

# Baclofen-related deaths in Australia 2000–2022

## BACKGROUND

The therapeutic indication of baclofen is for voluntary muscle spasm suppression, but off-label use includes alcohol use disorder. Deaths related to baclofen have been reported.



## METHODS

All cases of baclofen-related death in Australia, 2000–2022 aged  $\geq 15$  years were retrieved from the National Coronial Information System. Case characteristics, intent as determined by the coroner, toxicology and major autopsy findings were extracted from available reports.

## RESULTS



**MEAN AGE**  
**45.6**  
YEARS

**MALE**  
**51%**

## DOCUMENTED IN CASES

- Mental Health Problems 73.5%
- Substance Use Problems 43.1%
- Specifically Alcohol Use Problems 38.2%
- Chronic Pain 37.3%
- Previous Self-harm or Suicide Attempt 30.4%
- Multiple Sclerosis or Spinal Injury 15.7%



## CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEATH

**Intentional Toxicity**  
**54.9%**

**Unintentional Toxicity**  
**30.4%**

**Unintentional Toxicity + Disease**  
**9.8%**

**Accidental Injury**  
**4.9%**

## TOXICOLOGY



Median baclofen blood concentration was 3.10mg/L

Prescribable psychoactive substances were present in almost all cases particularly antidepressants (69.8%) and benzodiazepines (64.6%).

## CONCLUSIONS

**Mental health** and **alcohol and substance use problems** were prominent. **Caution** is needed in **prescribing baclofen**, given its potential to be used in **intentional and non-intentional overdose**.

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