Research Proposal

Allegheny County has many problems. From gun violence, sex trafficking, and drug use. The topic of focus for my research will revolve around drug use and drug overdoses. Now, the Allegheny County is moving in the right direction. Deaths related to accidental overdoses have done down by nearly 41%. But despite this reduction it still seems to be a problem we cannot shake. The purpose of my research is to evaluate which variable has a stronger correlation to these opioid deaths, factoring in age, race, gender, as well as the specific drug(s) causing the deaths. This information will be used to provide a solution to continue the reduction in overdoses.

Accidental overdoses take hundreds of lives annually in this area. In 2016 there were 650 deaths, in 2017 it increased to 737, and decreased to 432 in 2018. This is due the availability of naloxone, but even though these numbers are declining, with the rise of prescriptions many are fearful overdose deaths will increase.

So, what is an overdose? An overdose is an excessive and dangerous dose of a drug. Commons signs someone is having an overdose are choking or gurgling noise, being unresponsive, slow breathing, having a limp body and pale skin. Most of accidental overdoses are the result mixing drugs and medications. Mixing opioids with alcohol puts people are high risk for an overdose. People who do these drugs alone are at extreme risks to an overdose due to the fact that there isn’t someone monitoring them incase everything goes wrong. First time drug users are at high risk as well “first time” users after a long period of time without using the drug. This is due the lack of tolerance for the specific drug they are doing.

How can the factors in the paragraphs above lead to a conclusion? The variable with the highest correlation is a great start to reducing the opioid crisis. By being able to see which specific group of people are affected the most by this crisis, we can focus on methods to protect those certain people. Now, because my research is based solely on Allegheny County, areas outside of it may require different solutions.

Sources:

* Brambila, Nicole C. “Officials: Allegheny County Overdose Deaths Dropped Significantly Last Year.” *TribLIVE.com*, 26 June 2019, triblive.com/local/pittsburgh-allegheny/officials-allegheny-county-overdose-deaths-dropped-significantly-last-year/.
* “Overdose Information.” *Overdose Information and Prevention | Health Department | Allegheny County*, alleghenycounty.us/Health-Department/Programs/Special-Initiatives/Overdose-Prevention/Overdose-Information.aspx.
* “Allegheny County Fatal Accidental Overdoses.” *WPRDC*, data.wprdc.org/dataset/allegheny-county-fatal-accidental-overdoses.