

# Sex disparities in COVID-19 risk among people with opioid use disorder

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Among 2,600 patients with opioid use disorder, approximately 5% across both sexes tested positive for COVID-19. In contrast, significantly more males than females presented with an opioid

overdose, according to a study in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Women's Health*.

Caitlin Martin, MD, MPH, from Virginia Commonwealth University, and coauthors, demonstrated sex-related variation in COVID-19 susceptibility by race. Black females and male individuals in the Other racial group had higher odds of having a positive COVID-19 test than their White counterparts. Mortality rates were similar across the sexes.

More individuals with [opioid use disorder](#) presented with an opioid overdose than with a positive COVID-19 test, and more individuals died from an [opioid overdose](#) than from COVID-19 during the study period.

"Findings highlight the importance of incorporating an intersectionality framework into health investigations and the urgent need for effective, culturally tailored responses in the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing overdose crisis," concluded the investigators.

"In this retrospective study conducted at a large public health system in Virginia, COVID-19 test positivity rates were similar across sex among individuals with opioid use disorder, whereas males typically have higher rates of COVID-19 in the [general population](#)," says *Journal of Women's Health* Editor-in-Chief Susan G. Kornstein, MD, Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health, Richmond, VA.

**More information:** Caitlin E. Martin et al, Disparities by Sex in COVID-19 Risk and Related Harms Among People with Opioid Use Disorder, *Journal of Women's Health* (2022). [DOI: 10.1089/jwh.2021.0457](#)

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