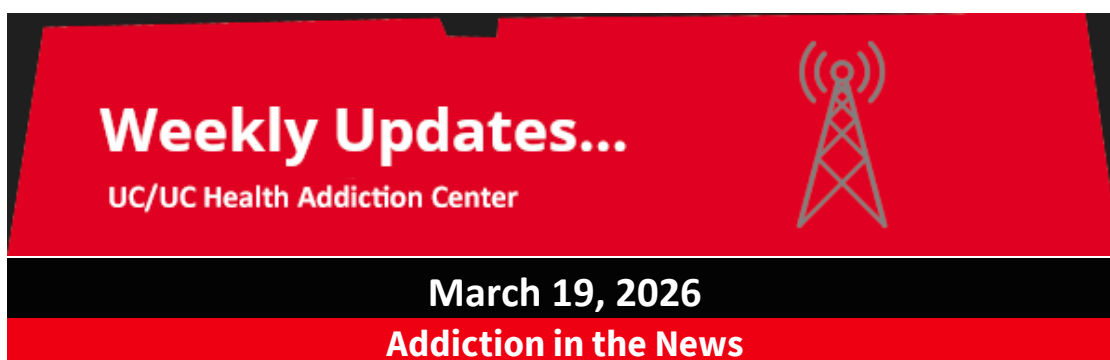


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the University of Cincinnati/UC Health Addiction Center (UCAC)! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from UCAC researchers. **Please note that the next weekly newsletter will be published Friday, April 3.** 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

Extended-Release Buprenorphine Viable, Safe During Pregnancy

Extended-release buprenorphine was an effective treatment for pregnant women with opioid use disorder (OUD) and safe for their babies, according to an open-label randomized trial. Women randomized to weekly, injectable extended-release buprenorphine had higher rates of abstinence from illicit opioids than those in the sublingual buprenorphine group (82.5% vs 72.6%, $P=0.009$), reported T. John Winhusen, PhD, of the University of Cincinnati, and colleagues. Those taking extended-release buprenorphine also had fewer serious adverse events during pregnancy (8.7% vs 26.8%, $P=0.007$) and during the postpartum period... **(Lead author and Principal Investigator, Dr. T. John Winhusen, UCAC Director, see publication below in the newsletter)**

Additional news coverage related to Dr. Winhusen's publication and trial results includes:

[Read the story in UC News](#)

[Read the NIH news release](#)

[Read the story in Medical Xpress](#)

What to know about cychlorphine, the synthetic opioid 10 times stronger than fentanyl

Multiple states have raised the alarm in the past month about cychlorphine, a synthetic opioid tied to several dozen recent overdoses that is far stronger than

fentanyl. Cychlorphine is part of a new class of synthetic opioids making their way into the U.S. illicit drug supply. The drug has never been approved for use in humans. Like fentanyl, cychlorphine is being mixed in with other street drugs, but it is not detectable through fentanyl test strips, making it even more dangerous. Narcan is still believed to be effective at treating an overdose caused by cychlorphine. When reached for comment, the Drug Enforcement...

Holmes County boosts tobacco compliance rate

In 2023, 15% of Ohio high school and middle school students reported current use of a form of tobacco. E-cigarettes are the most commonly used, with 13.7% of Ohio youth reporting current use. E-cigarettes often contain higher levels of nicotine and can quickly addict young people. Once addicted, it can be difficult to quit and may lead to other health concerns. Using e-cigarettes and other forms of nicotine can negatively affect a youth's health. E-cigarette use may increase the risk of lung damage, seizures, nausea and headaches. It also may lead to oral health concerns like tooth decay, gum disease and bad breath. Youth nicotine use...

Maker of device to treat addiction withdrawal seeks KY counties' opioid settlement cash

LOUISVILLE — In the early 2000s, Michelle Warfield worked at a factory, hauling heavy seats for Ford trucks on and off an assembly line. To suppress daily aches in her back and hips, her doctor prescribed opioid painkillers. They worked for a bit. But by 2011, Warfield struggled to walk. And “by that time, I was addicted,” said Warfield, now living in Shelbyville. After she lost her health insurance, Warfield started buying pills on the street. She tried to quit several times, but the debilitating withdrawal — so bad she couldn't get out of bed, she said — kept driving her back to drug use. Until last year. The NET device aims to reduce withdrawal...

Listen: How Kentucky's Addiction Recovery Care allegedly committed massive Medicaid fraud

Kentucky-based Addiction Recovery Care is under fire in a civil lawsuit for allegedly fraudulently billing Medicaid for a service. A federal database shows ARC made up 20% of all payments for that service in the country in a two-year period. The FBI announced its investigation of Kentucky-based treatment provider Addiction Recovery Care for potential Medicaid billing fraud in the summer of 2024, but in the ensuing 18 months, there was little indication of what the large and influential company was accused of doing. That all changed early this year, thanks to a filing in a new federal lawsuit against Addiction Recovery...

National News

ADHD, social confidence and risk of alcohol problems

Young adults with ADHD who are less confident in social situations may be more likely to use alcohol as a coping mechanism, which puts them at higher risk for problem drinking. This was one of the findings of a study exploring the role of social

functioning in drinking behaviors of young adults with ADHD. The findings, published in *Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research*, suggest that helping youth with ADHD learn healthy coping skills may prevent them from developing problems with alcohol use. Young adults with ADHD are more likely, even twice as likely, according to one study, to experience alcohol use problems compared to...

Scientists say marijuana doesn't ease anxiety or other mental health conditions

Using medical or recreational marijuana to ease symptoms of numerous mental health conditions doesn't work, according to two new analyses of existing gold-standard research. Medical marijuana includes products with cannabidiol, or CBD, and delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the part of the plant that produces euphoria. "We found no evidence any form of cannabis is effective in treating anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder, which are three of the leading reasons for which cannabis is prescribed," said Jack Wilson, a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Sydney's Matilda Centre...

Smoking rates are at a historic low. You're not hearing about it from the government

Government data released without analysis is leaving experts to fill in gaps left by federal cuts. The cigarette smoking rate among U.S. adults fell below 10% for the first time in recorded history in 2024. That's a big deal in itself. Also remarkable is how everyone is finding out about it. Reports of the historic dip in smoking didn't come from the U.S. government, which had collected the data. Instead, the news came via an analysis in the digital journal *NEJM Evidence* by Israel Agaku, the founder and CEO of research technology company...

Vaping: Emerging harms health systems can't ignore

When e-cigarettes first appeared around 2010, they were hailed as a breakthrough: nicotine delivery without the toxic tar and combustion byproducts of traditional cigarettes. Public health bodies cautiously endorsed them as a tool for adult smokers to quit, often citing early claims that vaping was 95% less harmful than smoking. More than a decade later, with millions now vaping regularly, the picture is less clear. A recent study, published in the *American Journal of Physiology—Heart and Circulatory Physiology*, found that people who vape or smoke have nearly 50% higher odds of elevated blood pressure compared to...

Higher buprenorphine doses help patients stay in opioid use disorder treatment, new study finds

Patients who are prescribed higher daily doses of the medication buprenorphine for opioid use disorder are significantly more likely to stay in treatment. Those on 17 to 24 milligrams averaged 190 days in care compared to 90 days for those on 8 milligrams or less. Yet Black patients are less likely than white patients to receive the higher doses. Those are the key findings of a study my colleagues and I

conducted with 5,000 adults enrolled in Medicaid in Philadelphia who are prescribed buprenorphine to treat their opioid use disorder. I am an assistant professor at University of Pennsylvania's School of Nursing, and my research...

Drug smoking can lead to severe burns, complicating harm reduction efforts

As U.S. drug use behavior has shifted away from injecting and toward smoking, public health experts have been almost uniform in their reaction. The development, they've said, is almost entirely positive: Smoking drugs like fentanyl, instead of injecting, can help reduce infections, disease transmission, and potentially even overdose rates. A new paper published this week, however, adds a significant wrinkle to the cost-benefit analysis. People who switch to smoking drugs, the new research shows, may be at risk for severe burns. People who smoked drugs like fentanyl or methamphetamine were roughly four times more likely than people...

Treating opioid use disorder with methadone in pharmacies could widen access and turn a profit

University of Rhode Island Clinical Professor of Pharmacy Jeffrey Bratberg partnered with Brandeis University and Boston University researchers in a recent study that found that pharmacy-based methadone dispensing models can operate profitably while widening access—a key step toward reducing overdose deaths. Bratberg, the sole pharmacist author on the study, provided his experience in addiction care—the use of medications to treat addiction—and community pharmacy research. Given Bratberg's longstanding relationship with Professor Traci Green, director of the Opioid Policy Research Collaborative at...

Teens and young adults with ADHD and substance use disorder face treatment gap

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common neurodevelopmental disorder, affecting 12%–13% of adolescents in the United States, according to some studies. The pattern of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity can interfere with daily life, raising problems at home, work or school. At the same time, individuals diagnosed with ADHD are at a higher risk of developing substance-use disorder. But treating the combination of these two conditions can be complicated. Recently, a team led by researchers from Penn State College of Medicine identified a treatment gap among adolescents and young adults diagnosed...

Study Introduces Tools to Measure Substance Use Disorder Knowledge

A study published in Drug and Alcohol Dependence introduces two new validated tools designed to measure substance use disorder (SUD) knowledge across prevention, treatment, and recovery. In response to the lack of validated tools to measure general knowledge about SUD, the Addiction Policy Forum and researchers from the University of Delaware developed and tested two scales to assess knowledge about addiction, including risk factors, treatment options, and

medications used to treat SUDs. “Misinformation fuels stigma, which in turn discourages individuals from seeking assessments, treatment, and support...

Funding Opportunities



There are no new NIH Grants Funding Opportunities to post this week.

UCAC Research Members New Publications

Extended-Release vs Sublingual Buprenorphine in Pregnancy Through 12 Months Post Partum: A Randomized Clinical Trial

T. John Winhusen, PhD; Michelle R. Lofwall, MD; Frankie Kropp, MS; Daniel Lewis, BA; Marcela C. Smid, MD; Jessica L. Young, MD, MPH; Candace Hodgkins, PhD; Elizabeth E. Krans, MD; Zachary Hansen, MD; Elisha M. Wachman, MD; Davida M. Schiff, MD; Constance Guille, MD; Vania Rudolf, MD, MPH; Tara Chowdhury, PhD, MCR; Lawrence Leeman, MD; Mitra Lewis, MS; Abigail G. Matthews, PhD; Gerald Cochran, PhD; Jacquie King, MS; Christine Wilder, MD; Carmen Rosa, MS

JAMA Internal Medicine

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2026.0057>

ABSTRACT

Importance: Treating opioid use disorder (OUD) in pregnancy with sublingual buprenorphine is an evidence-based practice, but it has disadvantages that could be addressed with an extended-release formulation.

Objective: To evaluate the effectiveness and safety of extended-release buprenorphine vs sublingual buprenorphine for OUD in pregnancy through 12 months post partum.

Design, Setting, and Participants: This 2-group, open-label, noninferiority, randomized clinical trial was conducted between July 2, 2020, and October 30, 2024, among adults with OUD and a singleton pregnancy of 6 to 30 weeks' gestational age at 13 outpatient cross-disciplinary peripartum OUD treatment sites.

Interventions: Randomization to sublingual or extended-release buprenorphine (weekly formulation during pregnancy, monthly formulation optional post partum if not breastfeeding).

Main Outcomes and Measures: The primary and key secondary outcomes were illicit opioid abstinence during pregnancy and the postpartum period, respectively, defined as the proportion of weekly collected urine samples negative for illicit opioids. If noninferiority

was demonstrated at a margin of 0.15, testing for superiority was planned. Key secondary infant outcomes from medical records were opioid treatment for neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome (NOWS; yes or no) and number of opioid treatment days for NOWS.

Results: Among 140 randomized participants, the mean (SD) age was 31.2 (4.6) years. There were 10 Black participants (7.1%), 10 Hispanic participants (7.1%), 116 (82.9%) White participants, and 14 participants (10.0%) who belonged to additional groups. All but 2 were already prescribed sublingual buprenorphine. Study completion was 98% through pregnancy (137 participants) and 81% through 12 months post partum (114 participants). Illicit opioid abstinence was higher during pregnancy for participants receiving extended-release vs sublingual buprenorphine (82.5% vs 72.6%; mean difference, 9.84 [95% CI, 1.72 to 17.95] percentage points; $P = .009$). Postpartum abstinence rates declined and were similar in both groups (60.2% vs 59.5%; mean difference, 0.65 [98% CI, -12.72 to 14.02] percentage points; $P = .45$). Those receiving extended-release buprenorphine experienced fewer serious adverse events during pregnancy (8.7% vs 26.8%; $P = .007$) and post partum (6.0% vs 18.6%; $P = .04$). Nonserious adverse events rates did not differ between groups, but more were deemed medication-related for extended-release participants during pregnancy (26.1% vs 7.0%; $P = .003$). Infants exposed to extended-release vs sublingual buprenorphine did not differ in need for opioid treatment (30.2% vs 26.5%; relative risk, 1.14 [98% CI, 0.54 to 1.99]; $P = .64$) or mean (SE) treatment days (10.9 [2.2] vs 14.8 [3.0] days; relative risk, 0.73 [98% CI, 0.36 to 1.51]; $P = .28$). At birth, extended-release-exposed neonates had larger mean (SE) head circumferences than those exposed to sublingual buprenorphine (34.0 [0.2] vs 33.4 [0.2] cm; mean difference, 0.63 [95% CI, -0.00 to 1.26] cm; $P = .049$).

Conclusions and Relevance: The findings of this randomized clinical trial support weekly extended-release buprenorphine for OUD treatment during pregnancy.

Trial Registration: ClinicalTrials.gov Identifier: NCT03918850

Fentanyl-Induced Changes in the Cellular Transcriptome of a Person Living With HIV: A Case Report

Krishna M. Roskin, Heidi L. Meeds, Janani Madhuravasal Krishnan, Matthew Juhascik, John M. Cafardi, Jennifer L. Brown, Caroline Freiermuth, Michael S. Lyons, Kenneth E. Sherman, Jason T. Blackard

Case Reports in Infectious Diseases

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1155/crdi/9959580>

ABSTRACT

The US is experiencing a major drug epidemic attributed in large part to synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. Opioid receptors exist on multiple immune cell types and alter innate and adaptive immune functions. Opioids also promote viral replication and accelerate disease pathogenesis. We previously reported that fentanyl resulted in significantly elevated levels of HIV replication and chemokine coreceptor expression in a dose-dependent manner in lymphocytes and monocyte-derived macrophages. Cell type-specific data on the regulation

of cellular processes by fentanyl are rare. Here, we considered how physician-prescribed fentanyl impacted gene expression profiles in the peripheral blood of a person living with HIV. He was diagnosed with septic bursitis and underwent operative incision and debridement. 15,834 and 15,642 (99.2%) cells were evaluated by single cell RNAseq analysis of pre- and postfentanyl blood samples. There were 133 differentially expressed genes (DEGs) in CD4+ T lymphocytes between the pre- and postfentanyl blood samples. There were 136 DEGs in CD8+ T lymphocytes, 74 DEGs in B lymphocytes, 180 DEGs in monocytes, 355 DEGs in dendritic cells, and 144 DEGs in NK cells. Biological processes that were enriched in multiple peripheral blood cell types included those associated with coronavirus disease, NFκB signaling, TNF signaling, and IL-17 signaling. This case study highlights multiple pathways by which opioids may contribute to HIV pathogenesis. Rigorous characterization of the interactions among HIV, opioids, and host cells can improve clinical management paradigms, facilitate rational public health policies, and reveal additional pathways for novel target-specific therapeutic interventions.

© [2026 UC/UC Health Addiction Center]

 University of
CINCINNATI |  Health.
**ADDICTION
CENTER**

