Analysis of Connecticut Drug Related Deaths (2012-2023)

Candace DeWitt
02/24/2025
Sources: DATA.GOV, 02/06/2025
CT.GOV, 03/03/2025

Data Overview

Data source: https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/accidental-drug-related-deaths-2012-2018

This is a reliable source because it's the official open data portal of the U.S. federal government. This means the data comes directly from government agencies, which are generally considered authoritative sources for information related to their respective domains.

Data Description:

This dataset details accidental drug overdose deaths in Connecticut from 2012 to 2023, compiled by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. It lists each death, specifying the year and indicating which substances were detected in the deceased's system. A "Y" in a substance column signifies its presence. The data is comprehensive, drawing from toxicity reports, death certificates, and scene investigations. A key nuance is the distinction between "Morphine (Not Heroin)" and regular morphine. This arises because heroin metabolizes into morphine. If heroin use is evident from the scene investigation (e.g., needles present), but the toxicity report only shows morphine, it's classified as "Morphine (Not Heroin)." If the medical examiner can't definitively determine if the morphine is from heroin or a prescription, and scene investigation doesn't clarify the source, "Any Opioid" may be marked. This distinction is crucial for accurate analysis of opioid-related deaths.

Data Overview

Data source: https://portal.ct.gov/sots/register-manual/section-vii/population-of-connecticut-by-counties

The Connecticut Office of the Secretary of State is considered a reliable source for several key reasons, including legal mandate, oversight, and public accountability, primarily due to its official governmental function and the nature of the information it manages.

Data Description:

This data set includes population data by city, county, and (or) town for the State of Connecticut as of 07/01/2021.

Variable Definitions

Injury County	The county where the injury occurred (text field)
Age	The age of the individual at the time of the injury (whole number)
Age (bins)	Age categorized into ranges (12-23,24-35,36-47,48-59,60-71,72-83,84-87) (text field)
Any Opioid	A binary (Yes/No) variable indicating whether any opioid was involved in the injury or death (text field)
Benzodiazepine (Valium/Xanax)	A binary variable indicating whether benzodiazepines (specifically Valium or Xanax, or potentially others) were involved (text field)
Cause(s) of Death	The reported cause of death (text field)
City of Death	The city where the death occurred. This may or may not be the same as the injury location (text field)
Cocaine	A binary variable indicating whether cocaine was involved (text field)
CustomCity	A user-defined or grouped city. This allows you to aggregate smaller cities or create custom regions for analysis (text field)
CustomDeathCity	A user-defined or grouped city where the death occurred (text field)
CustomInjuryCity	A user-defined or grouped city where the injury occurred (text field)
CustomInjuryState	A user-defined or grouped state where the injury occurred (text field)
CustomState	A user-defined or grouped state (text field)
Description of Injury	A textual description of the injury sustained (text field)
Drug Type	A more detailed classification of the drugs involved (text field)

Variable Definitions (cont)

Ethanol	A binary variable indicating whether ethanol (alcohol) was involved in the injury or death (text field)
Fentanyl	A binary variable indicating whether fentanyl was involved (text field)
Gabapentin (Seizure Medication)	A binary variable indicating whether gabapentin was involved. Note that while it's a seizure medication, it's also sometimes misused (text field)
Heroin	A binary variable indicating whether heroin was involved (text field)
Heroin Death Certificate	This variable likely indicates whether heroin was specifically mentioned on the death certificate (text field)
Heroin/Morph/Codeine	A binary variable indicating the involvement of any of these three substances. This groups them together (text field)
Hydrocodone	A binary variable indicating whether hydrocodone was involved (text field)
Hydromorphone	A binary variable indicating whether hydromorphone was involved (text field)
Injury City	The city where the injury occurred (text field)
Injury Place	A more detailed description of the location of the injury (e.g., "residence," "street," "workplace") (text field)
Injury State	The state where the injury occurred (text field)
Manner of Death	The official classification of how the death occurred (e.g., "Accident," "Suicide," "Homicide," "Undetermined") (text field)
Meth/Amphetamine	A binary variable indicating the involvement of methamphetamine or other amphetamines (text)
Methadone	A binary variable indicating whether methadone was involved. Methadone is often used in addiction treatment, so its presence might have different implications than other opioids (text field)
Morphine (Not Heroin)	A binary variable indicating the involvement of morphine excluding cases where heroin was also involved (text)

Variable Definitions (cont)

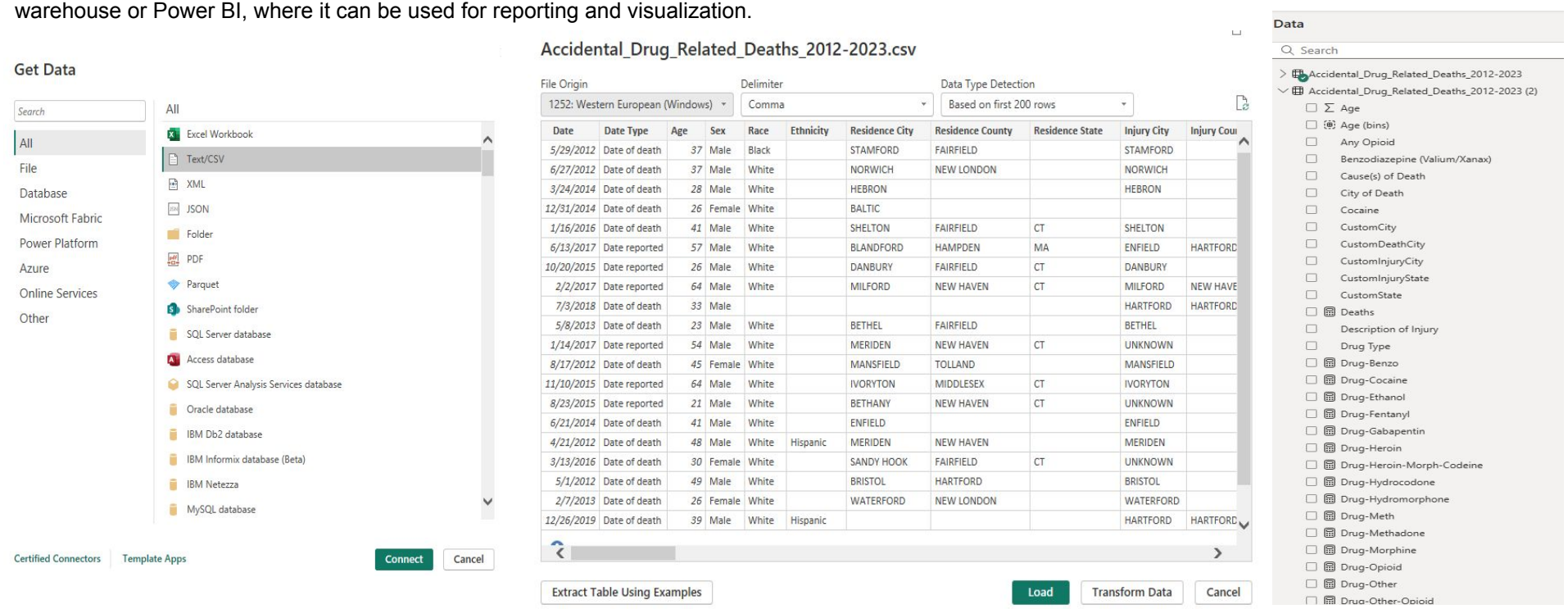
Opiate NOS	"Opiate NOS" likely refers to "Opiate, Not Otherwise Specified," meaning a general opiate was involved, but the specific type wasn't recorded (text field)
Other	A catch-all category for substances not specifically listed (text field)
Other Opioid	A category for opioids other than those specifically listed (text field)
Oxycodone	A binary variable indicating whether oxycodone was involved (text field)
Oxymorphone	A binary variable indicating whether oxymorphone was involved (text field)
Place of Death	The specific location where the death occurred (text field)
Race	The race of the individual (text field)
Residence City	The city where the individual resided (text field)
Residence State	The state where the individual resided (text field)
Sex	The sex of the individual (Male/Female/Other/Unknown) (text field)
State of Death	The state where the death occurred (text field)
Tramadol	A binary variable indicating whether tramadol was involved (text field)
Xylazine (Tranq)	A binary variable indicating whether xylazine was involved. This is a veterinary tranquilizer increasingly found in the illicit drug supply (text field)
Year of Death	The year in which the death occurred (text field)

Data Acquisition/Extraction Tools

- Power BI's (Get Data) - CSV to PBI

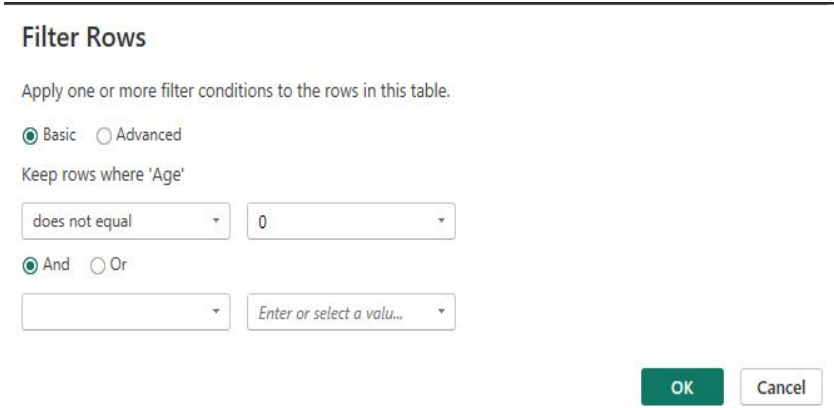
ETL Process

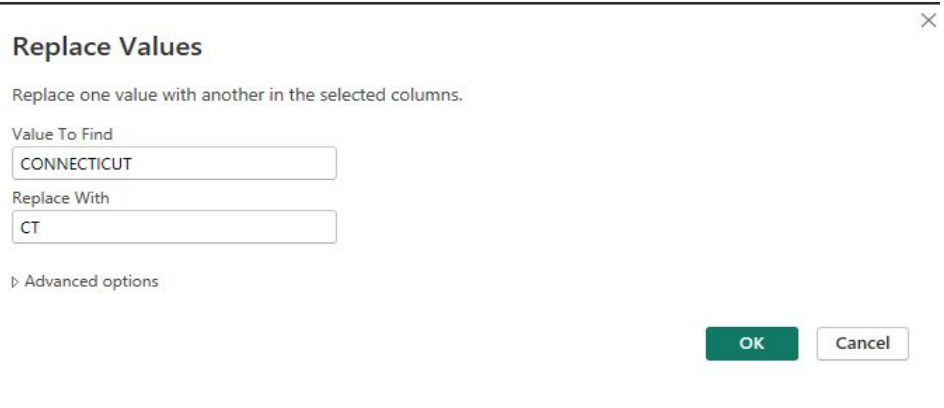
ETL stands for **Extract, Transform, Load**. It's the process of getting data ready for analysis. First, we **Extract** data from various sources, like files or databases. Then, we **Transform** it by cleaning, shaping, and preparing it for analysis. Finally, we **Load** the transformed data into a destination, like a data warehouse or Power BI, where it can be used for reporting and visualization.



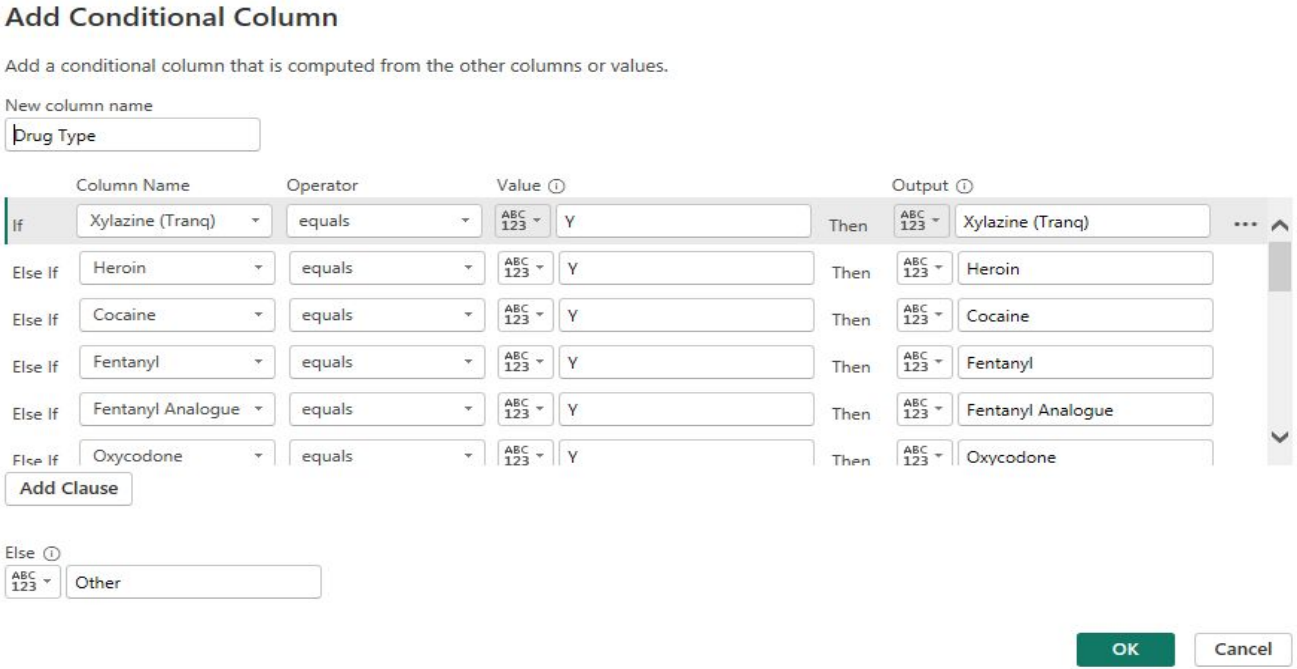
Power Query Transformations

Power Query transformation is the process of manipulating and reshaping data within the Power Query Editor before it's loaded into the Power BI data model. Basically, it's about getting your data into the right format for analysis.





Power Query Transformations(cont)

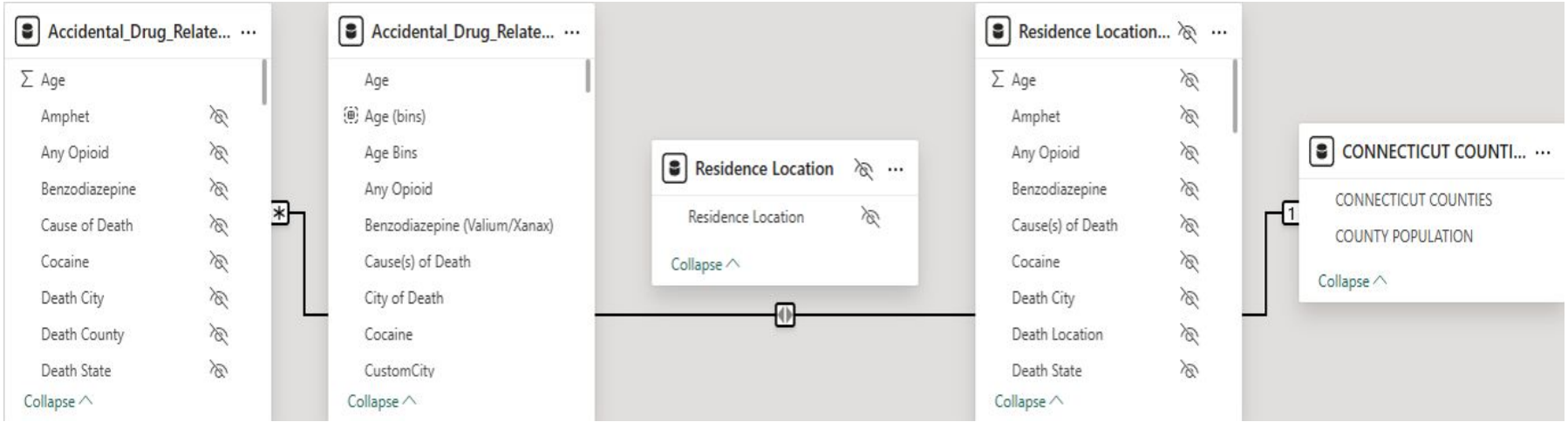


Queries

```
Source = Csv.Document(File.Contents("C:\Users\mypri\Downloads\Accidental_Drug_Related_Deaths_2012-2023.csv"),[Delimiter=",", Columns=48, Encoding=1252, QuoteStyle=QuoteStyle.Csv]),

#"Removed Columns" = Table.RemoveColumns(#"Changed Type",{"Injury County", "Residence County", "Ethnicity"}),

#"Merged Columns" = Table.CombineColumns(#"Removed Columns",{"Location", "Location if Other"},Combiner.CombineTextByDelimiter(" ", QuoteStyle.None),"Merged"),

#"Replaced Value" = Table.ReplaceValue(#"Merged Columns","","Not Listed",Replacer.ReplaceValue,{"Injury Place"}),

#"Replaced Value1" = Table.ReplaceValue(#"Replaced Value","","Not Listed",Replacer.ReplaceValue,{"Description of Injury"}),

#"Removed Columns1" = Table.RemoveColumns(#"Replaced Value1",{"Death County"}),

#"Renamed Columns" = Table.RenameColumns(#"Removed Columns1",{{"Merged", "Place of Death"}}),

#"Replaced Value2" = Table.ReplaceValue(#"Renamed Columns"," ","",Replacer.ReplaceText,{"Place of Death"}),

#"Replaced Value3" = Table.ReplaceValue(#"Replaced Value2","","Not Listed",Replacer.ReplaceValue,{"Place of Death"}),

#"Replaced Value4" = Table.ReplaceValue(#"Replaced Value3"," ","",Replacer.ReplaceText,{"Other Significant Conditions "}),

#"Replaced Value5" = Table.ReplaceValue(#"Replaced Value4","HypertensiveandAtherosclerotic CardiovascularDisease","-HypertensiveandAtherosclerotic CardiovascularDisease",Replacer.ReplaceText,{"Other Significant Conditions "}),

#"Replaced Value6" = Table.ReplaceValue(#"Replaced Value5","AtheroscleroticandHypertensiveCardiovascularDisease,Diabetes","-AtheroscleroticandHypertensiveCardiovascularDisease,Diabetes",Replacer.ReplaceText,{"Other Significant Conditions "}),
```

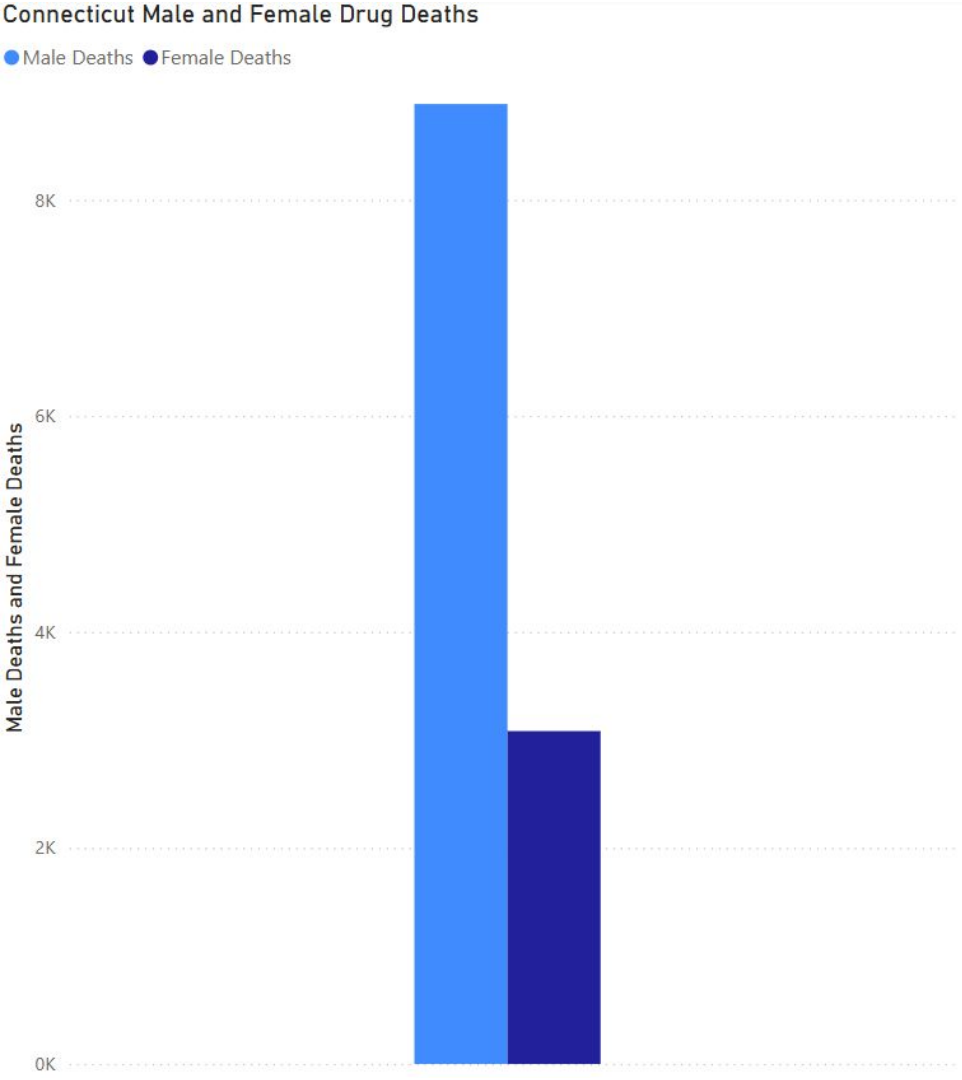
Entity Relationship Diagram

The root of my data model is the **Accidental_Drug_Related_Deaths** table. This table contains detailed information about each drug-related death, including the deceased's age, the substances involved (like fentanyl, cocaine, and heroin), the cause of death, and the location of death. Here you can see how these tables are connected.



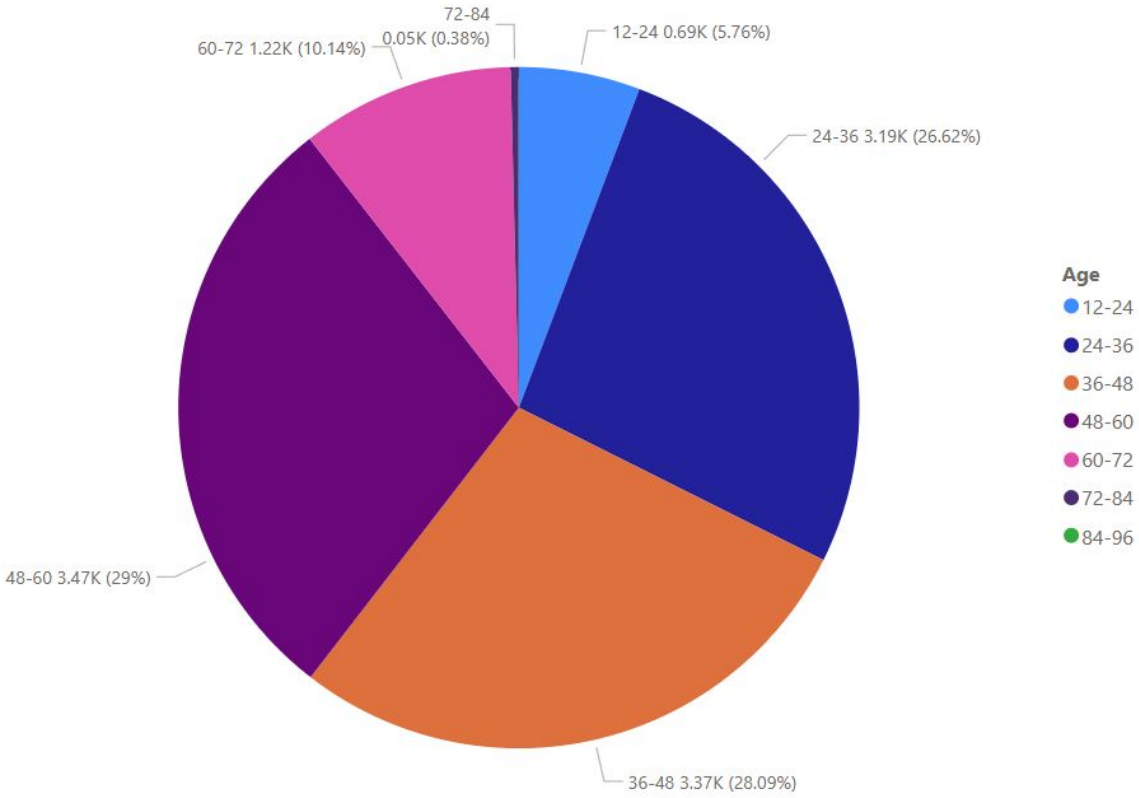
DEMO

POWER BI



CONNECTICUT COUNTIES	POPULATION BY COUNTY
FAIRFIELD	959768
HARTFORD	896854
LITCHFIELD	185000
MIDDLESEX	164759
NEW HAVEN	863700
NEW LONDON	268805
TOLLAND	147160
WINDHAM	119551
Total	**3605597**

Connecticut Drug Deaths by Age and Year



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Year of Death

- [ ] 2012
- [ ] 2013
- [ ] 2014
- [ ] 2015
- [ ] 2016
- [ ] 2017
- [ ] 2018
- [ ] 2019
- [ ] 2020
- [ ] 2021
- [ ] 2022
- [ ] 2023

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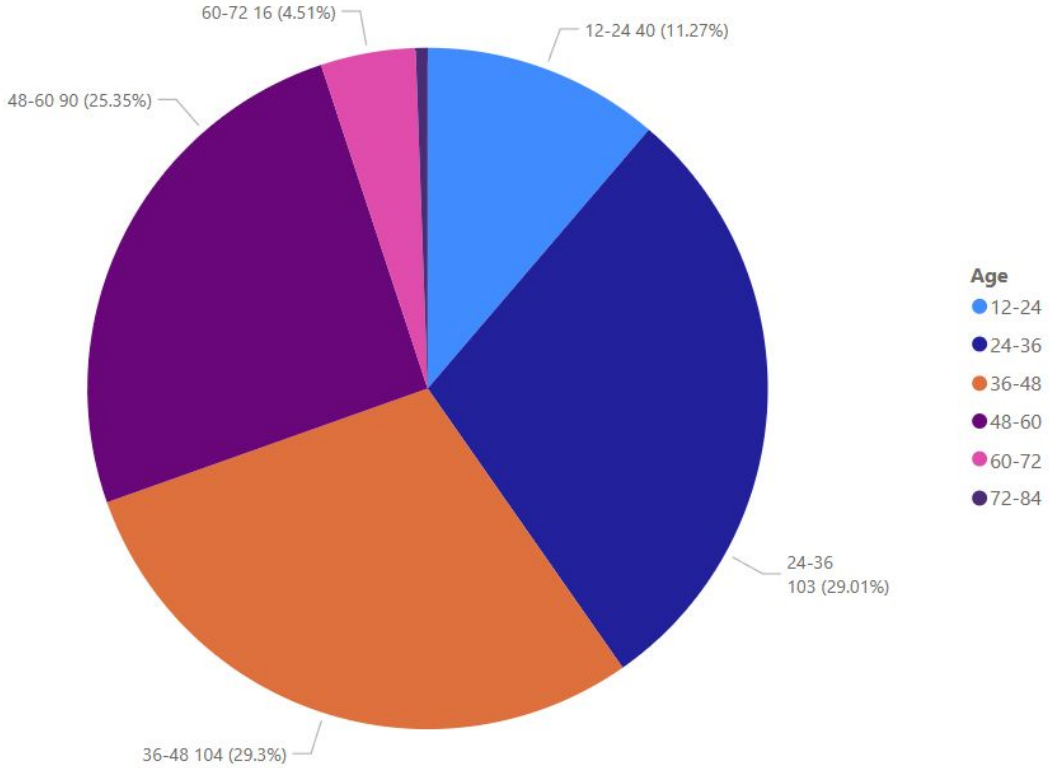

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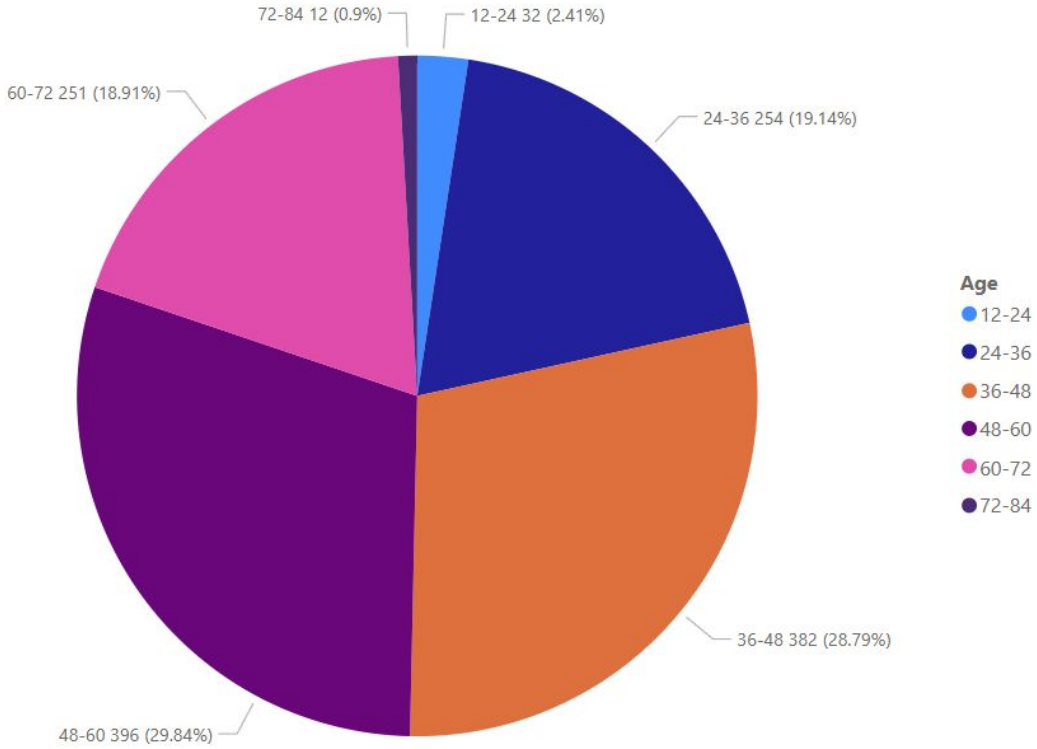
Connecticut Drug Deaths by Age and Year



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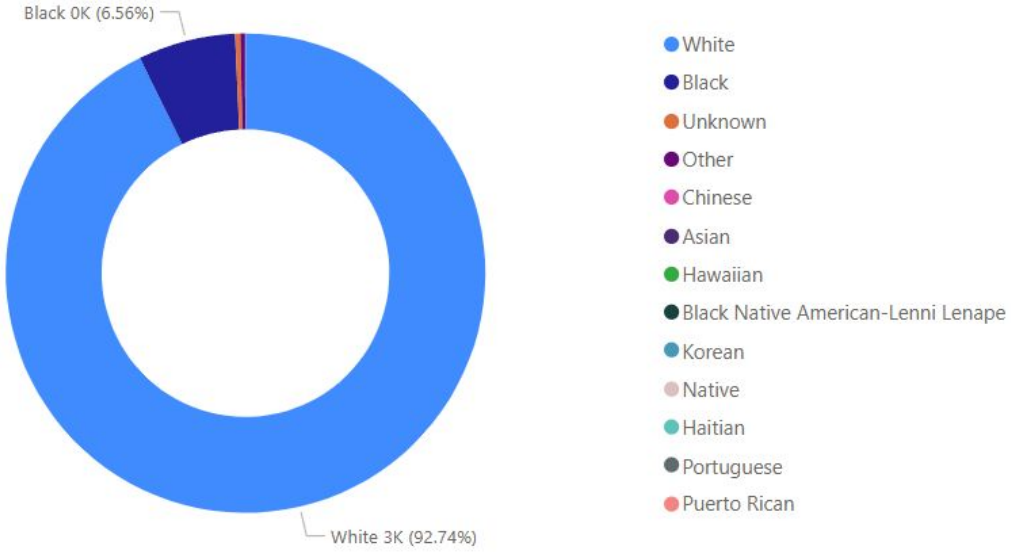
Drug Deaths by Race and Age Range



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Age

36 48

Drug Type

- [ ] Benzodiazepine (Valium/Xanax)
- [ ] Cocaine
- [ ] Ethanol
- [ ] Fentanyl
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- [ ] Heroin
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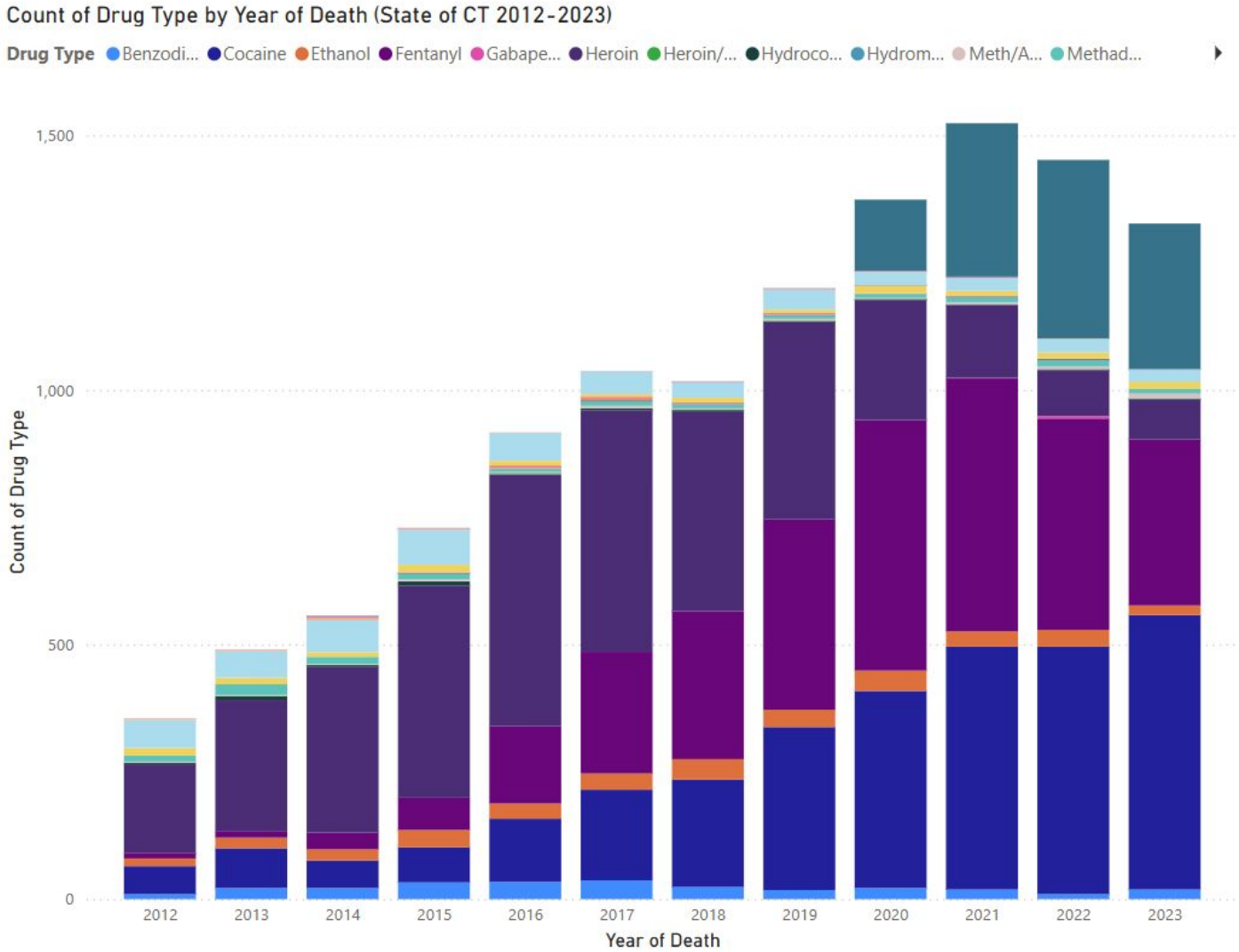
- [ ] Xylazine (Tranq)



Drug Type

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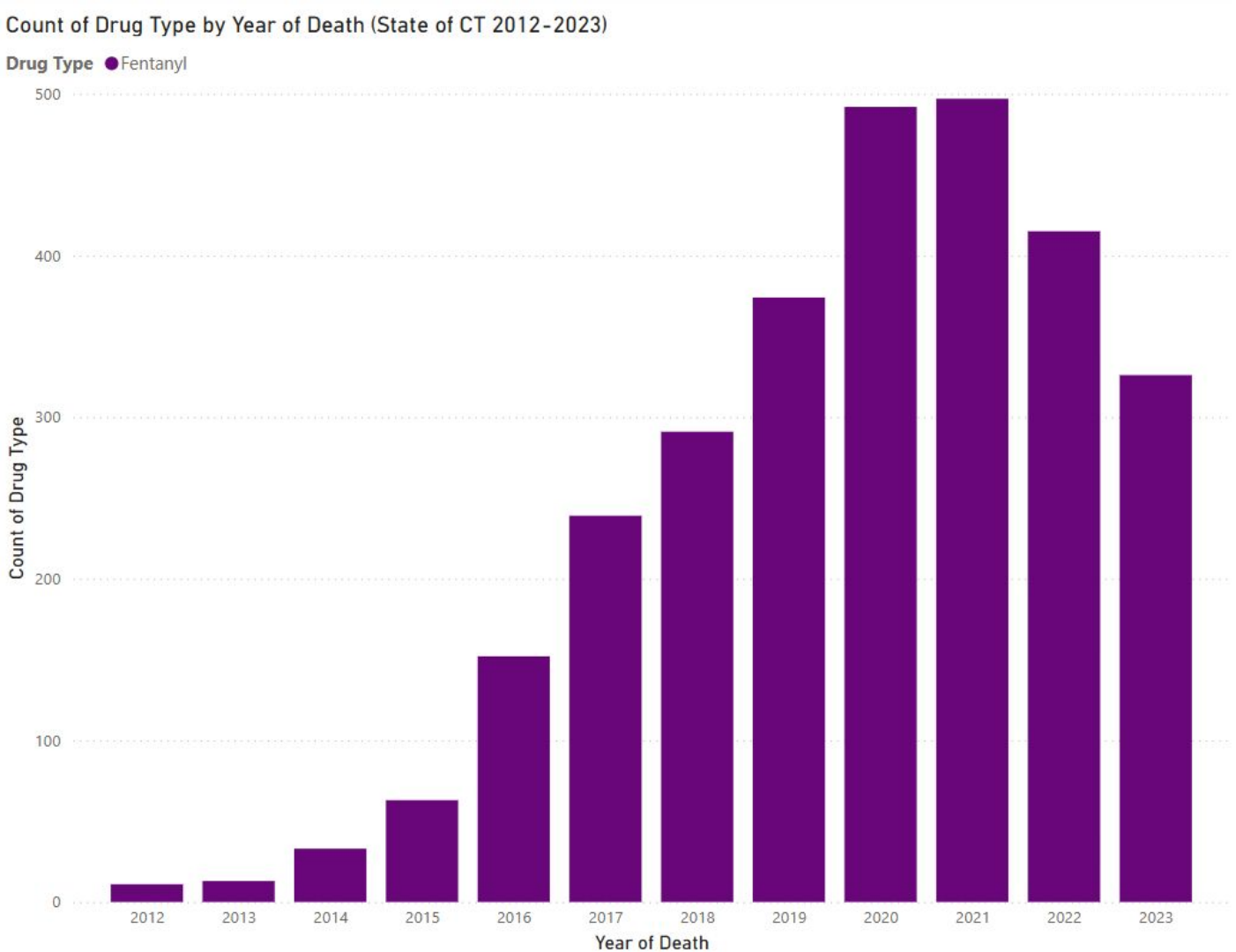

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- [ ] Benzodiazepine (Valium/Xanax)
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- [ ] Heroin
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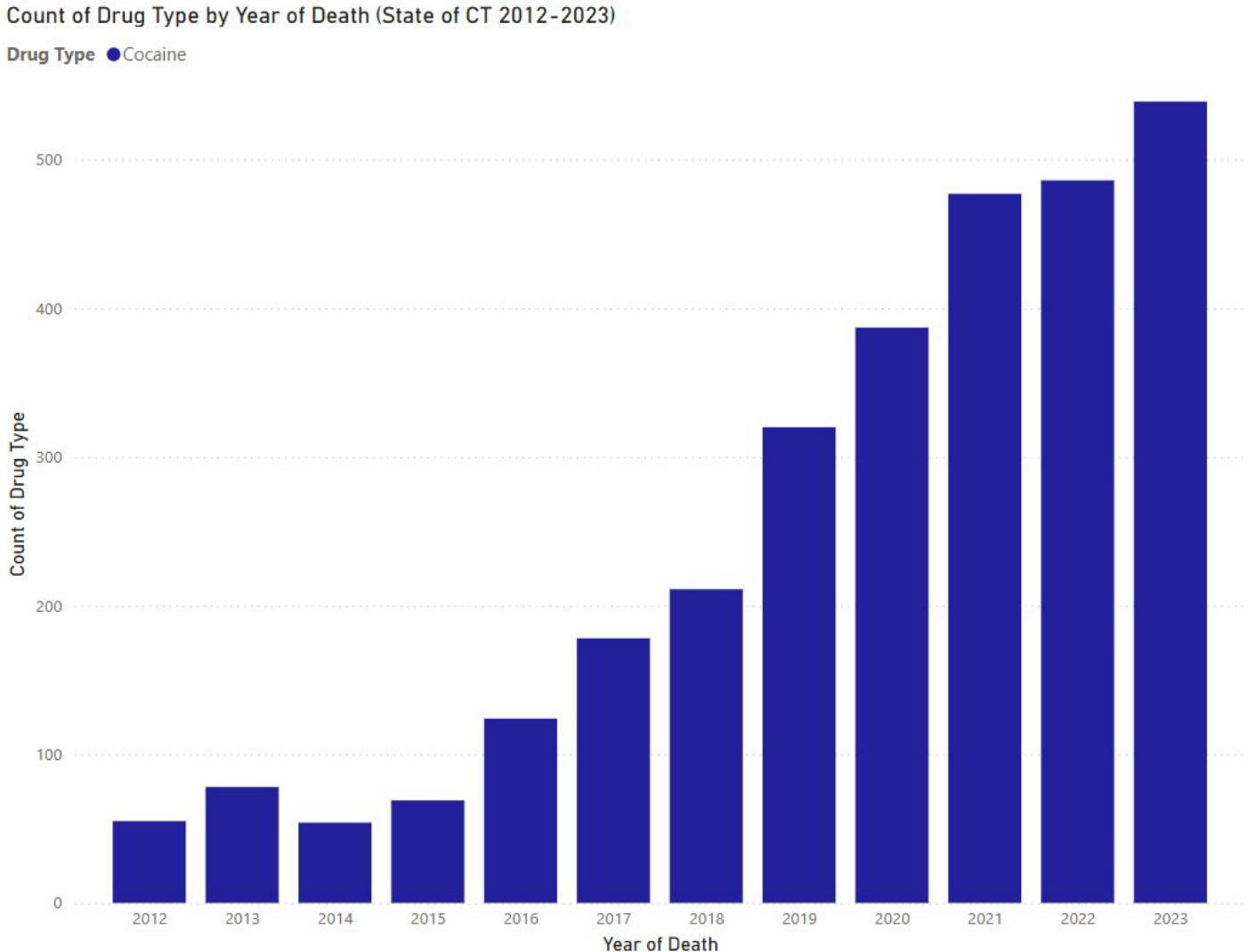

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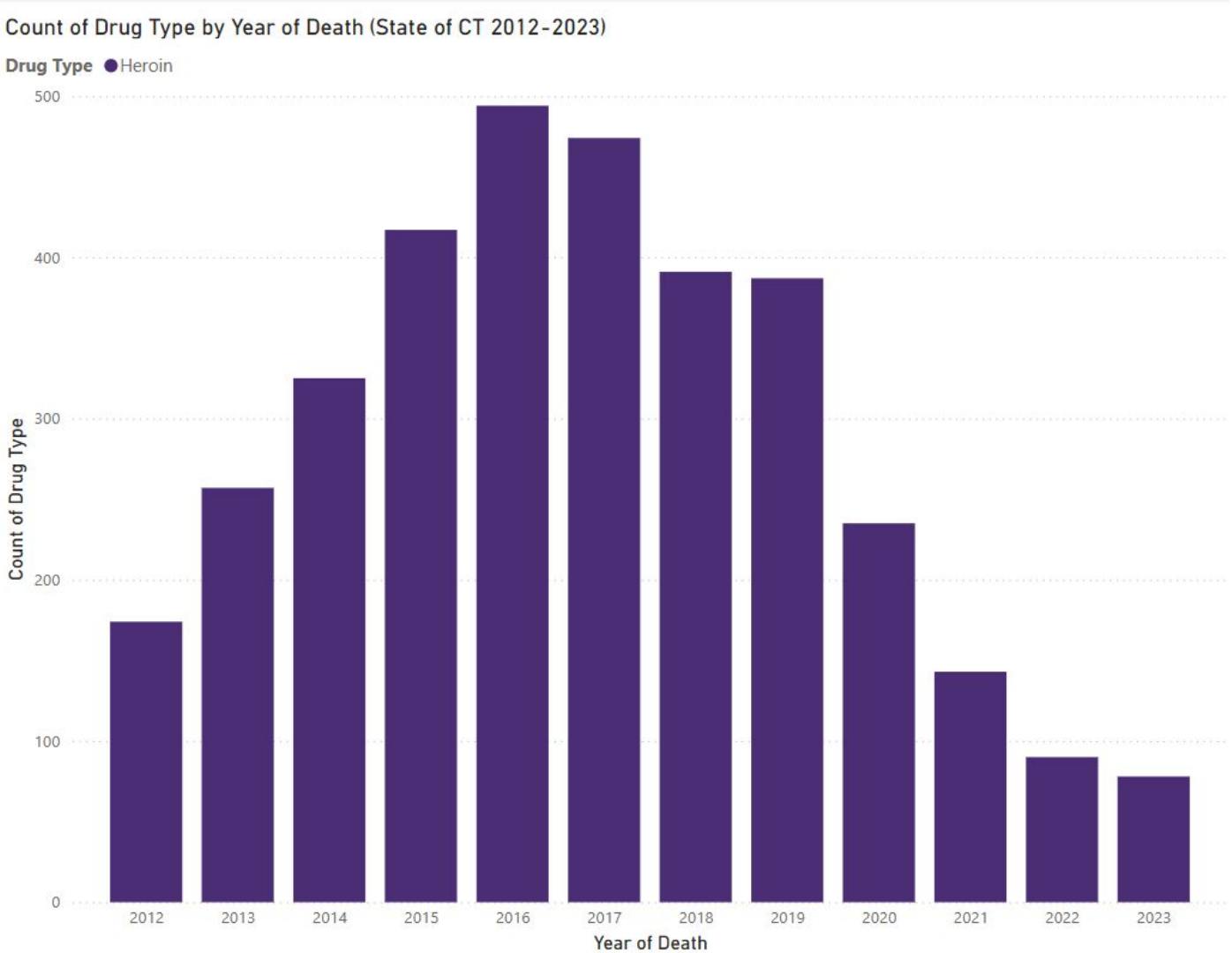
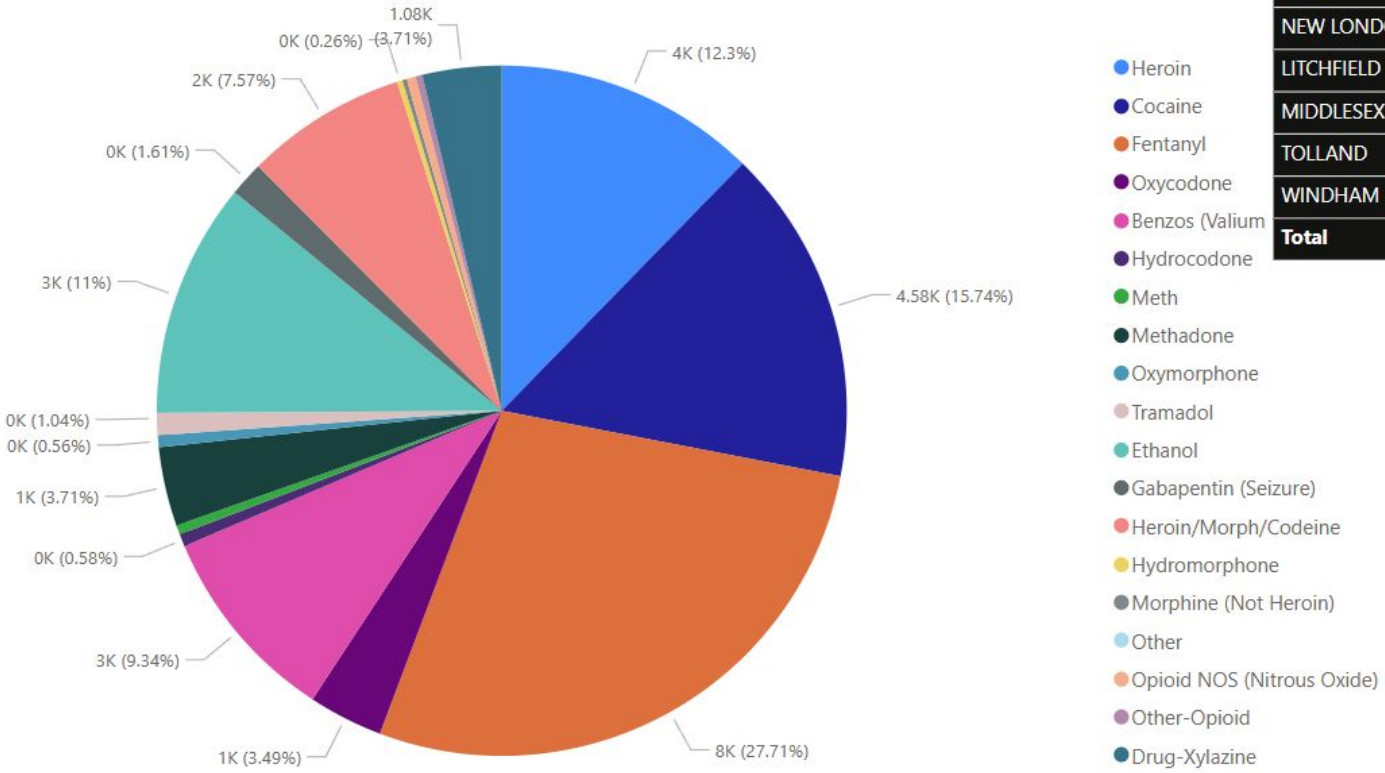


Drug Deaths by Drug Type

Heroin, Cocaine, Fentanyl, Oxycodone, Benzos (Valium), Hydrocodone, Meth, Methadone, Oxymorphone, Tramadol, Ethanol, Gabapentin (Seizure), Heroin/Morph/Codeine, Hydromorphone, Morphine (Not Heroin), Other, Opioid NOS (Nitrous Oxide), Other-Opioid and Drug-Xylazine



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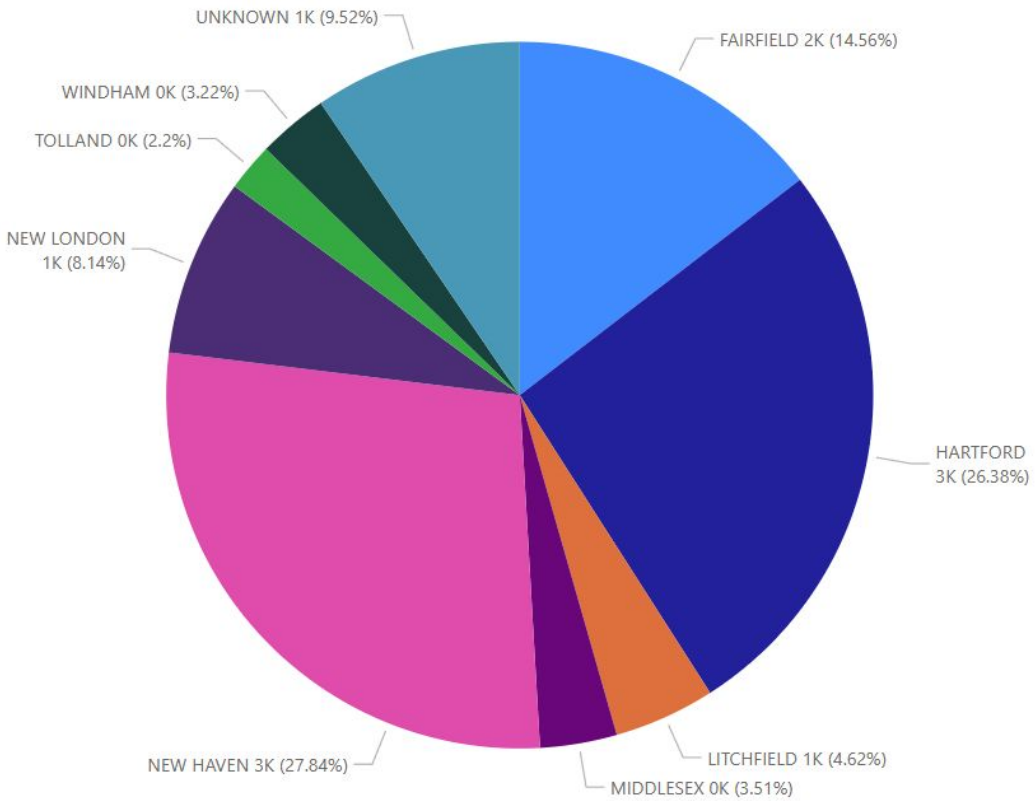
Connecticut Drug Deaths by County and Race (2012-2023)



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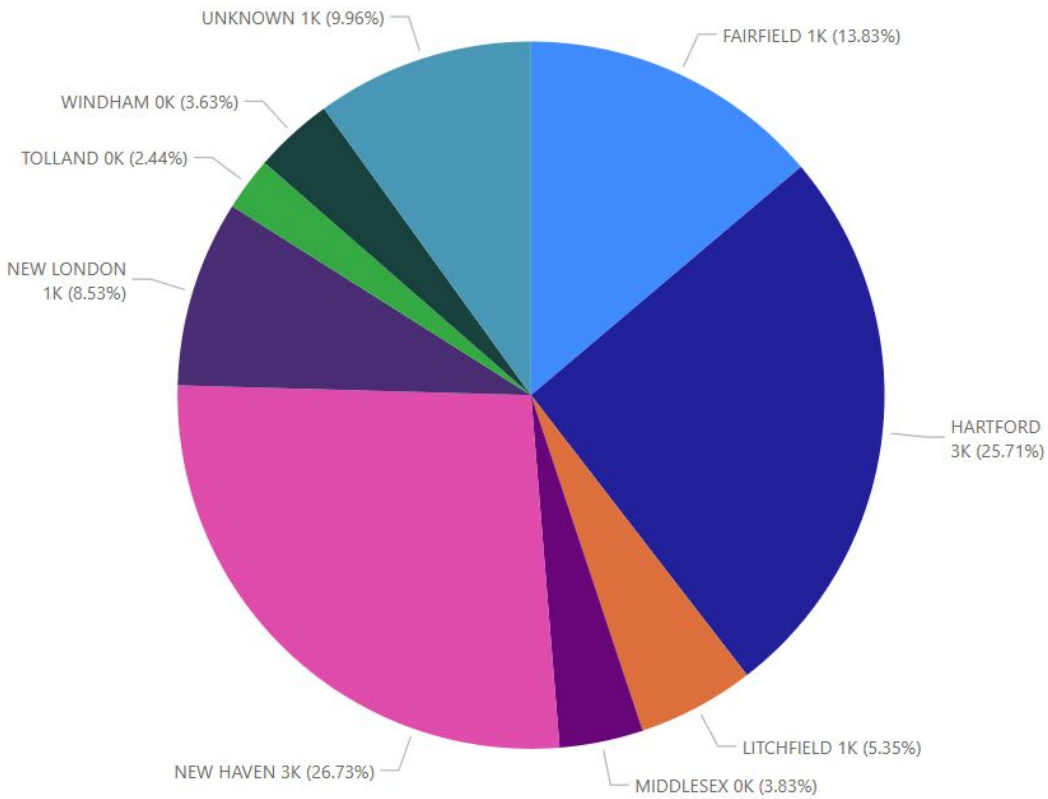
Race

- [ ] Asian
- [ ] Black
- [ ] Chinese
- [ ] Hawaiian
- [ ] Korean
- [ ] Other
- [ ] Unknown
- [ ] White

Connecticut Drug Deaths by County and Race (2012-2023)



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- FAIRFIELD
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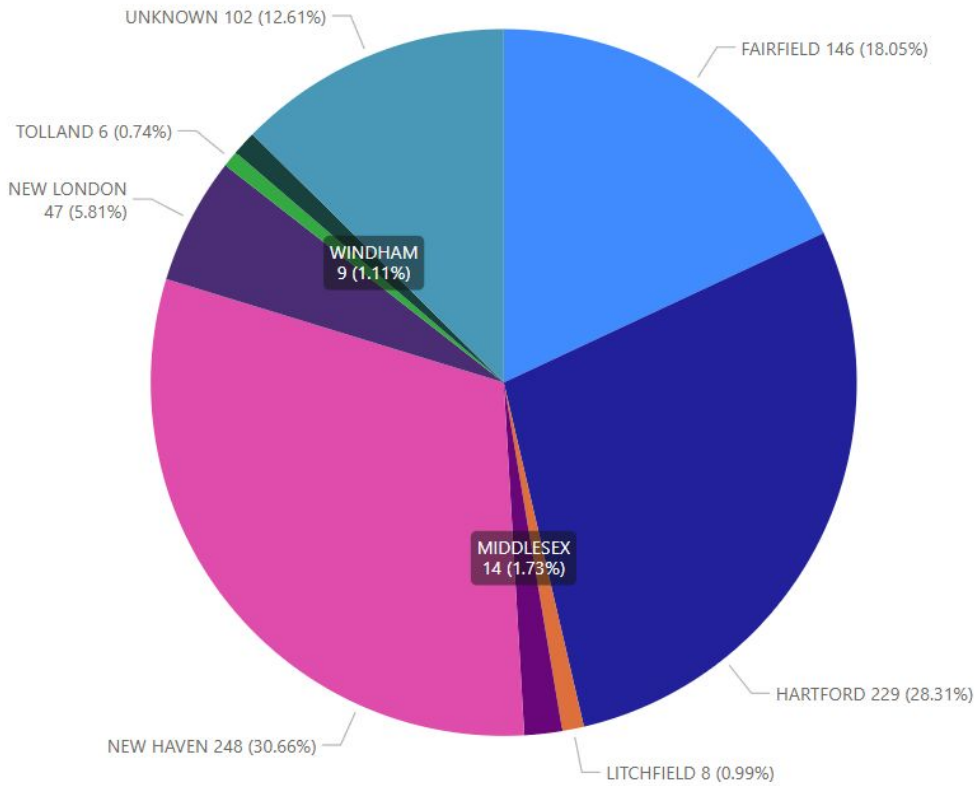

- FAIRFIELD
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- UNKNOWN

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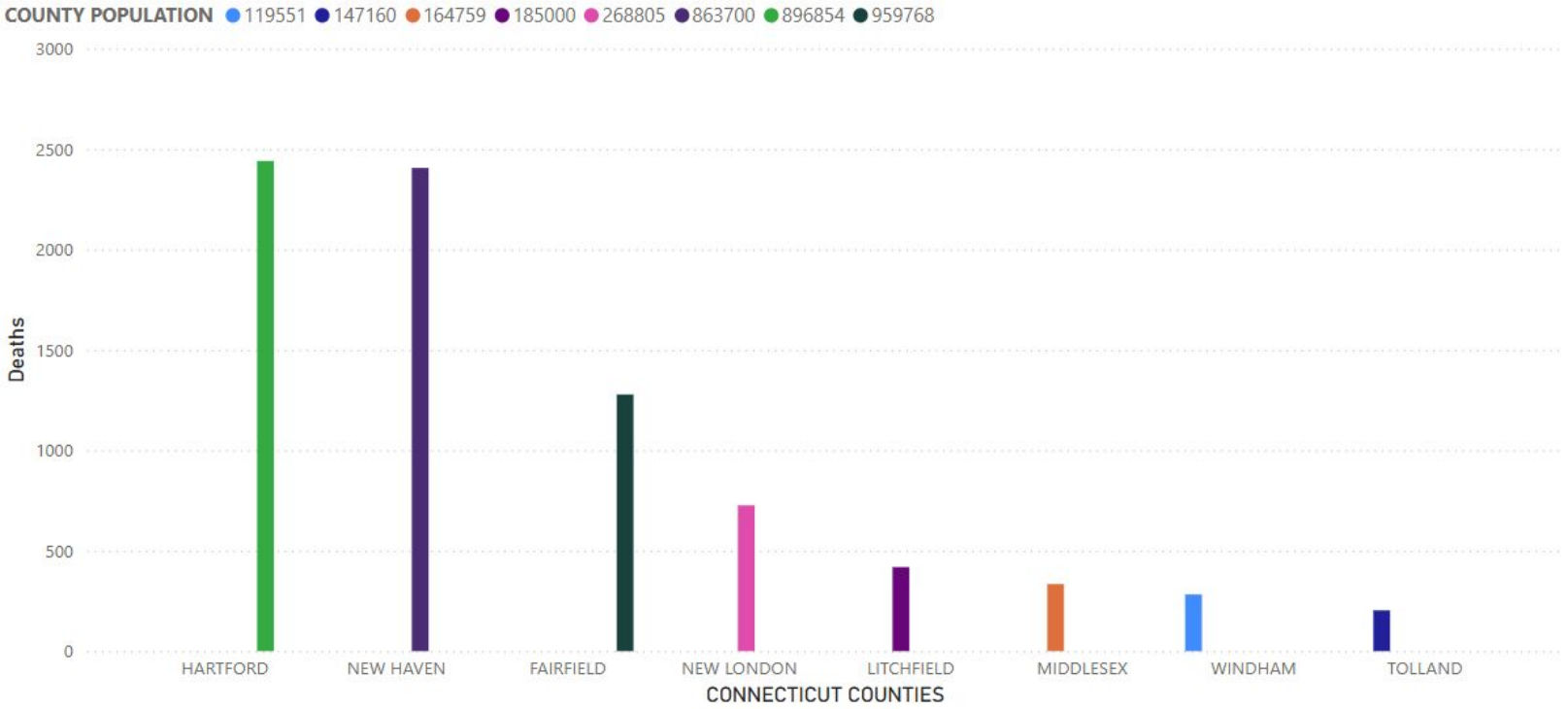
Deaths by CONNECTICUT COUNTIES and COUNTY POPULATION



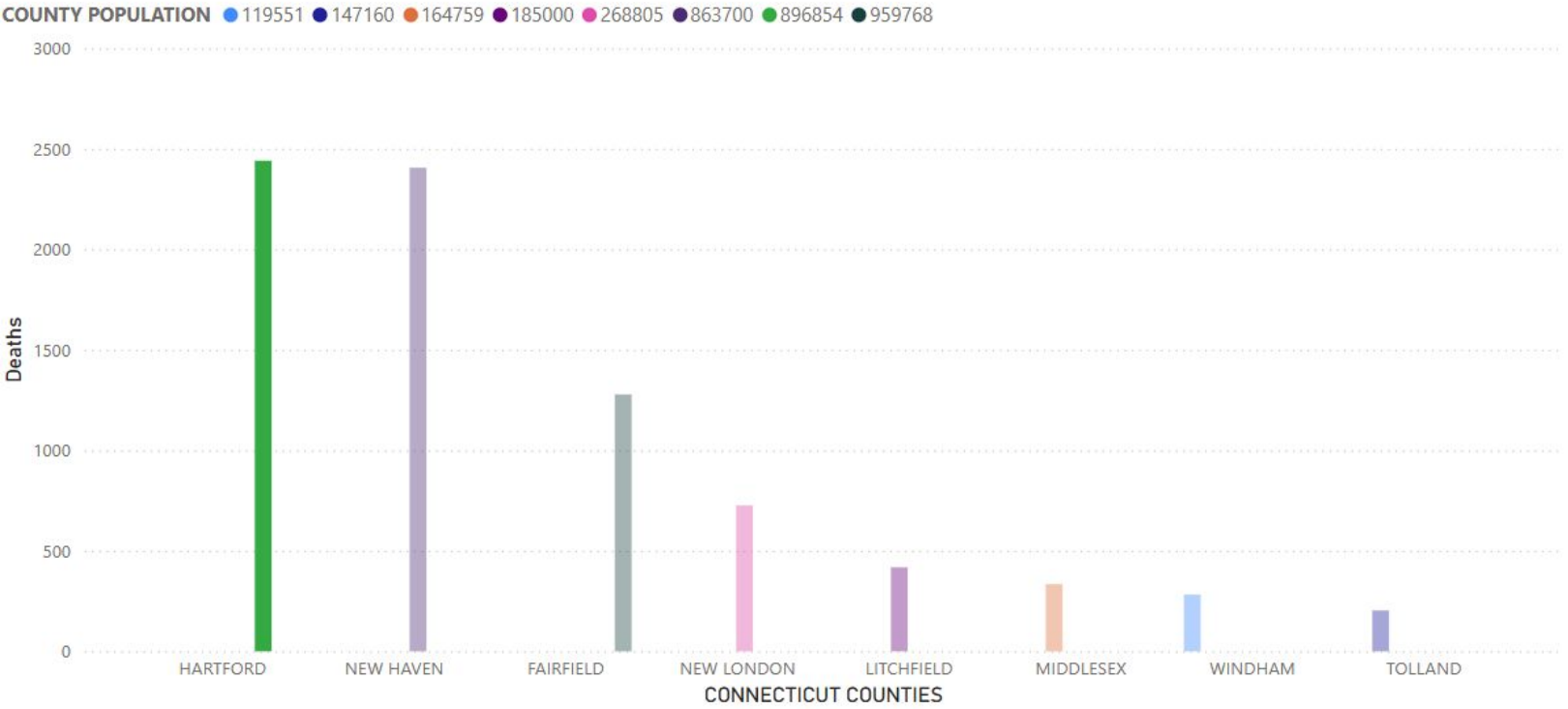
12K

Deaths

4M

POPULATION

Deaths by CONNECTICUT COUNTIES and COUNTY POPULATION



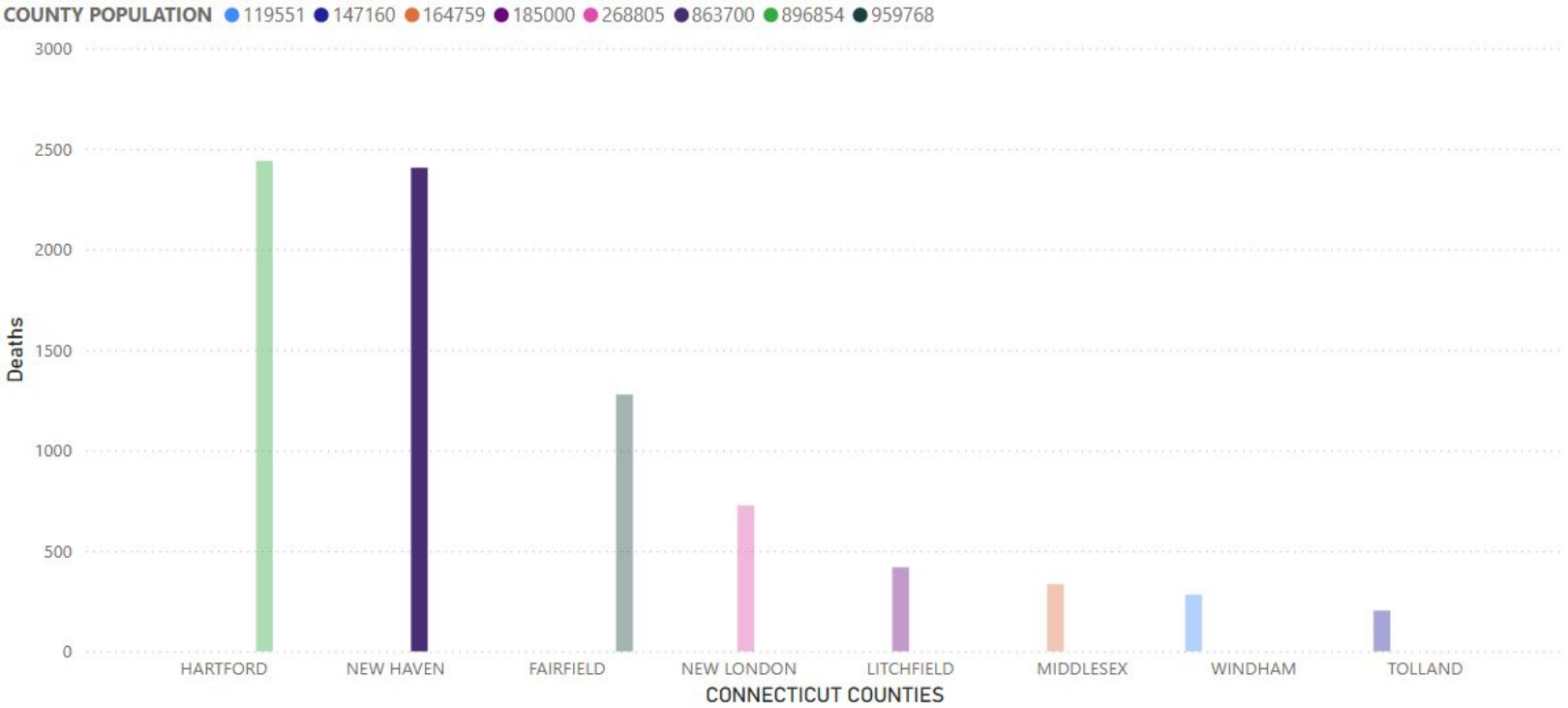
2441

Deaths

897K

POPULATION

Deaths by CONNECTICUT COUNTIES and COUNTY POPULATION



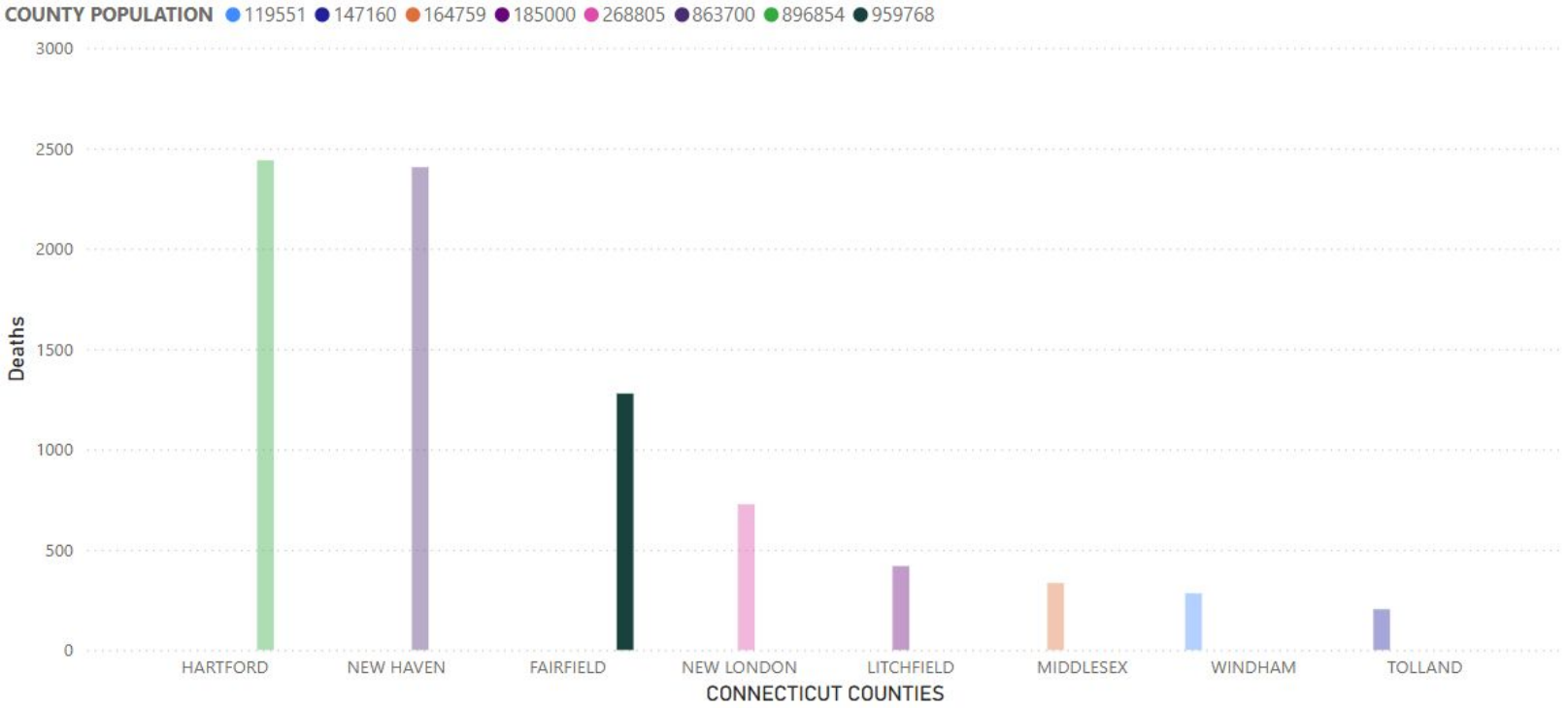
2406

Deaths

864K

POPULATION

Deaths by CONNECTICUT COUNTIES and COUNTY POPULATION



1278

Deaths

960K

POPULATION

Drug Type

- [ ] Benzodiazepine (Valium/Xanax)
- [ ] Cocaine
- [ ] Ethanol
- [ ] Fentanyl
- [ ] Gabapentin (Seizure Medication)
- [ ] Heroin
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- [ ] Meth/Amphetamine
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- [ ] Tramadol
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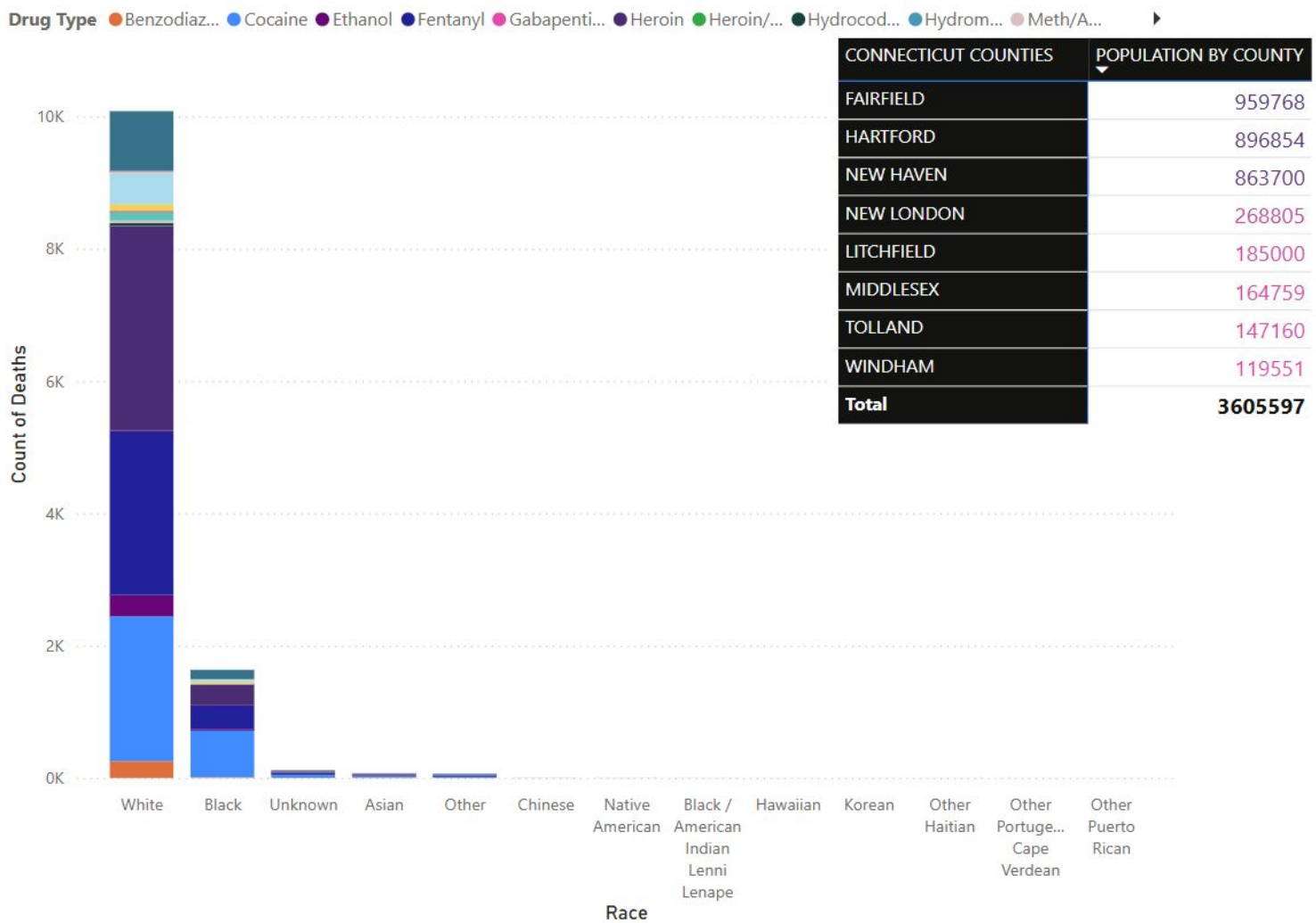
Count of Drug Deaths by Race and Drug Type (State of CT 2012-2023)



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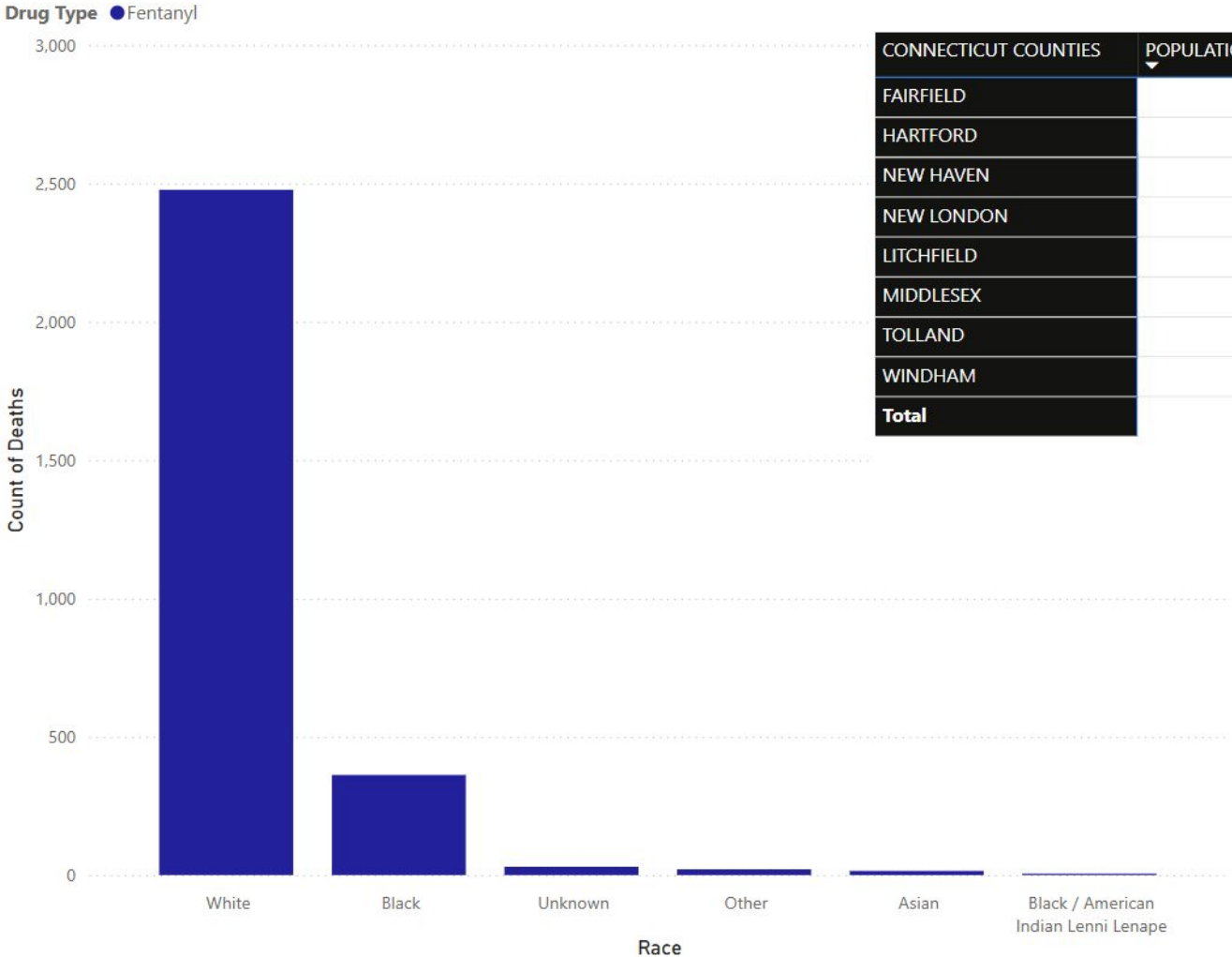
Count of Drug Deaths by Race and Drug Type (State of CT 2012-2023)



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NEW HAVEN	863700
NEW LONDON	268805
LITCHFIELD	185000
MIDDLESEX	164759
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WINDHAM	119551
Total	**3605597**

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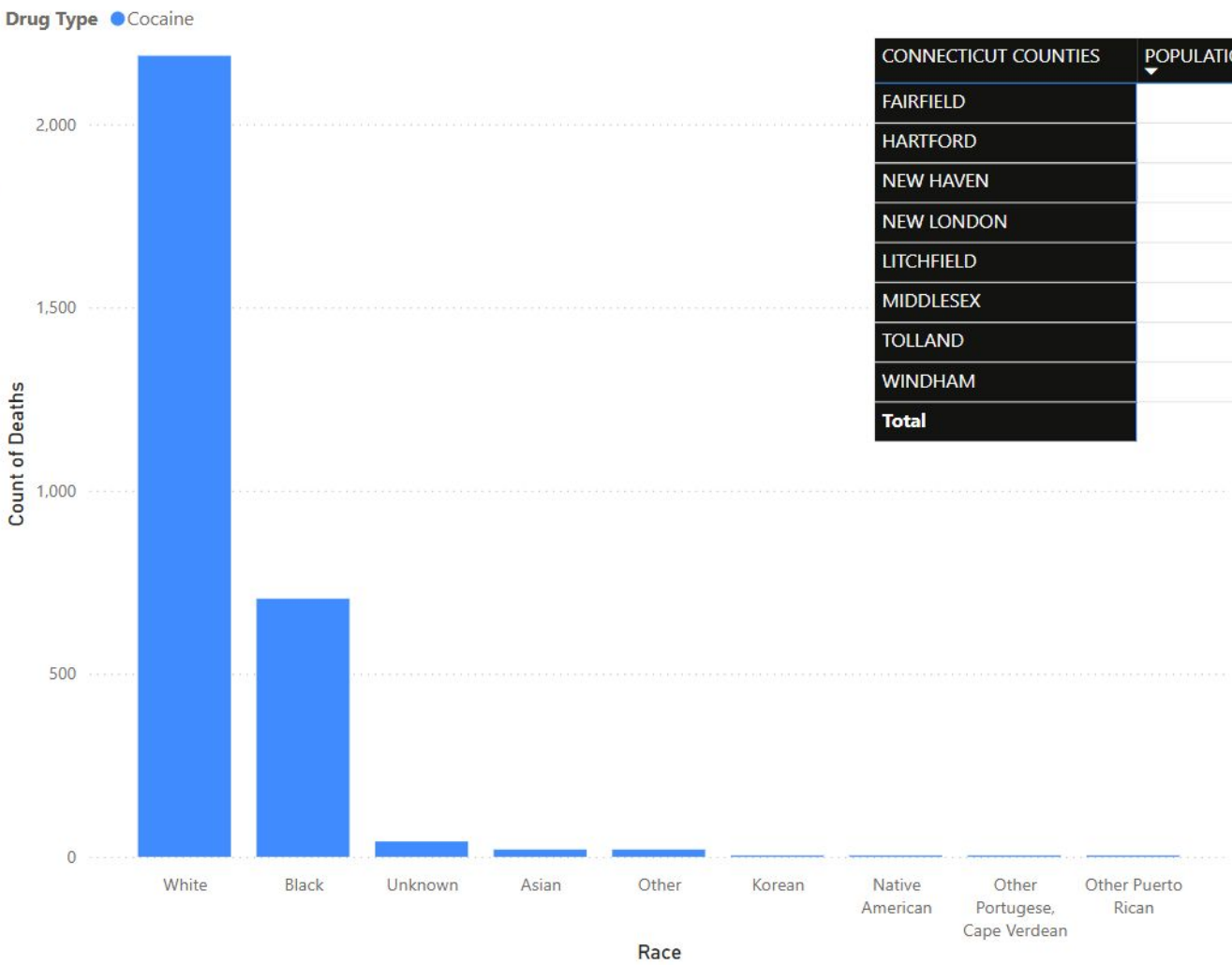

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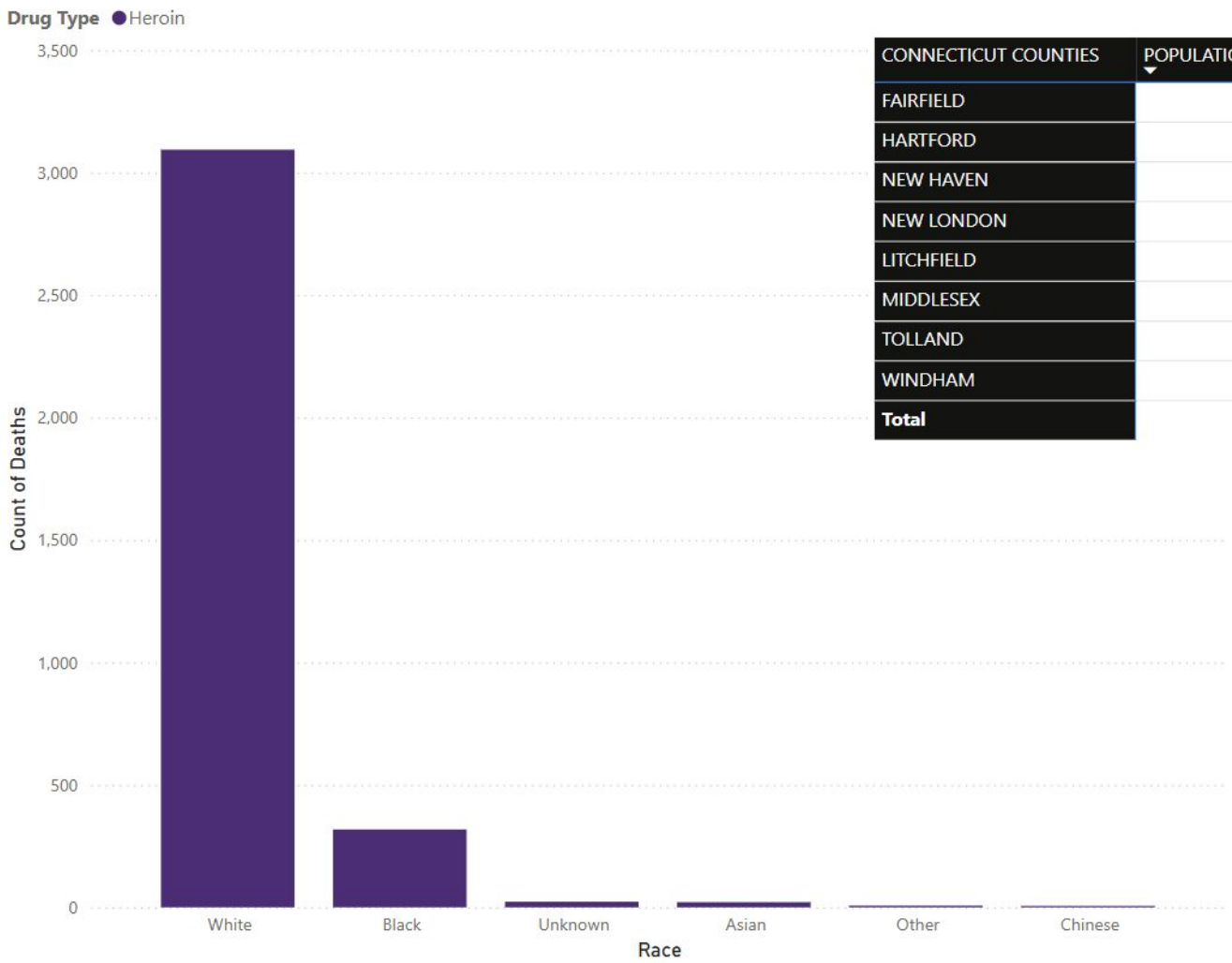

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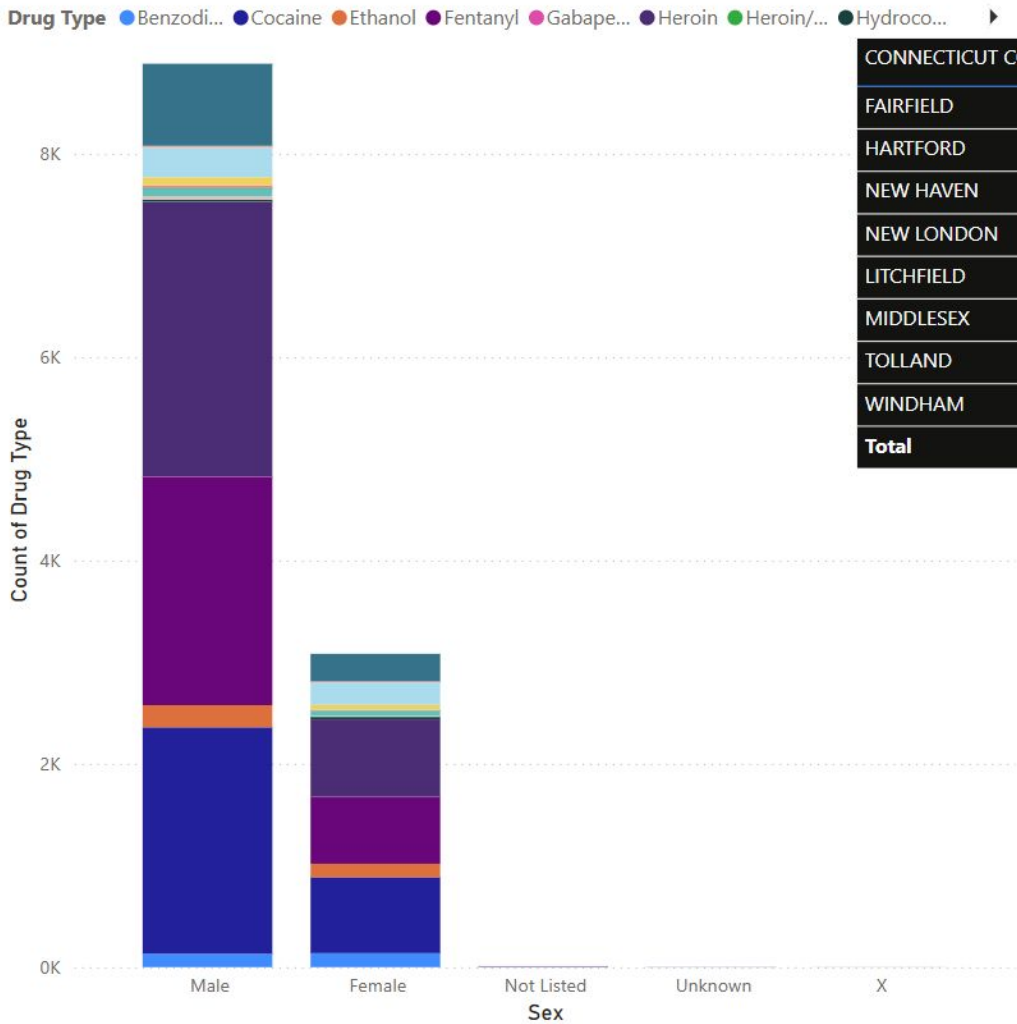
Count of Drug Type by Sex (State of CT 2012-2023)



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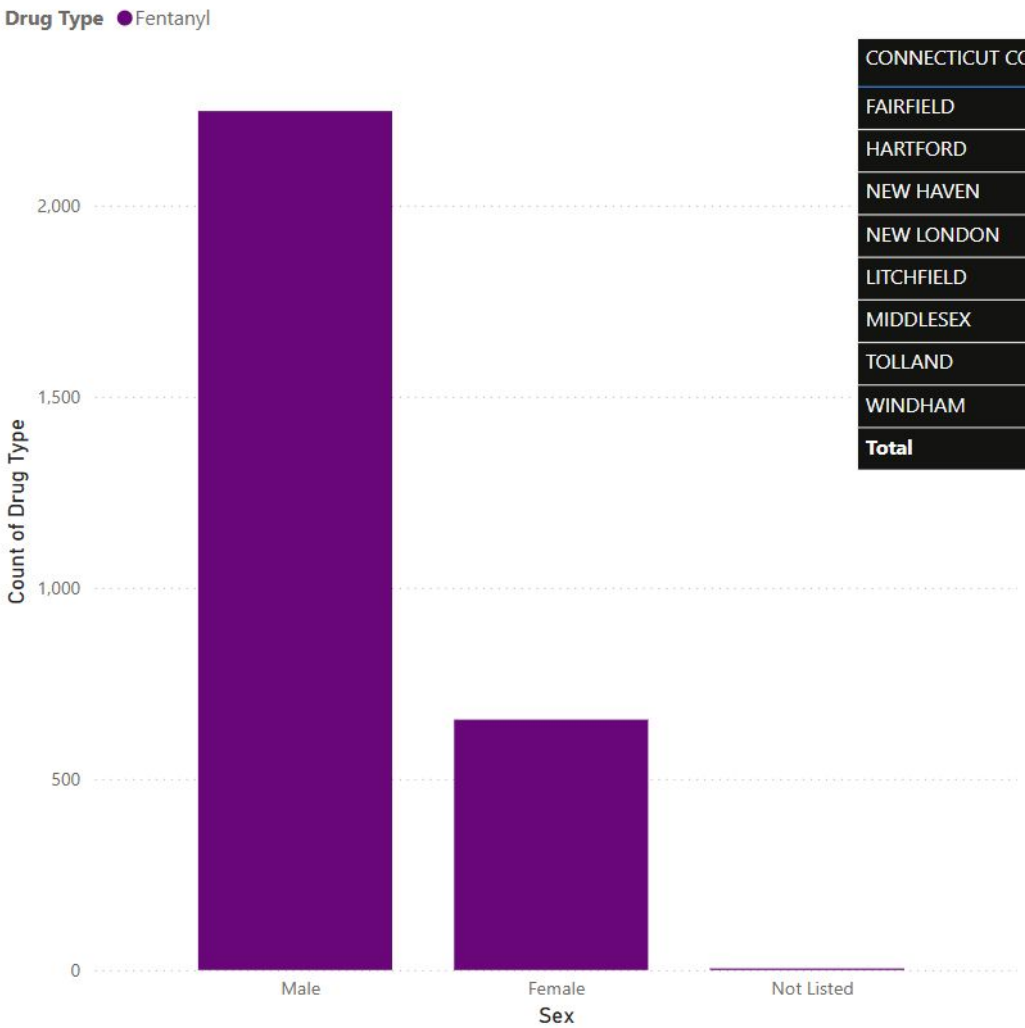

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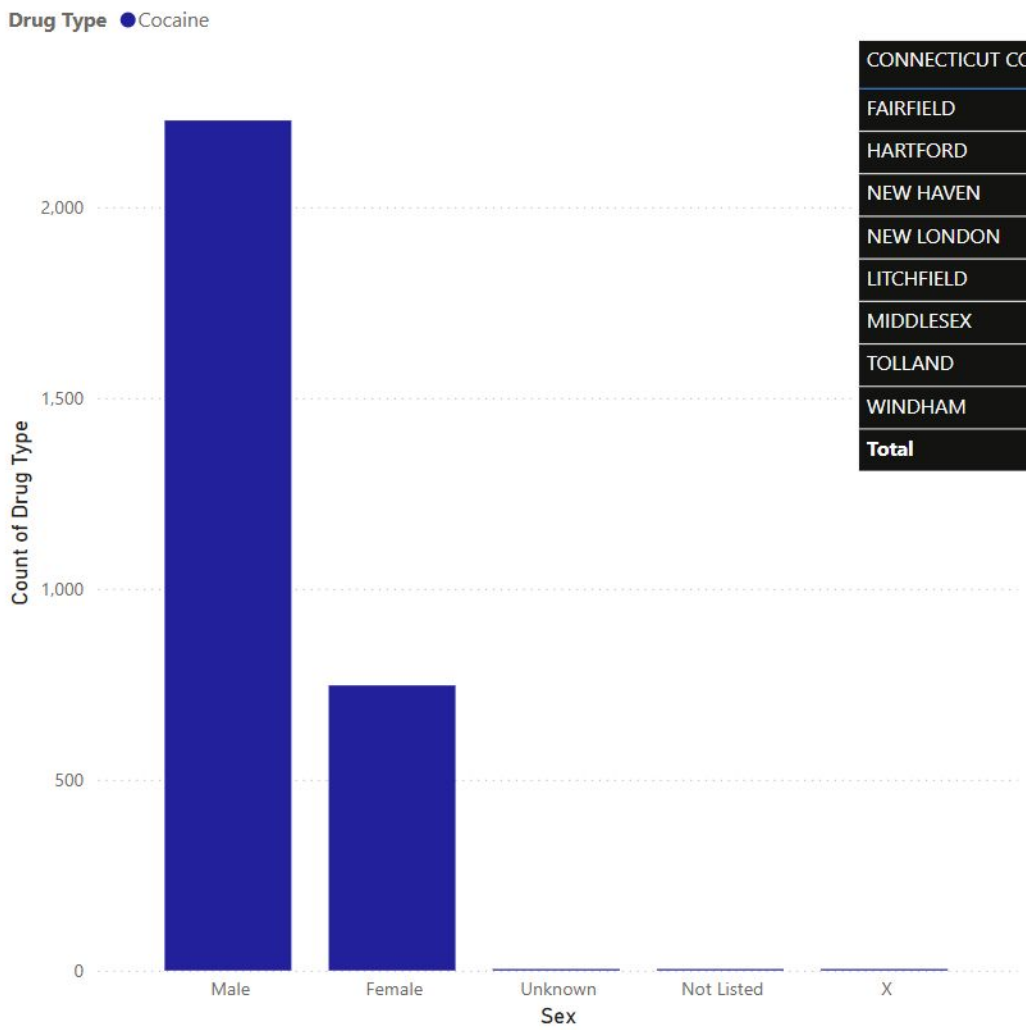

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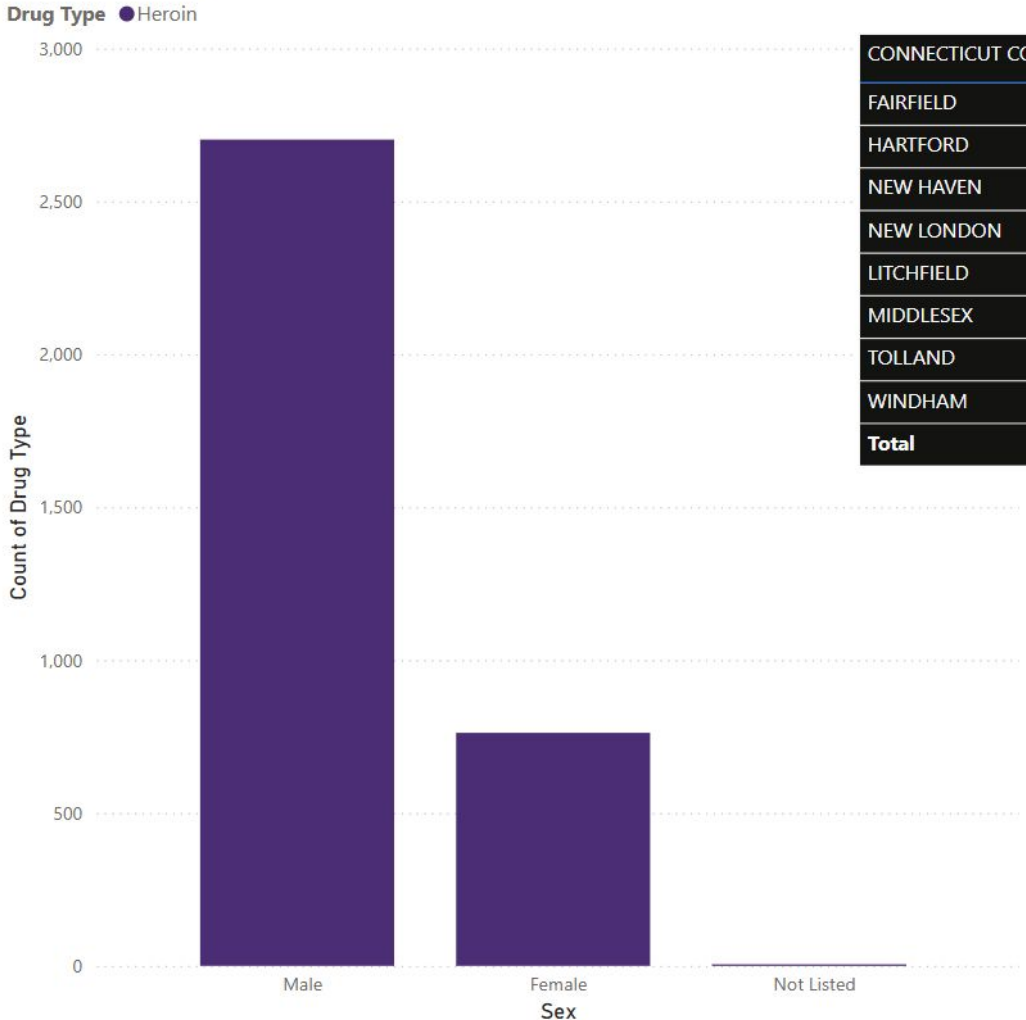

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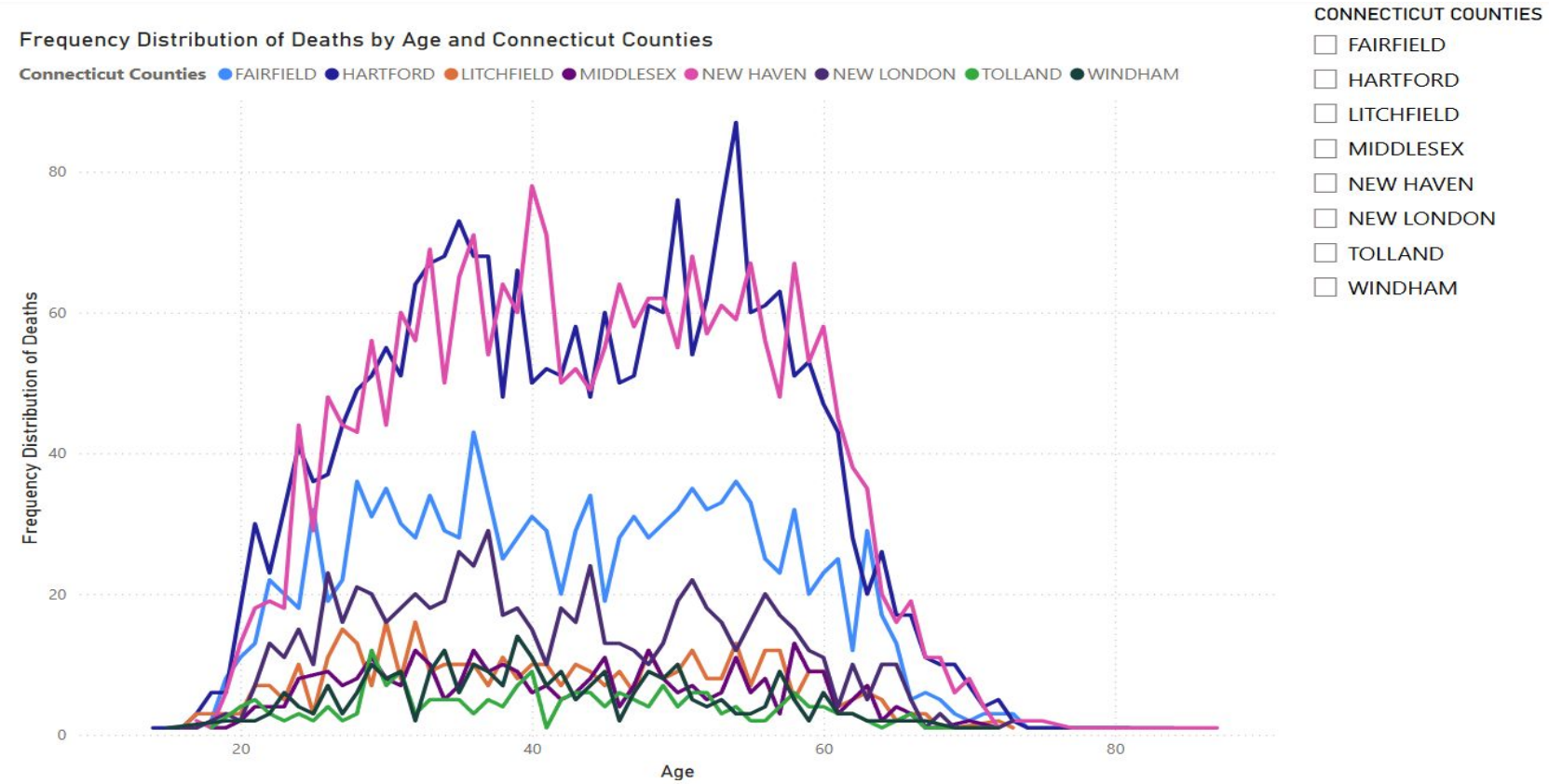
The frequency distribution chart shows a **rightward skew (positive skew)** for most of the counties. The longer tail on the right side of the distribution indicates that there are more deaths at older ages compared to what a symmetrical distribution would show.

The degree of skewness varies somewhat between counties. For example, some counties (like New Haven and Hartford, both urban counties) show a more pronounced peak and a more gradual decline to the right, suggesting a more noticeable right skew compared to others.



Conclusion

In conclusion the most significant portion of drug deaths consistently involved white males and fentanyl overdoses. I observed a shift in the age range most affected. In 2012, the age range most affected was between 36 and 48 years. By 2023, this range had increased to between 48 and 60 years.

Fentanyl was the deadliest drug in Connecticut, accounting for 8,061 deaths between 2012 and 2023. There were a total of 11,969 drug deaths in CT between 2012 and 2023. There was a slight decline in Fentanyl deaths in 2022 and 2023.

A key factor that may have contributed to the decline in fentanyl overdoses in 2022 and 2023 includes:

- Increased access to treatment and harm reduction services (e.g., Narcan distribution) In 2019, a generic version of the nasal spray was approved, but it didn't go on the market until 2021, which would explain the drop in fentanyl drug deaths in 2022 and 2023

Connecticut experienced a dramatic increase in drug-related fatalities from 2012 to 2023. In 2012, there were 315 drug deaths, compared to 1,327 in 2023.

New Haven, CT, an urban county, consistently showed a high concentration of drug-related deaths, with white males between 48 and 60 years, being the most affected group.

These findings underscore the severity and evolving nature of the drug crisis in Connecticut.