

UC CAR Weekly Newsletter 11.8.2024

Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe ([roweji@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:roweji@ucmail.uc.edu)) to change your communication preferences. **Please note that the next weekly newsletter will be published Friday, November 22.** Thank you.

Thank you for your interest in the Center for Addiction Research - our mission is to accelerate scientific progress in the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders and their consequences by fostering research collaborations across: 1) UC departments, colleges, and centers including Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center; 2) Local, regional, and state community and governmental partners; and 3) Other academic institutions and industry."



## **UC/ Regional News**

### **News from the Ohio Valley Node**

The CTN-OVN has successfully completed the [CTN-0150](#) (TOME; LI – Winhusen) study activities and is now heading into data analysis. This study was part of the supplemental IMPROVE funds from NIDA and the NICHD awarded to the OVN to utilize the [CTN-0080](#) study as a platform to collect additional data regarding Opioid Use Disorder in pregnant/postpartum populations. TOME included two objectives: 1) to evaluate the ability of the Personally Tailored Opioid-overdose and Medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) Education (TOME) intervention to increase MOUD and opioid-overdose knowledge in pregnant and postpartum (PP) persons (Primary), and 2) to evaluate the ability of TOME to decrease MOUD-related internalized stigma and expected difficulty in avoiding drug use (Secondary). Six of the 13 MOMs sites participated and enrolled 131 participants (goal: 120).

Congratulations and thank you to the TOME sites! **(Dr. T. John Winhusen, Principal Investigator for the Ohio Valley Node and CAR Director)**

Two new studies in development! The CTN-OVN has recently been approved to move forward with two new studies, both of which will be funded by the NIH HEAL Initiative:

[CTN-0152](#): Evaluation of Tirzepatide as an Adjunct to Buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid use disorder: A pragmatic, multi-site, double-blind, Randomized, placebo-controlled, trial (TAB; LI – Winhusen) will test tirzepatide,

which is a GLP-1 and glucose-dependent insulinotropic polypeptide (GIP) agonist, as an adjunct to buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid use disorder. It is anticipated that 12 sites will recruit approximately 310 participants into this 30-week study. The study is currently in the process of site selection, with a goal of starting recruitment in September 2025.

[CTN-0153](#): Effects of Semaglutide and Tirzepatide on Incidence and Outcomes of Stimulant Use Disorders (StUD) and Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) in Real-world Populations: Target Trial Emulation Using Patient Electronic Health Records (GLP-SUD; Co-Is Xu and Winhusen) will entail conducting emulation target trials utilizing a nationwide electronic health records (EHR) database of over 118 million US patients including 945,000 patients with OUD, and 842,000 with StUDs including 470,000 with methamphetamine use disorder. By emulating clinical trials using a large EHR database, this study will provide clinical evidence gathered from real-world patient populations to support prospective randomized-controlled trials in testing the effectiveness of semaglutide and tirzepatide for treating StUD and OUD. The study is currently in protocol development.

### **OneOhio Recovery Foundation awards grants to area substance abuse prevention efforts**

The OneOhio Recovery Foundation awarded nearly \$2.7 million in grants to 15 organizations across the state, including ones serving Marion, Crawford and Ashland counties, to help combat substance misuse by supporting prevention, treatment and recovery efforts. Marion-Crawford Prevention Programs will receive \$330,000 for its Building Better Communities project and \$174,661 for its A Community's Response to Preventing Substance Abuse project. The Ashland County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse was awarded \$52,946 for the Ashland County Quick Response Team and Deflection Team involving public safety and first responders. "It's inspirational to see the diverse array of initiatives...

### **National News**

#### **Alzheimer's and alcohol use disorder found to share similar gene expression patterns**

Nearly 7 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease, and this number is predicted to double by 2060. While aging and genetic predisposition are the most important risk factors for Alzheimer's, epidemiological studies suggest that lifestyle factors including alcohol use could also impact disease onset and progression. Now, Scripps Research scientists have shown that Alzheimer's and alcohol use disorder (AUD) are associated with similarly altered gene expression patterns in the brain, supporting the idea that alcohol use may promote Alzheimer's disease progression. The study, published in eNeuro on September 19...

### **Recreational cannabis legalization tied to higher prenatal use**

The implementation of recreational cannabis legalization (RCL) in California was associated with an increase in prenatal cannabis use, according to a study published online Nov. 1 in JAMA Health Forum. Kelly C. Young-Wolff, Ph.D., from Kaiser Permanente Northern California in Pleasanton, and colleagues assessed whether RCL in California was associated with changes in prenatal cannabis use rates detected via both self-report and urine toxicology testing. The analysis included universal screening results for cannabis use during early pregnancy from 300,993 pregnancies (236,327 unique individuals) from 2012...

### **Today's potent marijuana is spawning public health dangers and shouldn't be ignored, say experts**

In 1964, Bob Dylan reportedly introduced the Beatles to cannabis, a seminal moment in the 60-year campaign to legalize marijuana. Before that, marijuana was hardly a part of mainstream American society, its use primarily associated with artists, bohemians and the so-called urban underclass. Dylan sang, "Everybody must get stoned," and the Beatles incorporated drug references in their music, while marijuana, once demonized as "reefer madness," was touted as essentially harmless, safer than alcohol or tobacco. Six decades later, after a successful campaign and societal acceptance of marijuana, the health...

### **Novel digital pet game within smoking cessation app increases user engagement**

Mobile apps that offer smoking cessation support can be effective alternatives to conventional clinical treatment for people who want to stop smoking—but user engagement is key to this success. A novel pet retention game integrated into a popular smoking cessation app is showing promise as an effective opportunity to increase user engagement and retention, according to a new study led by a Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) researcher. Published in the Journal of Medical Internet Research, the study evaluated the effectiveness of Inner Dragon, a multifaceted game embedded within...

### **Cancer research reinforces calls for menthol cigarette restrictions**

Nationwide, fewer people smoke than did a decade ago, but the proportion who smoke menthol-flavored cigarettes is on the rise. More than 9 million adults, or about 32% of all smokers, use menthol cigarettes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Virginia, the proportion stands higher, at 38%. A team of researchers including Roberta Freitas-Lemos, assistant professor at Virginia Tech's Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC, found that reducing sales of menthol products while making replacement therapies such as nicotine gum and lozenges available could improve health outcomes...

### **UK parliament to debate world's first 'smoke-free generation' bill**

A new UK-wide law aimed at creating the first "smoke-free generation" was on Tuesday introduced in parliament, as part of a world-leading ban. The proposals come after New Zealand revoked plans to introduce a so-called "generational smoking ban" that would have stopped sales of tobacco to anyone born after 2008. "This is a groundbreaking piece of public health legislation. It will mean that we are creating the first ever smoke-free generation in our country," Health Secretary Wes Streeting said. "So children growing up in our country today will never, never legally be able to buy cigarettes," he added. The UK's Tobacco and...

### **Berry-flavored vapes may paralyze immune cells in the lungs, study finds**

Berry-flavored vapes can weaken the lungs' natural defenses, making it harder for the body to fight off infections, research suggests. The study, published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, compared effects of flavored e-cigarettes to those of unflavored ones. While previous research has shown that all forms of vaping can be harmful, the scholars said this study adds to a mounting body of evidence demonstrating how added flavorings to vaping solutions can exacerbate the dangers. Inspired by a series of reported lung injury cases in teenagers in 2019, McGill Assistant Professor Ajitha Thanabalasuriar in the...

### **Stronger and higher dose opioids linked to greater all-cause mortality risk**

A new international study spanning the United Kingdom, United States, and Canada has revealed important insights into the risks associated with prescribed opioid use for noncancer pain. The research, led by researchers at The University of Manchester and McGill University in Canada, which analyzed more than 1 million patients newly initiated on opioids, found prescription of strong opioids was associated with higher risk of all-cause mortality compared to taking codeine. Strong opioids include morphine, fentanyl and oxycodone, as well as combination opioids. The study findings, accepted for publication in the...

### **Hepatitis C screenings shown to be uncommon among opioid overdose patients**

New research from the University of Missouri School of Medicine indicates that accidental opioid overdose patients in central Missouri have high rates of hepatitis C infections, despite only 40% of patients having a history of testing. Hepatitis C is a virus that primarily affects the liver and can range in severity from a mild illness to a serious chronic condition. It spreads through contact with blood, and is commonly transmitted through sharing needles or syringes, unsafe blood transfusions or from unsterilized needles used for tattoos and body piercings. "Our data indicates many patients may be going undiagnosed for hepatitis..."

### **Project levels up opioid misuse prevention with innovative gaming**

With teens spending more time in front of screens than ever before, video games are emerging as a powerful way to teach important life lessons. Olufunmilola

Abraham, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Pharmacy Practice & Science at the University of Kentucky (UK) College of Pharmacy, is tapping into this trend to address a critical issue: opioid misuse among teens. Abraham is leading an innovative project that leverages the power of gaming to tackle this pressing public health concern. By creating an engaging tool for both teens and their families, the project is designed to bring important conversations about opioid...

### **Influx of mobile methadone clinics bring treatment to the streets**

There's a small line forming outside a plain white box truck in Seattle's Belltown neighborhood. A half-dozen folks are waiting on a gusty October morning for their turn to go inside and receive red liquid in a cup, medication that will help them get through the next 24 hours without opioids. Or if they do use, to keep them alive. It's life-changing for some, this treatment program on wheels, and it has faced obstacles in the past, but fentanyl's grip on Washington has given methadone distribution more urgency. Taking the drug regularly is one of the most effective ways to satisfy someone's craving for opioids without the high...

### **Researchers develop high-tech methods to stem the flow of fentanyl**

Fentanyl kills. Make that: Fentanyls kill. The threat is plural and potent, as illicit laboratories continually concoct new forms of the drug that sidestep today's best detection techniques and protect drug dealers from prosecution. It's a loophole that drug dealers are quick to step through—creating new drugs faster than the law and health care providers can keep track of them. While emergency responders are on the front lines daily in an epidemic that has seen hundreds of thousands of American lives lost, they have allies in chemists at the Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. PNNL scientists are developing ways...

### **Medicaid funding for addiction treatment hasn't curbed overdose deaths, study finds**

For generations, the federal government has largely refrained from paying for mental health and substance use treatment in large residential facilities. That changed in 2015, when in response to increasing overdose deaths nationwide from illicit drugs, the federal government allowed states to waive a longstanding prohibition against using federal Medicaid funding for services in so-called institutions of mental diseases. In turn, states were required to improve their addiction care with an emphasis on increasing treatment with medications. Yet a new study by researchers at Oregon Health & Science University finds no...

### **Kroger to pay nearly \$1.4 billion to settle opioid lawsuit claims**

Supermarket chain Kroger has finalized a nearly \$1.4 billion agreement to settle the majority of the claims made by states, counties and Native American tribes that accused the company of helping fuel the opioid epidemic. Payments are expected to begin early next year. The amount includes up to \$1.2 billion for state and local governments where it operates, \$36 million to Native American tribes and about

\$177 million to cover lawyers' fees and costs. The agreement in principle was first announced last fall, and a coalition of 30 bipartisan attorneys general said their states had signed on. Kroger is one of the country's largest grocery...

### **Treasury Sanctions Key Members of La Linea, a Group Involved in Trafficking Fentanyl into the United States**

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned five Mexican nationals and two Mexico-based entities linked to La Linea, a violent Mexico-based drug trafficking organization responsible for trafficking fentanyl and other deadly drugs into the United States. Today's action was coordinated closely with the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Government of Mexico, including La Unidad de Inteligencia Financiera (UIF), Mexico's Financial Intelligence Unit. "President Biden and Vice President Harris are committed to using every tool at our disposal to target and disrupt..."

### **Zoom Webinar on Multilanguage Resources for Underserved Communities** November 19, 2024, 1:00 p.m. ET

The Addiction Policy Forum, in partnership with ECORN-MO, the Opioid Response Network, and the Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC), is excited to announce an upcoming webinar designed to address the pressing need for accessible resources for underserved communities impacted by the opioid crisis. This special session will showcase a series of newly developed, multilanguage materials aimed at enhancing support for individuals and families affected by opioid use disorders, especially within non-English speaking populations. Participants will have the opportunity to explore these resources in detail, learning about the translation processes and cultural considerations that went into creating materials accessible to diverse communities. These tools are designed not only to inform but also to empower individuals to seek care and support by removing language barriers that often hinder access to critical resources and services. Register to learn about the importance of accessibility and inclusivity in opioid crisis interventions, discussing how translated materials can be leveraged by professionals, community organizations, and advocates to better serve populations that have been historically marginalized in healthcare.

## **Funding Opportunities**



## **GRANTS & FUNDING**

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[RFA-DA-26-024](#)

[Engaging Loved ones in Recovery Processes to Enhance Recovery Capital and Outcomes \(R61/R33 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[PAR-25-221](#)

[Population Approaches to Reducing Alcohol-related Cancer Risk \(R01 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[PAR-25-117](#)

[Research With Activities Related to Diversity \(ReWARD\) \(R01 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[PAR-25-198](#)

[Engineering Next-Generation Human Nervous System Microphysiological Systems \(R01 Clinical Trials Not Allowed\)](#)

[PAR-25-199](#)

[Engineering Next-Generation Human Nervous System Microphysiological Systems \(R21 Clinical Trials Not Allowed\)](#)

[RFA-DA-26-018](#)

[Addressing Challenges in Detecting New Drugs: Instrumentation for Alternative Analytical Methods \(R43/R44 - Clinical Trials Optional\)](#)

[RFA-DA-26-019](#)

[Addressing Challenges in Detecting New Drugs: Instrumentation for Alternative Analytical Methods \(R41/R42 - Clinical Trials Optional\)](#)

### **UC Foundation Funding Opportunity**

Please contact Carol Russell at (513) 556-6169 or [carol.russell@uc.edu](mailto:carol.russell@uc.edu) **at least 5 business days before the deadline**, prior to applying to the below opportunity, to ensure coordination and to facilitate assistance with approaches.

### **Opportunity Posted for Personality Psychology Research Funding**

**Deadline: December 11, 2024**

The American Psychological Foundation invites applications for its Theodore Millon Grant in Personality Psychology. Named after the American psychologist, the \$5,000 grant will be awarded to support research to advance the science of personality psychology, including areas of personality theory, personality disorders, and personality assessment. Preference will be given to work that improves the study, development, and delivery of personality assessment, as represented by the work of Theodore Millon, PhD. To be eligible, applicants must be graduate students or psychologists with an EdD, PsyD, or PhD.

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