Abstract

The study presents the mortality risk in a retrospective cohort of intravenous drug users entering public treatment centres in Ferrara (Italy) between 1979 and 1995.

The observed mortality in this cohort (720 males, 186 females) was greater than that of the population in general; the SMRs for all causes were 15.61 (males: 13.97; females: 32.16). The major causes of death were overdose and AIDS; other relevant excessive deaths are observed for accidental deaths (especially car accidents), cirrhosis and cancer in males.

Survival probability after 15 years of observation is 66% for both males and females.

Keywords: Heroin addiction, Mortality risk, Intravenous drug users (IDUs), Cohort study, AIDS, Overdose