
Manner: UNDETERMINED

The King County Medical Examiner's Office certifies a manner of death as Undetermined when available information regarding the circumstances of death is insufficient to classify the death into one of the specific manners of natural or unnatural death (Accident, Homicide, or Suicide). In some cases, serious doubt existed as to whether an injury occurred with intent or as a result of an accident. Information concerning the circumstances may be lacking due to the absence of background information or witnesses, or because of a lengthy delay between death and discovery of the body. Moreover, it may be difficult to assess street drug or medication overdose deaths as showing enough features to reasonably determine the manner of death. If an extensive investigation and autopsy cannot clarify the circumstances, the death is classified Undetermined.

The King County Medical Examiner's Office certified 59 deaths with manner undetermined, accounting for three percent (59/1,863) of the deaths investigated for the calendar year 2004. Drugs caused 26 or 44%, of the 59 deaths of undetermined manner. For a more detailed review of drug-caused deaths in 2004, see the discussion in the section on Drugs and Poisons on pages 81 & 82.

The 59 deaths that were classified as Undetermined for 2004 include three fetal deaths, which, in accordance with the Washington State Department of Health - Center for Health Statistics (Fetal Death Certification Guidelines), are not assigned a manner of death. Fetal death certificates must be issued for every fetus of 20 or more weeks gestation. The Medical Examiner assumed jurisdiction over three fetal deaths in 2004 due to the fact that all three were related to maternal drug use. The three cases included one due to maternal cocaine use, one due to maternal methamphetamine use, and one due to maternal cocaine and methamphetamine use.

Graph 8-1 Undetermined Manner of Death / King County Medical Examiner / 2004

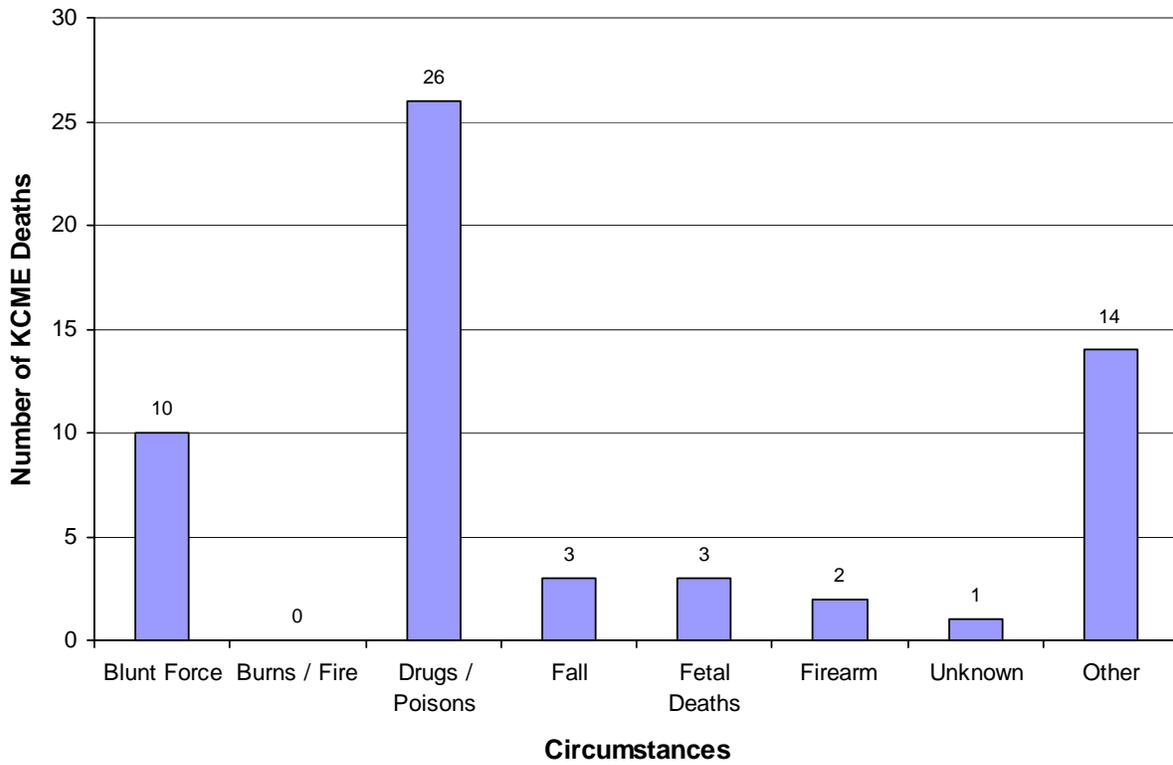
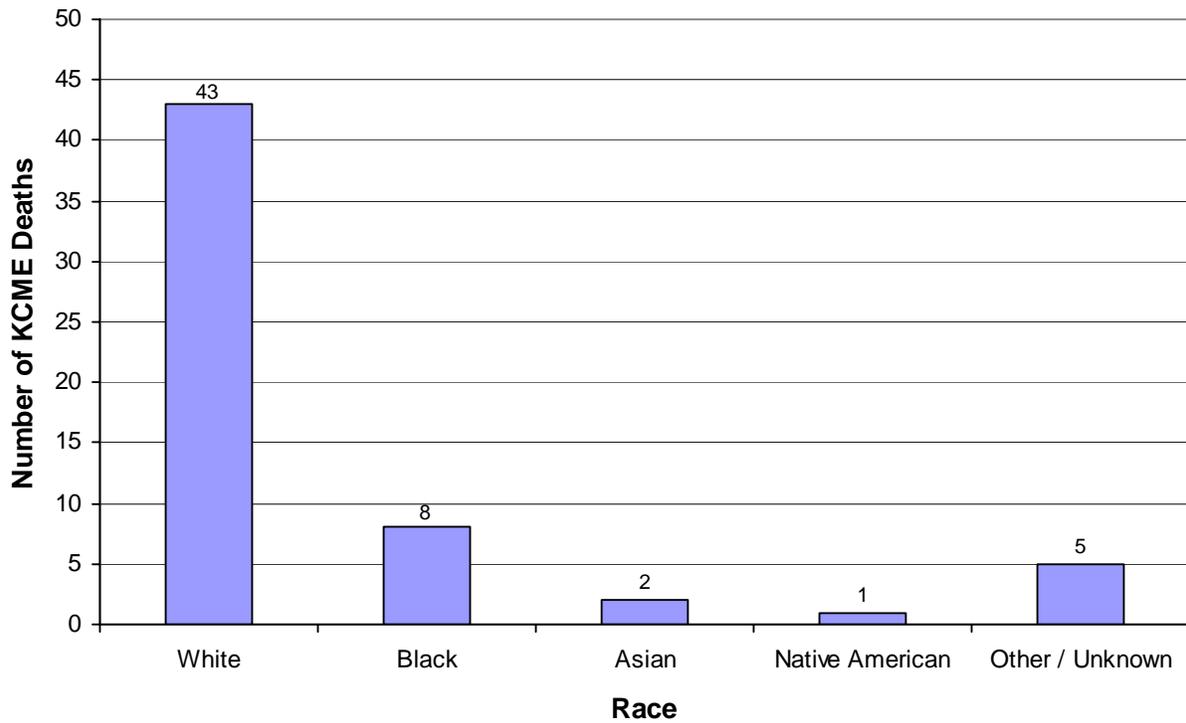


Table 8-1 Undetermined Manner of Death / Race / Sex / KCME / 2004

CIRCUMSTANCES / SEX	RACE					SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	OTHER / UNK		
Blunt Force	8	1	1	0	0		10
<i>Male</i>	4	1	1	0	0	6	
<i>Female</i>	4	0	0	0	0	4	
Burns / Fire	0	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Drugs / Poisons	22	3	0	0	1		26
<i>Male</i>	9	2	0	0	0	11	
<i>Female</i>	13	1	0	0	1	15	
Fall	2	0	0	0	1		3
<i>Male</i>	1	0	0	0	1	2	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Fetal Deaths	1	1	0	0	1		3
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	1	1	0	0	1	3	
Firearm	1	1	0	0	0		2
<i>Male</i>	1	1	0	0	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
No Anatomic or Toxicologic Cause of Death	0	1	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	1	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	9	1	1	1	2		14
<i>Male</i>	5	1	1	0	1	8	
<i>Female</i>	4	0	0	1	1	6	
Totals	43	8	2	1	5		59
Percent	73%	14%	3%	2%	8%		100%

Graph 8-2 Undetermined Manner / Race / King County Medical Examiner / 2004



Graph 8-3 Undetermined Manner / Age Group / King County Medical Examiner / 2004

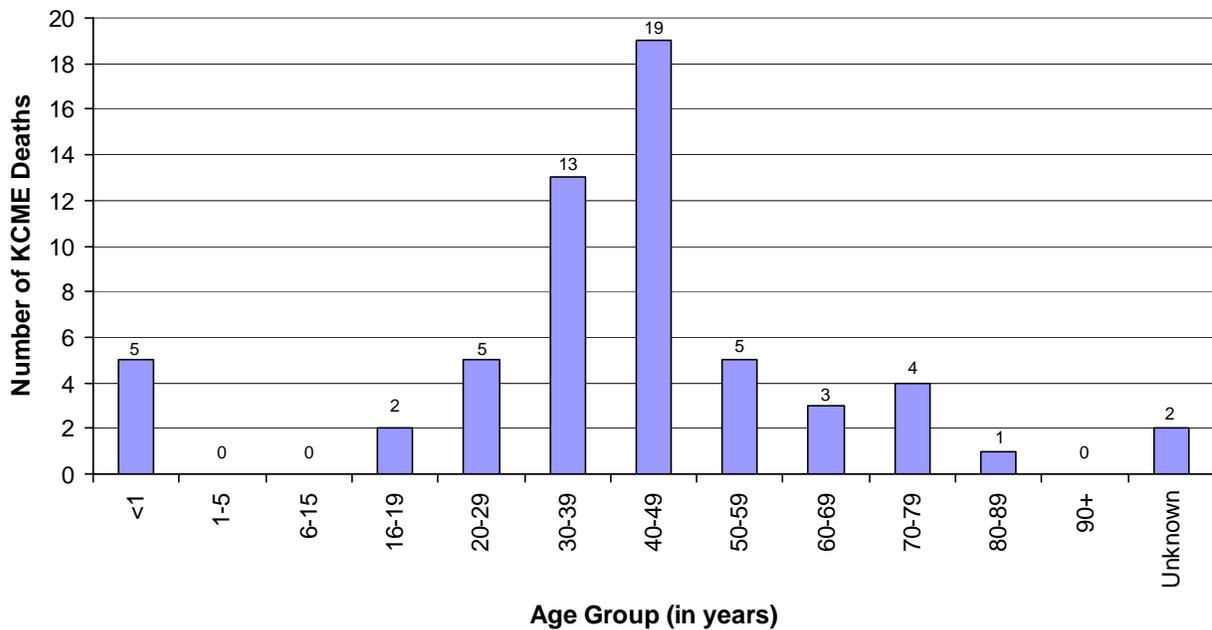


Table 8-2 Undetermined Circumstances / Age / Sex / KCME / 2004

INJURY METHOD / SEX	AGE GROUP (YEARS)												SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	<1	1 to 5	6 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 +		
Blunt Force	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	2	2	0	0		10
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	6	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	4	
Burns / Fire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Drugs / Poisons	1	0	0	1	1	5	11	4	1	2	0	0		26
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	2	0	2	0	0	11	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	1	1	4	5	2	1	0	0	0	15	
Fall	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0		3
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Fetal Deaths	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		3
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Firearm	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0		2
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
No anatomic or toxicological cause of death	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	1	0	0	0	3	3	4	0	0	0	1	0		14 ¹
<i>Male</i>	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	7	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	
Totals	5	0	0	2	5	13	19	5	3	4	1	0		59
Percent	8.8	0	0	3.5	8.8	22.8	33.2	8.8	5.3	7.0	1.8	0		100%

¹ Includes two unidentified decedents whose age is unknown.

Table 8-3 Undetermined Manner / Sex / King County Medical Examiner / 2004

INJURY METHOD	SEX		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
Blunt Force	6	4	10
Burns / Fire	0	0	0
Drugs / Poisons	11	15	26
Fall	2	1	3
Fetal Deaths	0	3	3
Firearm	2	0	2
No Anatomic or Toxicologic Cause of Death	1	0	1
Other	8	6	14
Totals	30	29	59
Percent	51%	49%	100%

Table 8-4 Undetermined Manner / Blood Alcohol / King County Medical Examiner / 2004

METHOD	TESTED		NOT	TOTAL
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	TESTED	
Blunt Force	1	6	3	10
Burns / Fire	-	-	-	0
Drugs / Poisons	3	21	2	26
Fall	1	2	0	3
Fetal Deaths	0	3	0	3
Firearm	1	1	0	2
No Anatomic or Toxicologic Cause of Death	0	1	0	1
Other	2	9	3	14
Totals	8	43	8	59
Percent	13.5%	73%	13.5%	100%