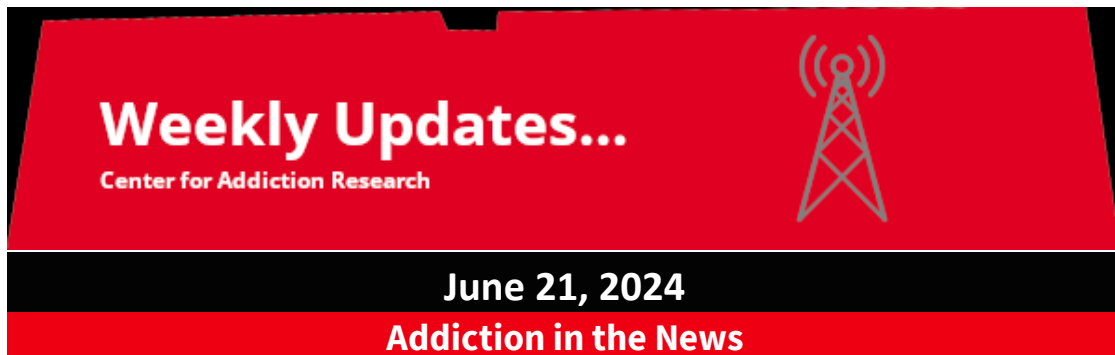


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu) 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

Legacy of federal opioid intervention: communities equipped to act

A national effort to reduce opioid-related overdose deaths has laid the groundwork for more widely available opioid use disorder treatment, safer prescribing practices, and community-based overdose education and naloxone distribution that can save lives, according to researchers who led Ohio's participation in the initiative.

Launched in 2019, the HEALing (Helping to End Addiction Long-Term) Communities Study (HCS) is the largest addiction prevention and treatment implementation study ever conducted. Researchers from the four participating states report June 16 in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and at the College on Problems of Drug Dependence (CPDD) annual meeting that there was not a... **(Dr. T. John Winhusen is the HEALing Communities Study Co-Principal Investigator for Ohio and the CAR Director, see publication below in the newsletter)**

Science-based addiction treatment in Kentucky and the nation must drive our policies | Opinion

When you're sick, you go to the doctor. When you have a life-threatening disease, you get medical treatments to save your life. When you have opioid use disorder (OUD), you can hit a brick wall, because America's healthcare systems cannot always deliver the care you need. This is true for several reasons, including stigma, a lack of understanding that addiction is a treatable, chronic medical disease, and an array of restrictive policies and practices, including federal legal barriers that prohibit your state from providing access to one (i.e., methadone) of three OUD

medications through prescriptions dispensed from your nearby pharmacy. In the era of high-potency synthetic opioids, like fentanyl, expanding access to...

National News

Gut bacteria might discourage binge drinking

Binge drinking significantly increases the risk of alcohol addiction. In a study published in *Microbiome* on June 17, a team led by University of Connecticut School of Medicine researchers reports that valeric acid, a substance made by gut bacteria, reduces binge drinking in mice. Their findings open a new avenue in the search for treatments for alcohol abuse. Binge drinking is a pattern of excessive alcohol consumption in which an individual consumes a large quantity of alcohol in a short period, typically leading to a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08% or higher. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse...

Rates of Problem Marijuana Use Are Rising Among Seniors

TUESDAY, June 18, 2024 (HealthDay News) -- As marijuana use becomes legal and more accepted across America, more seniors are developing unhealthy relationships with the drug, a new report suggests. A look at data on almost 56 million Medicare beneficiaries finds "rates of health care encounters with cannabis-related disorders increased from 2017 through 2022," according to a study led by Dr. Silvia Perez-Vilar, of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The FDA team's analysis included all Medicare recipients except nursing home residents. It focused on Medicare claims mentioning any medical incident linked...

Study shows cannabis use disorder during pregnancy increases by more than 20% after cannabis legalization in Canada

In October 2018, Canada enacted the Cannabis Act in Canada (CAC), which legalized the non-medical use of cannabis. A new study has found that the rate of cannabis-related disorders diagnosed among pregnant women in the Canadian province of Québec increased by more than 20% after the enactment of the CAC, while rates for all other drug- and alcohol-related disorders remained stable. The study is published today in the journal *Addiction*. This study measured changes to the monthly rates of diagnosed cannabis-related disorders (CRDs) in the pregnant population in Québec. Since 2010, the monthly average number of CRDs...

What Are Nicotine Pouches, and Are They Less Harmful Than Smoking?

MONDAY, June 17, 2024 (HealthDay News) -- Nicotine pouches might be less harmful than smoking or chewing tobacco, but they still pose an addiction risk to users, a new review finds. These pouches are filled with crystallized nicotine, and are placed between the gums and lips, researchers said. They are sold in various flavors and nicotine strengths. The pouches differ from Snus, which are used the same way but contain actual tobacco instead of crystallized nicotine. "Oral nicotine pouches are rapidly increasing in popularity," said researcher Nargiz Travis, project director for Georgetown University's Center for the Assessment of...

Feeling unsafe in your neighborhood makes you more likely to smoke, study shows

Research from the University of Houston indicates that more people smoke—and have trouble quitting—in neighborhoods where they feel unsafe. High crime rates, low police presence or trust, and a history of neglect in these neighborhoods result in heightened neighborhood vigilance among residents to protect against personal harm. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the neighborhoods people live in have a major impact on their health and well-being, making them key non-medical drivers of care. Although non-medical effects have increasingly been understood as clinically...

Research reveals most effective images for cigar health warning labels

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Tobacco Prevention and Evaluation Program (TPEP) recently published a study in the journal *Nicotine and Tobacco Research* discussing the effectiveness of pictorial health warning labels as proven tools for communicating the dangers of tobacco product use. Little research has been conducted on the effectiveness of health warning labels for cigars specifically. The study, led by Sonia Clark, MHA, sought to address this gap by identifying the most effective types of images to pair with newly developed cigar health warning labels. Cigar smoking remains a significant public...

Vaping, Chantix Show Similar Benefit for Quitting Cigarettes, in the Short-Term

E-cigarettes and varenicline (Chantix) helped long-time smokers quit conventional cigarettes at similar rates in the short term, but the benefit was more lasting with varenicline, according to a single-center randomized trial from Finland. In individuals with moderate to heavy dependence on nicotine, confirmed 7-day abstinence from smoking at week 26 -- the trial's primary endpoint -- was observed in 40.4% of the participants utilizing nicotine-containing e-cigarettes, 43.8% of those taking varenicline, and 19.7% of those on placebo ($P < 0.001$ for both placebo comparisons). The difference was not significant when comparing e-cigarettes...

Teens and young adults modify electronic nicotine delivery systems, finds study

Adolescents and young adults (AYAs) are aware of and engage in modifications of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), according to a study published online June 17 in *Pediatrics*. Grace Kong, Ph.D., from the Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, Connecticut, and colleagues examined awareness and perceptions of, information sources about, and engagement in modifying ENDS among 1,018 AYAs endorsing past-month ENDS use. The researchers found that the most common modifications to disposable pods were refilling (69.0% heard; 40.1% tried) and recharging the battery (66.4% heard; 35.8% tried). The...

Many young adults who began vaping as teens can't shake the habit

G Kumar's vaping addiction peaked in college at the University of Colorado, when flavored, disposable vapes were taking off. "I'd go through, let's say, 1,200 puffs in a week," Kumar said. Vaping became a crutch for them. Like losing a cellphone, losing a vape pen would set off a mad scramble. "It needs to be right next to my head when I fall asleep at night, and then in the morning, I have to thrash through the sheets and pick it up and find it," Kumar recalled. They got sick often, including catching COVID-19—and vaping through all of it. Kumar, now 24, eventually quit. But many of their generation can't shake the habit. "Everyone knows..."

Study uses powerful new 'digital cohort' method to understand vaping epidemic

Tapping into the vast amount of data now available on social media, a new study from scientists at the University of California San Diego introduces a powerful new approach to understanding the nation's health, in this case the vaping epidemic. The study, published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine on June 19, was led by John W. Ayers, Ph.D., from the Qualcomm Institute within UC San Diego. "Researchers studying social media have tended to analyze the frequency and content of posts," said Ayers, who is deputy director of informatics at the Altman Clinical and Translational Research Institute, vice chief of...

Candy tobacco imitation products availability and marketing linked to children

Childhood use of candy cigarettes, which are fake cigarettes made out of sugar, is associated with cigarette use among users, and yet there has been no research into the availability of these products or how they are currently being marketed. In a recent study led by UNC undergraduate student Dov Bearman with co-authors and mentors from the UNC Tobacco Prevention and Evaluation Program (TPEP), researchers set out to fill this gap by performing a content analysis of all candy tobacco imitation products available for online purchase in the United States. The research is published in the journal Nicotine and Tobacco...

Federal Study Examines Care Following Nonfatal Overdose Among Medicare Beneficiaries; Identifies Effective Interventions and Gaps in Care

Researchers from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that among a cohort of 137,000 Medicare beneficiaries who experienced a nonfatal overdose in 2020, almost 24,000 (17.4%) experienced a subsequent nonfatal overdose, and about 1,300 (1%) died from overdose in the following year. Results were published today in JAMA Internal Medicine, identifying both effective interventions...

Most Outpatient Mental Health Clinics Don't Offer Opioid Addiction Meds

WEDNESDAY, June 19, 2024 (HealthDay News) -- Only a third of outpatient mental health facilities offer medications essential for treating opioid addiction, a new study finds. Standard care for treating people with opioid use disorder involves drugs like buprenorphine, methadone and naltrexone, which help suppress cravings and blunt the effects of narcotics. But most front-line mental health facilities don't offer these medications, researchers reported June 18 in the journal JAMA Network Open. "Outpatient community mental health treatment facilities can be an important part of the treatment ecosystem for individuals..."

Help for Women Battling ADHD & Opioid Addiction in Pregnancy

MONDAY, June 17, 2024 (HealthDay News) -- Opioid overdoses in pregnant women are at an all-time high in the United States, and researchers think they've figured out one way to counter this phenomenon. Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is strongly tied to substance use disorders, which means some women who become pregnant are taking ADHD medications while receiving treatment for opioid addiction. Researchers found that women who keep taking their ADHD medications during pregnancy are more likely to adhere to addiction treatment and less likely to overdose. "Treatment of ADHD is a huge knowledge..."

High out-of-pocket costs may be barrier to filling naloxone prescriptions, study shows

Patients are less likely to fill prescriptions for naloxone when they face increases in out-of-pocket costs, according to research by the University of Michigan. Published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, the study utilized data from a national pharmacy transactions database from November 2020 to March 2021. Researchers found that about one in three naloxone prescriptions for privately insured and Medicare patients were not filled. Naloxone, an opioid antagonist that can reverse overdose, is a critical tool in preventing overdose deaths. Nationally, opioid overdoses account for more than 78,000 deaths...

Cost may not keep many people from filling opioid addiction treatment prescriptions

When people get a prescription for the opioid addiction medication called buprenorphine, they almost always fill it—even if they have to pay more out of their own pocket, a new study shows. The paper is published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine. Whether it's their first prescription for the medication, or they've been taking it for months, nearly all patients pick up the order from the pharmacy, according to the new findings from a University of Michigan team. Even among those just starting on buprenorphine, higher costs aren't a deterrent. The researchers say this suggests that removing barriers that prevent...

Researchers to Develop Predictive Model for Opioid Addiction in High-Risk Patients

Opioids are a broad group of effective pain-relieving medicines that can become highly addictive in some individuals. According to government sources, nearly 40 million people are addicted to illicit drugs worldwide. In 2017, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared the opioid crisis a national public health emergency. To combat the opioid epidemic, researchers at University of California San Diego School of Medicine will develop an AI model that will more accurately predict opioid addiction in high-risk patients. The project is funded through a three-year contract with Wellcome Leap as part of a \$50 million...

Identifying connections between adverse childhood events and substance use disorders

Physical and sexual abuse, having parents who misuse substances, and witnessing violent crime are tragic events that don't remain locked in a single point in time. Rather, they are termed adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and 64% of American adults who participated in a recent survey reported experiencing at least one ACE prior to turning 18 years old. The wake of these events can extend into adulthood and include harmful behaviors such as self-medicating—which one new study found is akin to adding fuel to an already burning fire. This research, published in Nature Human Behavior, shows that individuals exposed to ACEs...

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[RFA-DA-25-049](#)

[Solutions to enable diagnosis and treatment of adverse health consequences of non-disordered drug use \(R41/R42 - Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[RFA-DA-25-050](#)

[Solutions to enable diagnosis and treatment of adverse health consequences of non-disordered drug use \(R43/R44 - Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[RFA-MH-25-180](#)

[Mechanisms of Reciprocal Interactions between HIV Associated Neuroinflammation and CNS Persistence: Implications in HIV Neuropathogenesis and Cure \(R01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[RFA-MH-25-181](#)

[Mechanisms of Reciprocal Interactions between HIV Associated Neuroinflammation and CNS Persistence: Implications in HIV Neuropathogenesis and Cure \(R21 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[PAR-24-204](#)

[Summer Research Education Experience Program \(R25 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

CAR Member New Publications

Community-Based Cluster-Randomized Trial to Reduce Opioid Overdose Deaths

The HEALing Communities Study Consortium

*The authors' full names, academic degrees, and affiliations are listed in the Appendix. Drs. Samet, El-Bassel, Winhusen, and Walsh contributed equally to this article.

The New England Journal of Medicine

DOI: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2401177>

ABSTRACT

Background: Evidence-based practices for reducing opioid-related overdose deaths include overdose education and naloxone distribution, the use of medications for the treatment of opioid use disorder, and prescription opioid safety. Data are needed on the effectiveness of a community-engaged intervention to reduce opioid-related overdose deaths through enhanced uptake of these practices.

Methods: In this community-level, cluster-randomized trial, we randomly assigned 67 communities in Kentucky, Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio to receive the intervention (34 communities) or a wait-list control (33 communities), stratified according to state. The trial was conducted within the context of both the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic and a national surge in the number of fentanyl-related overdose deaths. The trial groups were balanced within states according to urban or rural classification, previous overdose rate, and community population. The primary outcome was the number of opioid-related overdose deaths among community adults.

Results: During the comparison period from July 2021 through June 2022, the population-averaged rates of opioid-related overdose deaths were similar in the intervention group and the control group (47.2 deaths per 100,000 population vs. 51.7 per 100,000 population), for an adjusted rate ratio of 0.91 (95% confidence interval, 0.76 to 1.09; P=0.30). The effect of the intervention on the rate of opioid-related overdose deaths did not differ appreciably according to state, urban or rural category, age, sex, or race or ethnic group. Intervention communities implemented 615 evidence-based practice strategies from the 806 strategies selected by communities (254 involving overdose education and naloxone distribution, 256 involving the use of medications for opioid use disorder, and 105 involving prescription

opioid safety). Of these evidence-based practice strategies, only 235 (38%) had been initiated by the start of the comparison year.

Conclusions: In this 12-month multimodal intervention trial involving community coalitions in the deployment of evidence-based practices to reduce opioid overdose deaths, death rates were similar in the intervention group and the control group in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and the fentanyl-related overdose epidemic. (Funded by the National Institutes of Health; HCS ClinicalTrials.gov number, NCT04111939.).

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