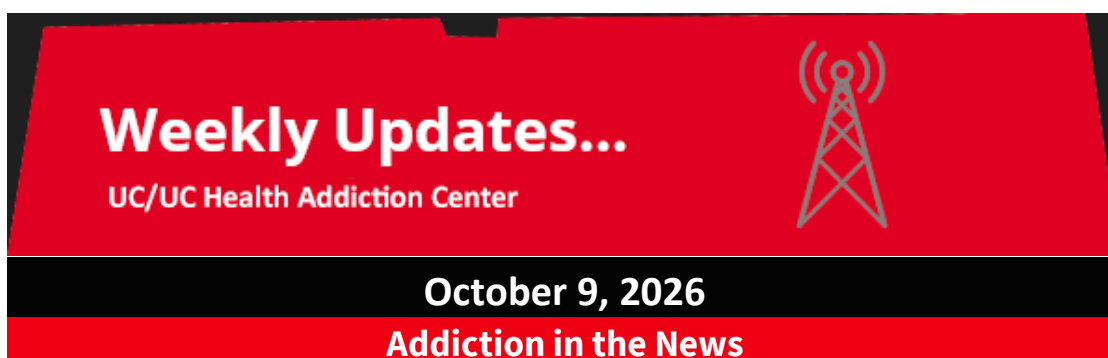


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the University of Cincinnati/UC Health Addiction Center (UCAC)! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from UCAC researchers. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu) to change your communication preferences. Thank you.

Thank you for your interest in the UC/UC Health Addiction Center - our mission is to generate new knowledge through innovative research, disseminate that knowledge through education and training, and provide high-quality, evidence-based treatment for individuals affected by addiction and related conditions. We are committed to supporting lifelong recovery and promoting dignity and respect for all individuals on their recovery journey.



UC/ Regional News

New vending machine helps people with addiction

The University of Cincinnati's Daniel Arendt was featured in a Spectrum News report on a new harm reduction vending machine installed at the IPM Food Pantry in partnership with the Hamilton County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board. IPM Food Pantry President Melissa Meyer said the placement of the machine directly at the food pantry helps address the community's immediate needs in a place they already are. "[People] might be scared to seek out addiction treatment or go to a clinic because of the stigma associated with it or reach out and ask for help," said Arendt PharmD, assistant professor in UC's James... **(Dr. Arendt, UCAC Research Associate Member)**

Ohio governor touts success of actions to target addiction, mental health

COLUMBUS, Ohio (WCMH) — Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine (R) delivered remarks Tuesday afternoon to the advisory council for RecoveryOhio, the agency tasked with coordinating addiction recovery and mental health treatment efforts in the wake of the opioid epidemic. DeWine praised the agency's success, noting that Ohio's overdose fatalities continue to decline. "It's never good when people are dying but they're moving, certainly moving in the right direction," DeWine said. "We're moving faster than other states and certainly faster than the national average." According to DeWine, preliminary numbers show the state's overdose...

National News

Health services may be missing the link between alcohol problems and eating disorders, study suggests

A review led by Bournemouth University researchers has highlighted the extent to which people seeking help for alcohol problems may also be struggling with a second, hidden problem with food and eating. Despite this evidence that many people experience both conditions at the same time, support for eating disorders and alcohol recovery is provided separately in health care systems. The researchers warn that failure to identify this link earlier can make it harder for a patient to recover and increase the risk of leaving treatment early. Their findings have been published in the Journal of Eating Disorders. The research team...

Public Health Alerts: E-cigarette and nicotine pouch use among youth, United States, 2025

A Public Health Alerts report today reveals that, based on 2025 data, 13.4% of US middle school and high school students had ever used e-cigarettes and 4.1% had ever used nicotine pouches, while 5.2% currently used e-cigarettes and 1.7% currently used nicotine pouches. Rates were higher in high school students, with 17.9% having ever used e-cigarettes and 7.1% currently using them, compared with 5.7% and 2.3%, respectively, for nicotine pouch use. "Nearly all youth who used e-cigarettes or nicotine pouches used flavored products, especially fruit-flavored e-cigarettes and mint-flavored nicotine pouches," wrote the...

Vaping Plus Smoking in the Home Might Be Worst for Kids' Asthma

For kids with asthma, household exposure to e-cigarettes was associated with poorer respiratory health, and the risk was even higher when combined with tobacco use in the home, an observational study showed. E-cigarette exposure alone was associated with a 30% elevated risk of asthma flares (adjusted OR 1.3, 95% CI 1.1-1.4) and a 40% greater likelihood of activity-related asthma symptoms (adjusted OR 1.4, 95% CI 1.2-1.5), Brian Jenssen, MD, MSHP, of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, reported at the American Academy of Pediatrics meeting in San Diego. "There's some evidence that e-cigarettes could be very helpful to...

Study reveals large gaps in care for youths with opioid use disorder

One in 100 adolescents and young adults in the United States has an opioid use disorder (OUD) and, with the rise of fentanyl in the drug supply, overdoses in this age group have risen sharply since 2019. A new study by investigators from Mass General Brigham asked whether Medicaid-enrolled people ages 13 to 25 with OUD receive evidence-based, reliable treatment. Using eight years of national data from 229,847 adolescents and young adults, they found only half began treatment, one-third engaged in care, one-sixth received medication and one in 32 continued medication for 180 days or more. Results are published in JAMA Network...

Know the Facts About Fentanyl Semipostal Stamp Issued

BETHESDA, MD — Today the U.S. Postal Service issued a semipostal stamp, Know the Facts About Fentanyl, at a ceremony held at the National Institutes of Health. The stamp will raise funds to advance research and raise awareness to combat this ongoing epidemic while providing a message encouraging hope, healing and recovery. The stamp was dedicated by Peter Pastre, USPS government relations and public policy vice president. “Fentanyl contributes to some 80,000 overdose deaths each year, with devastating impacts to families and communities across the nation,” he said. “This semipostal stamp is priced higher...

Grassley calls on Trump administration to ban kratom ‘NOW’

Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) on Friday called on the Trump administration to finalize its proposed rule limiting the sale of kratom, a plant with opioid-like properties that can be bought over the counter. “All Kratom is deadly it should NOT be sold at gas stations/vape stores/ANYWHERE Admin needs 2 put out final 7OH rule NOW Kratom is killing our kids BEWARE of special interest snake oil,” Grassley said on the social media platform X. Grassley was referring to the Drug Enforcement Administration’s (DEA) proposed rule published in July that would temporarily schedule any synthetic kratom products as Schedule 1 substances...

Utah health officials warn of fatal overdoses involving illegal “cat’s claw” and kratom product

Salt Lake City— Utah health, poison control, and agriculture officials are issuing an urgent public health warning following four deaths across the state linked to high-potency, illegal chemical compounds found in certain herbal supplements, including kratom products and “cat’s claw.” The Utah Poison Control Center (UPCC) strongly advises the public not to buy or use any products labeled as “cat’s claw,” products marked “adults only/21+,” or any non-prescription item marketed as legal while promising psychoactive “highs.” Although these substances are illegal to sell in Utah, consumers could find them in some retail stores. The...

Ketamine: What to know about the sedative drug some college students are using recreationally

Known as special K, key and K, ketamine is both a psychoactive club drug similar to acid or ecstasy and a promising option for treating depression or substance use disorder. This story was originally published on PolitiFact.com. With its dueling profile, the anesthetic ketamine has made lots of headlines in recent years. It was scrutinized for its role in “Friends” actor Matthew Perry’s 2023 death. During the 2024 election, billionaire and business owner Elon Musk said he used ketamine to treat depression while others reported he may have misused it. Now, a former Cornell University student’s lawsuit alleging she was gang raped by a...

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[RFA-DA-28-011](#)

HEAL Initiative: Integrative Management of Chronic Pain and OUD for Whole Recovery (IMPOWR): Research Centers (RM1 Clinical Trial Required)

[RFA-DA-28-012](#)

HEAL Initiative: Integrative Management of chronic Pain and OUD for Whole Recovery (IMPOWR) - Building Engagement, Assistance, Capacity, Outreach, and Networks (BEACON) Center (U2C Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

[RFA-AI-27-018](#)

Implementation Science to Advance HIV Prevention, Treatment, and Care (R61/R33 Clinical Trial Optional)

New Publications from UCAC Faculty

Examining site-level and structural factors influencing the recruitment and engagement of participants of color in perinatal substance use research: Insights from the Medication Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder in Expectant Mothers (MOMS) trial

Major, Erin; Wheeler, Alexindra; Vazquez, Julyvette; Goullaud, Latisha; Kropp, Frankie; Greenfield, Shelly F.; Smid, Marcela C.; Wilens, Timothy; Winhusen, T. John; Schiff, Davida M

Substance Use and Addiction Journal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/29767342261478707>

ABSTRACT

Background: Racial and ethnic inequities persist in perinatal opioid use disorder (OUD) care, with pregnant and postpartum people of color facing structural barriers to using medications to treat OUD (MOUD). Because access to clinical research is often mediated through treatment settings, these structural barriers may also shape who is reached, recruited, and retained in perinatal OUD trials. The Medication Treatment for OUD in Expectant Mothers trial (CTN-0080) provided an opportunity to assess how site-level and policy contexts influenced equitable recruitment, including gaps between projected and actual enrollment.

Methods: We employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design integrating thematic analysis of semi-structured qualitative interviews with non-White and/or Hispanic trial participants and research staff, site survey data, state policy classifications, and administrative enrollment data from the 13 trial sites. We examined how clinical structures, staffing composition, and policy environments shaped equitable recruitment. For each site, we calculated a recruitment ratio (actual/expected non-White and/or Hispanic enrollment).

Results: Among the 13 trial sites, 3 exceeded projected recruitment of non-White and/or Hispanic participants, 7 fell below projections, and 2 enrolled no non-White and/or Hispanic participants. Recruitment ratios (actual/expected) ranged from 0.0 to 6.3. Sites that exceeded projections commonly reported the inclusion of peer clinical staff and integration of prenatal and OUD care and were more often located in states without mandated reporting of MOUD during pregnancy. Qualitative analyses of participant (n = 17) and research staff interviews (n = 32) identified themes of trust, representation, and lived experience, emphasizing their importance for equitable recruitment and engagement.

Conclusions: Equity in perinatal substance use disorder (SUD) research depends not only on inclusive trial design but also on the relational and policy conditions that build trust and enable participation. Beyond demographic targets, findings point to institutional practices, community partnerships, and supportive policy environments as actionable levers to promote equitable recruitment and engagement in perinatal SUD research.

Hepatic Viral Reservoirs in Concurrent HIV and HBV: From Mechanistic Insight to Integrated Cure Strategies

Renato Bobadilla, Finn MacLean, Shravan Dave, Jason T Blackard, Sara Gianella

Infection and Drug Resistance

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2147/idr.s576715>

ABSTRACT

Purpose of Review: Concurrent HIV and hepatitis B virus (HBV) affect an estimated 4-5 million people worldwide and remain a major driver of liver-related morbidity and mortality, even among individuals receiving tenofovir-containing antiretroviral therapy (ART). Both viruses establish long-lived reservoirs that are not eliminated by current antiviral therapies. This review summarizes current mechanistic and clinical frameworks for understanding concurrent HIV and HBV, highlights the interplay between their viral reservoirs, and discusses the implications of these interactions for cure strategies.

Recent Findings: The liver functions as a multicellular reservoir. HBV persists within hepatocytes as nuclear covalently closed circular DNA (cccDNA) and integrated viral sequences. HIV persists as integrated provirus in tissue-resident CD4⁺ T cells and liver macrophages, with evidence supporting viral transfer or cell-to-cell spread involving stellate cells and hepatocytes. Concurrent HIV and HBV accelerate fibrosis and immune dysfunction through shared pathogenic pathways, including epigenetic silencing, cytokine- and checkpoint-mediated T-cell exhaustion, metabolic stress, and inflammation driven by the gut-liver axis. HBV-associated liver injury promotes recruitment of HIV target cells, while

HIV-associated immune dysregulation impairs HBV control. Despite these interlinked biological mechanisms, individuals living with HIV and HBV are frequently excluded from clinical trials, slowing therapeutic progress and exacerbating health inequities.

Summary: Concurrent HIV and HBV represent a synergistic disease model that demands integrated therapeutic approaches and inclusive research frameworks. Priority needs include robust tissue-based reservoir measurements, validated biomarkers that distinguish latent from transcriptionally active viral states, combination strategies incorporating antiviral, antifibrotic, and immunomodulatory agents, and community-engaged clinical trial designs that are inclusive of individuals living with HIV and HBV and safe in the context of HBV. Advancing these areas will be essential to achieving durable remission-and ultimately functional cure-for both viruses.

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