

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) to change your communication preferences. 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

Could a little-known psychedelic drug treat opioid addiction? Kentucky wants to find out.

As the opioid epidemic continues raging, some advocates in Kentucky are pushing the state to explore a little-known psychedelic drug called ibogaine as a possible treatment option for addiction, a move, they say, could save lives. A state committee is considering funding research into the drug, marking the first time a state has looked into such an approach and underscoring the urgent need to expand the playbook to combat a crisis that has devastated the region in the past decade. The psychedelic is derived from the iboga plant, a shrub native to parts of Central Africa. Ibogaine is classified as a Schedule I drug in the U.S., but is unregulated in many other countries, including Mexico, where it has...

National News

Pattern of alcohol intake more accurate indicator of liver disease risk than overall consumption, finds study

Those who binge drink and have a certain genetic makeup are six times more likely to develop alcohol-related cirrhosis, according to new research from UCL, the Royal Free Hospital, the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge. The study, published in Nature Communications, is the first to assess how an individual's pattern of drinking, their genetic profile (via a polygenic risk score) and whether or not they have type-2 diabetes affects their risk of developing alcohol-related cirrhosis (ARC). The observation that pattern of drinking is more important than volume, coupled with the...

Young adults report lower alcohol use after learning that drinking is declining among their peers

Learning that their peers' alcohol use is declining over time may help reduce young adults' drinking, according to the first study that tested this approach among community-based participants (versus college students). During young adulthood, drinking habits tend to become established. Young adults are known to be influenced by social norms, particularly their peers' drinking behaviors. They tend to misperceive those behaviors, however, conforming to a false "norm" that often exceeds their peers' actual alcohol consumption. Interventions that highlight discrepancies between perceived and...

Alcohol abuse increases sensitivity of coronavirus infection

Lung airway cells of people with alcohol use disorder developed "enhanced inflammation" three days after being infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, according to a new study from Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta and the University of Georgia. An analysis of gene expression found that uninfected airway cells from people with alcohol use disorder ("AUD") had mild pro-inflammatory characteristics that were amplified after SARS-CoV-2 infection when compared to cells not exposed to excessive alcohol use ("control"). In addition, control cells infected with the virus...

Drinking during the super bowl linked to more aggressive parenting among mothers, unlike on valentine's day

Alcohol use on certain special occasions may contribute to harsher parenting by mothers, according to an innovative study. The findings compare drinking and parenting behaviors on Super Bowl Sunday and Valentine's Day and may help create environments conducive to positive parenting. It is known that special occasions—sporting events, holidays, bachelor parties, and so on—involve atypical drinking behaviors. Major sporting events, in addition, are linked to increased levels of domestic violence and assault. Potentially, atypical drinking on such occasions may similarly be a risk factor for harsh...

More Americans than Canadians use alcohol to dull their pain, according to study

From exercise and over-the-counter medications to alcohol use and prescription drugs, North Americans report using a number of different strategies to manage and prevent day-to-day pain. Some of these strategies are useful to mitigate pain, and others, like alcohol, are actually counterproductive and can make pain worse. A new study from Western University researchers explored how frequently people use a variety of pain management strategies, and how those correlate to their level of pain and other factors, including where they live. The research team, led by sociology professor Anna Zajacova, found...

Stressors linked to increased drinking college students during COVID pandemic differ by race

College students reporting increased mental distress during the pandemic also reported greater quantity and frequency of alcohol use, and distress was linked to certain pandemic-related factors which differed by race. A study published in *Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research* identified social distancing as a stressor linked with mental distress for both Black and white college students, whereas financial issues were associated with mental distress in white students, and contracting COVID-19 was linked to mental distress in Black students. The study examined whether mental distress may be a link...

Unique relations of drinking motives and motivations for drinking responsibly

When someone gets pulled over while driving under the influence, officers, friends and family don't fully understand the why—why did this person think they could drive while high or drunk? The motivation behind safe and unsafe decision-making when it comes to consuming substances is something UNM's Center on Alcohol, Substance Use And Addictions' (CASAA's) Research Assistant Professor Dylan Richards is exploring with college-aged students. Richards previous research, published in the *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology*, and a new study, published in *Addictive Behaviors*, apply his innovative...

Why get high? Teens use cannabis for coping and enjoyment, finds study

A study in *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* by researchers at UC Davis Health and the University of Washington surveyed teens over a six-month period to better understand their motives for using cannabis. The researchers found that teens who have more "demand" for cannabis (meaning they are willing to consume more when it is free and spend more overall to obtain it) are likely to use it for enjoyment. Using cannabis for enjoyment ("to enjoy the effects of it") was linked to using more of it and experiencing more negative consequences. Teens who have more demand for cannabis were also likely to use...

Study shows smoking likely leads to brain shrinkage

Smoking likely shrinks the brain, according to a study by researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. The good news is that quitting smoking can prevent further loss of brain tissue—but still, stopping smoking doesn't restore the brain to its original size. Since people's brains naturally lose volume with age, smoking effectively causes the brain to age prematurely, the researchers said. The findings, published in *Biological Psychiatry: Global Open Science*, help explain why smokers are at high risk of age-related cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease. "Up until recently..."

Decline in smoking in England has stalled since pandemic

A decades-long decline in smoking prevalence in England has nearly ground to a halt since the start of the pandemic, according to a new study led by UCL

researchers. The study, published in the journal BMC Medicine, looked at survey responses from 101,960 adults between June 2017 and August 2022. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, from June 2017 to February 2020, smoking prevalence had fallen by 5.2% a year, but this rate of decline slowed to 0.3% during the pandemic (from April 2020 to August 2022), the study found. This stall in the decline of smoking was particularly pronounced among...

New study on vapes challenges belief that adolescents experience less severe withdrawal symptoms

Vapes or e-cigarettes were introduced as a potentially safer alternative to traditional smoking to curb tobacco use. However, the popularity of vapes has risen among an age group they weren't intended for: adolescents. While the entire breadth of the health effects of vaping is still being unveiled, previous research has shown one in four high school students in Canada have reported vaping in the preceding 30 days, with almost 12 percent having reported exclusively using nicotine vapes. A new study, published in the journal Neuropsychopharmacology, examined the effects of nicotine vapor...

Shaping tobacco control messages for the Chinese lunar new year through effective short videos

China is the largest tobacco producer and consumer in the world. However, there is still a serious lack of public awareness of the hazards of smoking and second-hand smoke exposure in China. Furthermore, despite efforts by the government in tobacco control, challenges persist. For example, harmful behaviors, such as gifting cigarettes, are still prevalent, and legal restrictions on smoking in designated areas have not yet translated into completely smoke-free environments. In a study published in the journal Global Transitions, a team of researchers in China conducted a mixed-methods concept testing...

Mexico president to push forward anti-vape bill

MEXICO CITY, Dec 11 (Reuters) - Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador plans to present a law banning e-cigarettes and vapes before he leaves office in 2024, he said on Monday, after the supreme court overruled his previous attempt to outlaw their sale. "It's proven they're bad for your health," he said at a regular news conference on Monday. Mexico has one of the world's strictest anti-tobacco laws, after passing a bill for a total ban on smoking in public places - including the street - in January. Mexico has already banned the import of e-cigarettes. Global support has increased for a...

States strive to get opioid overdose drug to more people

Posing as shoppers, a team of researchers from the University of Mississippi called nearly 600 pharmacies across the state and asked a simple, yes-or-no question, "Do you have naloxone that I can pick up today?" Mississippi enacted a law authorizing pharmacists to sell the opioid overdose reversal drug naloxone— often sold under

the brand name Narcan—in 2017. The drug, which can be administered via nasal spray or injection, can prevent death from overdose by blocking the effect of opioids in the body. The results of the survey, conducted last year, were disheartening. Despite the Mississippi law, 41%...

Methadone clinics spar with addiction doctors on bill that would widen access

Lawmakers on Tuesday will debate an addiction medicine proposal that would have been considered unthinkable just years ago: giving a select group of doctors the power to prescribe methadone directly to patients. With no end in sight to the deadly U.S. drug overdose crisis, which claims nearly 110,000 lives a year, many advocates have zeroed in on methadone as a potential game changer. While the medication is highly effective, it is so tightly regulated that many patients see it as impossible to access. Now, a growing coalition of lawmakers, patient advocates, and addiction doctors is arguing that any strategy to...

Millions in opioid settlement funds sit untouched as overdose deaths rise

Nearly a year after Montana began receiving millions of dollars to invest in efforts to combat the opioid crisis, much of that money remains untouched. Meanwhile, the state's opioid overdose and death counts continue to rise. The money is part of the approximately \$50 billion that states and local governments will receive nationwide in opioid settlement funds over nearly two decades. The payments come from more than a dozen companies that made, distributed, or sold prescription opioid painkillers that were sued for their role in fueling the overdose epidemic. Many places have begun deciding where that...

You're Far Less Likely to Get an Opioid Now After Surgery

MONDAY, Dec. 11, 2023 (HealthDay News) -- In response to the ongoing crisis of opioid misuse, U.S. doctors had already cut the amount of opioids they gave patients after surgery by 2022 to just a third of the amount given in 2016, new research shows. Much of the decline happened before the pandemic, however, and the rate at which doctors are reducing the use of post-op opioids has slowed. The use of opioids during surgery recovery is a well-known gateway to opioid addiction. "The goal should be to ensure that opioids are only prescribed when necessary, and that the amount of opioids prescribed..."

No spike in overdoses seen with COVID-era expansion of methadone access

A new study led by researchers at Columbia University indicates that patients who receive methadone take-home doses—a protocol expanded during the COVID pandemic—are no more likely to overdose or drop out of care than those whose methadone is delivered at government-approved opioid treatment programs. The findings, published Dec. 4 in *Lancet Regional Health Americas*, could eventually result in improving access to this proven, life-saving treatment and help close the gap in care. There are currently 1,800 opioid treatment programs in the United States dispensing methadone to about...

Mass. DPH backs drug use sites as ‘lifelines’ in addiction crisis

The state’s drug overdose crisis is persisting at record high levels, exacerbated by a “poisoned drug supply” that isn’t just affecting those who use opioids anymore. There were 2,323 confirmed and estimated fatal opioid-related overdoses between Oct. 1, 2022, and Sept. 30, 2023 -- about level with last year’s record highs, according to data the Department of Public Health published Wednesday. As overdoses impact people across Massachusetts, the DPH released a report Wednesday that supports so-called overdose prevention centers or supervised injection sites, where individuals can use pre-acquired...

Reported drug use among adolescents continued to hold below pre-pandemic levels in 2023

The percentage of adolescents reporting they used any illicit substances in 2023 continued to hold steady below the pre-pandemic levels reported in 2020, with 10.9% of eighth graders, 19.8% of 10th graders, and 31.2% of 12th graders reporting any illicit drug use in the past year, according to the latest results from the Monitoring the Future survey. Reported use for almost all substances decreased dramatically between 2020 and 2021, after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and related changes like school closures and social distancing. In 2022, most reported substance use among adolescents held steady at...

An Explosion in Sports Betting Is Driving Gambling Addiction Among College Students

When Evan Ozmat, a Ph.D. student in psychology at the University of Albany, first began counseling undergraduates about HIV and substance abuse, he expected to hear about their health issues. Instead, he heard about problem gambling. “Since the beginning of the project three years ago, students have brought up, unprompted, gambling,” Ozmat says. “We started asking about it in every appointment and everyone has something to say. It’s everywhere.” The majority of the gambling takes place on mobile phones, Ozmat says, largely—although not exclusively—on sports betting apps. Served up to students...

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[PAR-24-088](#)

[Discovery of in vivo Chemical Probes for the Nervous System \(R01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[PAR-24-091](#)

[Multidisciplinary Studies of HIV/AIDS and Aging \(R01 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[PAR-24-092](#)

[Multidisciplinary Studies of HIV/AIDS and Aging \(R21 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[PAR-24-038](#)

[Assessment of Climate at Institutions \(ACt\) Award \(RC2 - Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[NOT-DA-23-047](#)

[Notice of Change to the budget limits in RFA-DA-25-047 and RFA-DA-25-048,
"Seeking Products to Address Social Needs impacting Substance Use Disorders
\(SUD\) \(R41/R42 and R43/R44 Clinical Trials Optional\)"](#)

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