In 2012, a total of 41,502 drug poisoning deaths, 34,935 motor vehicle traffic deaths, and 33,563 firearm deaths occurred. The age-adjusted death rate for drug poisoning more than quadrupled from 3.0 per 100,000 in 1979 to 13.1 in 2012. In contrast, the age-adjusted rate dropped from 22.1 to 10.9 for motor vehicle traffic deaths and from 14.7 to 10.5 for firearm deaths during this period. The age-adjusted drug poisoning death rate exceeded the motor vehicle traffic death rate beginning in 2009.


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