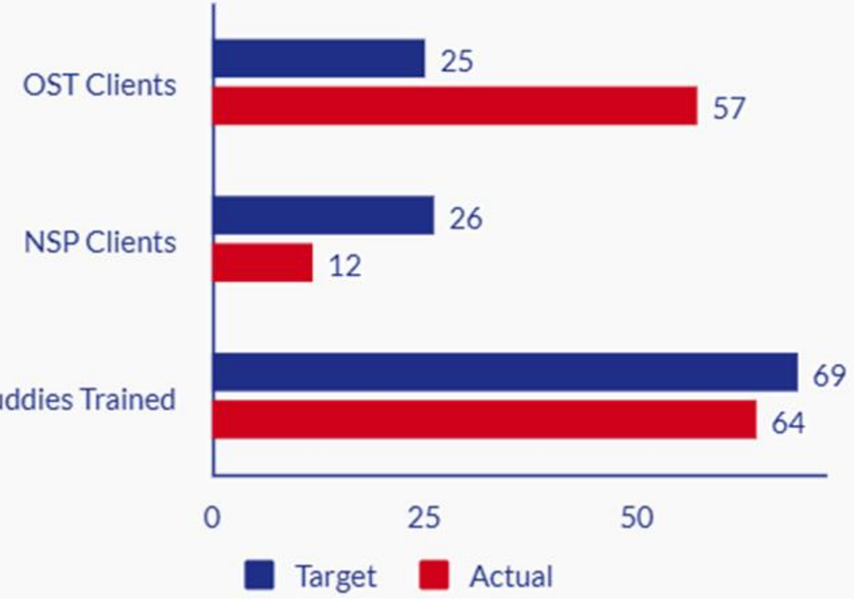
Fatalities

uMgungundlovu (10...

Nelson Mandela Bay Total Trained



uMgungundlovu Total Trained



OVERDOSE MANAGEMENT PILOT RESULTS

Positive Supporting Factors:
- Strong Community Engagement and empowerment
- Effective Training Initiatives for overdose response
- Success of the “Buddies Model” in fostering peer support

Unintended Consequences:
- Negative Perception: Some beneficiaries misinterpreted naloxone kits as endorsing illicit drug use while on Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST).
- Stigma: Fear of judgment deterred some family members from participating as support partners

Challenges:
- Limited engagement with law enforcement and broader community leaders was noted.
- Limited reach of community members and clients within hotspots.

Recommendations for Improvement
- Program Design and Delivery- Limited hotspots
- Replace injectable naloxone with nasal spray naloxone for user-friendliness and safety.
- Expand training to cover all community members and hotspots, including overdose symptom recognition.
- Strengthen partnerships with healthcare providers, law enforcement, and local organizations.

Scaling the Pilot
- Retain: Comprehensive training, community engagement, and collaborations with healthcare professionals.
- Modify: Extend coverage to remote areas and ensure naloxone is integrated into broader addiction treatment services.
- Remove: Misconceptions about naloxone enabling drug use through targeted education and awareness.

CALL FOR ACTION

- Pilot naloxone in select districts, documenting usability and impact for broader rollout.
- Initiate stigma-reduction workshops for families and community leaders, led by peer educators.
- Scale the naloxone pilot nationally, using lessons from NACOSA's program to guide implementation.
- Develop policy proposals to intergrade overdose surveillance and naloxone access in public health strategies.
- Monitor and evaluate program impact through quarterly reports, adjusting strategies based on community feedback.
- Maintain community engagement through quarterly refresher trainings and awareness campaigns.
- Advocate for sustained funding and political commitment to overdose prevention as part of South Africa's public health agenda.