New WHO guidelines, released on 4 November 2014, aim to reduce the number of opioid-related deaths globally. The guidelines recommend countries expand naloxone access to people likely to witness an overdose in their community, such as friends, family members and partners of people who use drugs, and social workers. In most countries, naloxone is accessible only through hospitals and ambulance crews.

Naloxone has been used in the management of opioid overdose for more than 40 years. It is a safe drug with a low risk of serious side effects. According to the guidelines, any adult capable of learning basic life support can also learn to recognize an opioid overdose, and administer naloxone in time to save lives.

Globally, an estimated 69 000 people die each year from opioid overdose. Among people who inject drugs, opioid overdose is the second most common cause of death after HIV/AIDS.

WHO guidelines on Community management of opioid overdose
http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/management_opioid_overdose/en