

**Table 1. Characteristics and end-of-life care of 525 DWDA patients who died after ingesting a lethal dose of medication as of January 7, 2011, by year, Oregon, 1998-2010**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>2010 (N = 65)</b>	<b>1998-2009 (N = 460)</b>	<b>Total (N = 525)</b>
<b>Sex</b>	N (%)*	N (%)*	N (%)*
Male (%)	38 (58.5)	244 (53.0)	282 (53.7)
Female (%)	27 (41.5)	216 (47.0)	243 (46.3)
<b>Age</b>			
18-34 (%)	0 (0.0)	6 (1.3)	6 (1.1)
35-44 (%)	1 (1.5)	12 (2.6)	13 (2.5)
45-54 (%)	5 (7.7)	34 (7.4)	39 (7.4)
55-64 (%)	13 (20.0)	94 (20.4)	107 (20.4)
65-74 (%)	19 (29.2)	127 (27.6)	146 (27.8)
75-84 (%)	15 (23.1)	136 (29.6)	151 (28.8)
85+ (%)	12 (18.5)	51 (11.1)	63 (12.0)
Median years (range)	72 (44-95)	71 (25-96)	71 (25-96)
<b>Race</b>			
White (%)	65 (100.0)	449 (97.6)	514 (97.9)
Asian (%)	0 (0.0)	7 (1.5)	7 (1.3)
American Indian (%)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	1 (0.2)
African American (%)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	1 (0.2)
Hispanic (%)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.4)	2 (0.4)
Other (%)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Married (%)	33 (50.8)	212 (46.1)	245 (46.7)
Widowed (%)	14 (21.5)	101 (22.0)	115 (21.9)
Never married (%)	4 (6.2)	38 (8.3)	42 (8.0)
Divorced (%)	14 (21.5)	109 (23.7)	123 (23.4)
<b>Education</b>			
Less than high school (%)	4 (6.3)	33 (7.2)	37 (7.1)
High school graduate (%)	13 (20.3)	117 (25.5)	130 (24.9)
Some college (%)	20 (31.3)	105 (22.9)	125 (23.9)
Baccalaureate or higher (%)	27 (42.2)	204 (44.4)	231 (44.2)
Unknown	1	1	2
<b>Residence</b>			
Metro counties (%) <sup>Δ</sup>	29 (44.6)	197 (42.8)	226 (43.0)
Coastal counties (%)	7 (10.8)	34 (7.4)	41 (7.8)
Other western counties (%)	29 (44.6)	190 (41.3)	219 (41.7)
East of the Cascades (%)	0 (0.0)	39 (8.5)	39 (7.4)
<b>Underlying illness</b>			
Malignant neoplasms (%)	51 (78.5)	373 (81.1)	424 (80.8)
Lung and bronchus (%)	8 (12.3)	88 (19.1)	96 (18.3)
Pancreas (%)	3 (4.6)	35 (7.6)	38 (7.2)
Breast (%)	3 (4.6)	38 (8.3)	41 (7.8)
Colon (%)	3 (4.6)	31 (6.7)	34 (6.5)
Prostate (%)	1 (1.5)	24 (5.2)	25 (4.8)
Other (%)	33 (50.8)	157 (34.1)	190 (36.2)
Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (%)	7 (10.8)	35 (7.6)	42 (8.0)
Chronic lower respiratory disease (%)	2 (3.1)	18 (3.9)	20 (3.8)
HIV/AIDS (%)	0 (0.0)	8 (1.7)	8 (1.5)
Other illnesses (%) <sup>Ψ</sup>	5 (7.7)	26 (5.7)	31 (5.9)

<b>End of life care</b>			
Hospice			
Enrolled (%)	50 (92.6)	404 (88.2)	454 (88.7)
Not enrolled (%)	4 (7.4)	54 (11.8)	58 (11.3)
<i>Unknown</i>	11	2	13
Insurance			
Private (%) <sup>Q</sup>	36 (60.0)	315 (69.1)	351 (68.0)
Medicare, Medicaid or Other Governmental (%)	22 (36.7)	135 (29.6)	157 (30.4)
None (%)	2 (3.3)	6 (1.3)	8 (1.6)
<i>Unknown</i>	5	4	9
<b>End of life concerns<sup>#</sup></b>			
Losing autonomy (%)	61 (93.8)	414 (90.8)	475 (91.2)
Less able to engage in activities making life enjoyable (%)	61 (93.8)	398 (87.3)	459 (88.1)
Loss of dignity (%) <sup>S</sup>	51 (78.5)	282 (85.2)	333 (84.1)
Losing control of bodily functions (%)	30 (46.2)	264 (57.9)	294 (56.4)
Burden on family, friends/caregivers (%)	17 (26.2)	167 (36.6)	184 (35.3)
Inadequate pain control or concern about it (%)	10 (15.4)	101 (22.1)	111 (21.3)
Financial implications of treatment (%)	1 (1.5)	12 (2.6)	13 (2.5)
<b>DWDA process</b>			
Referred for psychiatric evaluation (%)	1 (1.5)	38 (8.4)	39 (7.5)
Patient informed family of decision (%)**	62 (95.4)	361 (93.5)	423 (93.8)
Patient died at			
Home (patient, family or friend) (%)	63 (96.9)	435 (94.6)	498 (94.9)
Long term care, assisted living or foster care facility (%)	2 (3.1)	19 (4.1)	21 (4.0)
Hospital (%)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	1 (0.2)
Other (%)	0 (0.0)	5 (1.1)	5 (1.0)
Lethal medication			
Secobarbital (%)	60 (92.3)	261 (56.7)	321 (61.1)
Pentobarbital (%)	5 (7.7)	195 (42.4)	200 (38.1)
Other (%) <sup>ΔΔ</sup>	0 (0.0)	4 (0.9)	4 (0.8)
<b>Health-care provider present**</b>			
When medication was ingested			
Prescribing physician (%)	6 (30.0)	88 (23.8)	94 (24.2)
Other provider, prescribing physician not present (%)	10 (50.0)	218 (59.1)	228 (58.6)
No provider (%)	4 (20.0)	63 (17.1)	67 (17.2)
<i>Unknown</i>	45	21	66
At time of death			
Prescribing physician (%)	6 (9.4)	77 (20.3)	83 (18.7)
Other provider, prescribing physician not present (%)	19 (29.7)	233 (61.5)	252 (56.9)
No provider (%)	39 (60.9)	69 (18.2)	108 (24.4)
<i>Unknown</i>	1	11	12
<b>Complications<sup>††</sup></b>			
Regurgitated (%)	1 (3.6)	20 (4.5)	21 (4.4)
Seizures (%)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Awakened after taking prescribed medications (%)	2 <sup>SS</sup>	1 <sup>SS</sup>	3 <sup>SS</sup>
None (%)	27 (96.4)	429 (95.5)	456 (95.6)
<i>Unknown</i>	37	11	48
<b>Emergency Medical Services</b>			
Called for intervention after lethal medication ingested (%)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Calls for other reasons (%) <sup>###</sup>	0 (0.0)	4 (0.9)	4 (0.8)
Not called after lethal medication ingested (%)	28 (100.0)	451 (99.1)	479 (99.2)
<i>Unknown</i>	37	5	42

<b>Timing of DWDA event</b>			
Duration (weeks) of patient-physician relationship			
Median	18	10	10
Range	0-1905	0-1440	0-1905
<i>Unknown</i>	0	20	20
Duration (days) between 1st request and death			
Median	64	43	46
Range	16-338	15-1009	15-1009
Minutes between ingestion and unconsciousness <sup>**</sup>			
Median	5	5	5
Range	1-20	1-38	1-38
<i>Unknown</i>	33	38	71
Minutes between ingestion and death <sup>**</sup>			
Median	35	25	25
Range (minutes - hours)	5min-53hrs	1min-104hrs	1min-104hrs
<i>Unknown</i>	33	33	66

\* Unknowns are excluded when calculating percentages.

△ Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties.

ψ Includes alcoholic hepatic failure, corticobasal degeneration, diabetes with renal complications, hepatitis C, organ-limited amyloidosis, scleroderma, Shy-Drager syndrome, multiple sclerosis, meningioma, pulmonary disease, chronic heart failure, diseases of the heart, cerebrovascular disease, Parkinson's disease and Huntington's disease.

Ω Private insurance category includes those with private insurance alone or in combination with other insurance.

# Affirmative answers only ("Don't know" included in negative answers). Available for 17 patients in 2001.

§ First asked in 2003.

\*\* First recorded beginning in 2001. Since then, 20 patients (4.4%) have chosen not to inform their families, and 8 patients (1.8%) have had no family to inform. There was one (1) unknown case in 2009.

ΔΔ Other includes combinations of secobarbital, pentobarbital, and/or morphine.

++ The data shown are for 2001-2010 since information about the presence of a health care provider/volunteer, in the absence of the prescribing physician, was first collected in 2001. Procedure revision was made mid-year in 2010 to standardize reporting on the follow-up questionnaire. The new procedure only collects information on health care providers present at ingestion when the physician or another health care provider is present at time of death. This resulted in a larger number of unknowns in 2010.

†† Procedure revision was made mid-year in 2010 to standardize reporting on the follow-up questionnaire. The new procedure accepts information about time of and circumstances surrounding death only when the physician or another health care provider is present at the time of death. This resulted in a larger number of unknowns in 2010.

§§ In 2005, one patient regained consciousness 65 hours after ingesting the medication, subsequently dying from their illness 14 days after awakening. In 2010, two patients regained consciousness after ingesting medications. One patient regained consciousness 88 hours after ingesting the medication, subsequently dying from their illness three months later. The other patient regained consciousness within 24 hours, subsequently dying from their illness five days following ingestion.

## Calls included three to pronounce death and one to help a patient who had fallen off a sofa.