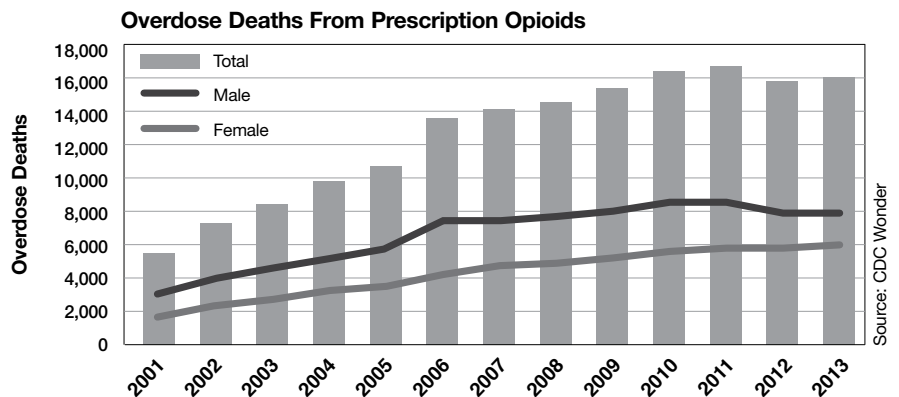
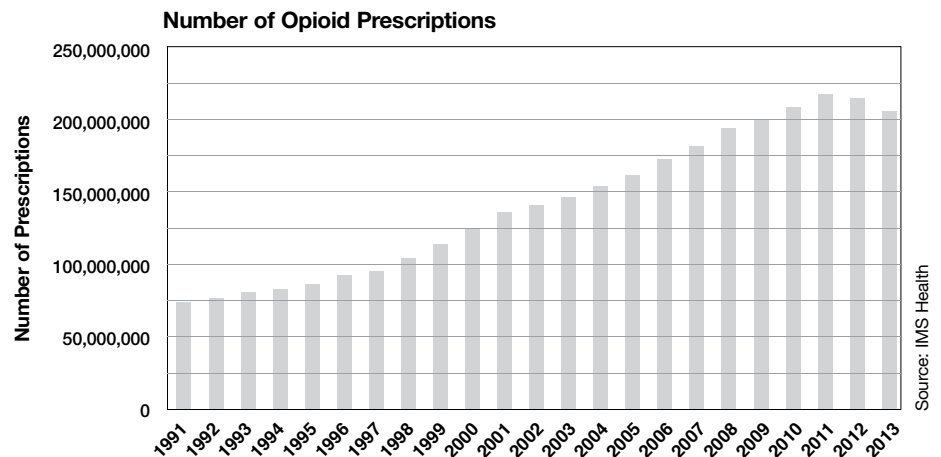


Prescription Opioid Use and Abuse

If a person takes too much of a prescription opioid, it can lead to a potentially deadly overdose. In recent years, public health officials have observed that the number of deaths caused by overdoses on opioid drugs is on the rise. What is causing this alarming increase? Some scientists see a relationship between the increasing number of overdose deaths and the rising number of prescriptions given during the past decade. Complete the activity below to analyze recent trends in opioid use and abuse.

Directions:

Study the graphs on the right. Then use the data and the information in the article "Prescription Pain Medications: What You Need to Know" to answer the questions that follow.



Think It Through:

1. Roughly how many more prescriptions for opioids were given out by pharmacies in the U.S. in 2013 compared with 1991?
2. Approximately how many more people died from prescription opioid overdoses in 2013 than 2001?
3. Use data from the second graph to describe how the number of prescription opioid overdose deaths has changed over time for both men and women.
4. What evidence suggests that the number of opioid prescriptions could be linked to the number of overdose deaths? Use evidence from the graphs and the article to explain your answer.
5. Many scientists are urging the medical community to improve the way prescription opioids are prescribed. That may include using other, less powerful medications more often. Do you agree with this recommendation? What factors might scientists and doctors be considering? Use evidence from the graphs and from the article to support your answer.