

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

Veterans need access to non-opioid pain management options | Opinion

I have had a sense of duty since I was a kid. I guess you could say it was a calling to serve others. I have spent my entire adult life doing just that, beginning by becoming a United States Marine. As with all military service, you find your purpose protecting others. I would continue this calling by becoming a police officer, but that sense of protecting was shattered when an entire generation of a family died of addiction on my watch. A mother and her three sons. The dark realities of the opioid epidemic struck me personally and professionally. I couldn't save that family, but we can save others, especially by focusing on preventing addiction in the first place. To start, by expanding access to safe...

Drugs, sex and harm reduction: New vending machines could reduce spread of HIV

Tucked away in an alley between the NeighborHub Integrated Care Clinic and an elevated parking lot in Over-the-Rhine is a green vending machine emblazoned with a leaf icon. The foot traffic in the alley is sparse, but the machine is available to anyone 24-7. It is stocked with potentially lifesaving supplies: naloxone spray, fentanyl test strips, and condoms. Call a confidential number and you'll get the access code to get the items free. In mid-December, Hamilton County Public Health installed two of these new vending machines (the other is Downtown at Fire Station District 3), designed to meet people who may not be able to get to, or feel comfortable going to, other harm reduction sites. The supplies...

From bad to good: How Ohio is using pharma settlement funds to address opioid crisis

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The opioid epidemic continues to cause issues across America and in Ohio, as officials are continuing to search for answers. "The opioid epidemic is always on my mind and the mind of law enforcement officials, and Gov. (Mike) DeWine and others because it's still a crisis," Lt. Gov. Jon Husted said. The OneOhio Recovery Foundation started in December 2021 -- and 2 years later, it continues to distribute 55 percent of the funds from pharmaceutical settlements into recovery. "So, the OneOhio foundation is made up of local governments as well as some state appointees by the governor and whatnot," Attorney General Dave Yost said. "But, it's a private foundation and a great...

Overdose deaths drop in Ohio, but increase in Stark County. Why?

The number of overdose deaths in Stark County rose 11% last year, while Ohio saw a 5% decrease. The jump in Stark also far exceeded the national increase of 1%. According to the Stark County Health Department's annual overdose report, 159 people died from unintentional overdoses last year — 134 of whom were county residents. Deaths have been on the rise since 2018, with 143 overdose deaths in 2021 — 131 were Stark County residents. Justina Gorman, coalition and community development coordinator at Stark County Mental Health & Addiction Recovery, said the "why" is difficult to answer. "It's a lot of things," she said. "There's still a lot of stigma around getting access to resources..."

Columbus ban on flavored tobacco begins Jan. 1 as state lawmakers aim to snuff it out

A sign explains the empty slots meant for flavored cigarettes and vapes inside the Sheetz gas station at 744 Grandview Avenue and directs customers to Grove City or Reynoldsburg, the closest Sheetz stops for anyone seeking a menthol nicotine fix or strawberry, mango or gummy bear vape. The store is one of more than 800 in Columbus where selling smokes or vapes with "distinguishable" flavorings other than natural tobacco will be outlawed beginning Jan. 1. That means that most Columbus suburbs may become destinations for those who purchase menthol cigarettes like Newport or Salem, or vape products with an entire menu of flavors, both of which critics say are targeting young...

National News

Multi-ancestry study uncovers shared genetics of problematic drinking

A study led by VA Connecticut Healthcare Center/Yale researchers reveals ancestries around the world possess a shared genetic architecture for problematic alcohol use (PAU)—habitual heavy drinking, accompanied by harmful consequences. The findings, published in Nature Medicine, could help scientists understand the genetic basis of PAU, a major cause of health problems in many age groups. It is a leading cause of death in those it afflicts. This study is the largest to

date for PAU—it identified many new risk genes and uncovered a large amount of new biology. With a better understanding of PAU biology...

Many young people at risk for psychosis are torn about using marijuana

Even after they've experienced episodes of psychosis, many young people who use marijuana are unsure they want to quit the drug, new research shows. Cannabis has long been linked to a heightened risk for psychosis—a dangerous psychiatric state in which people lose their connection with reality. However, "most people with psychosis don't worry about substance use until it detrimentally affects them, and even then they are very reluctant to talk about it," said study lead author Neely Myers, who directs the Mental Health Equity Lab at Southwestern Methodist University in Dallas. "Adolescents can look...

An African history of cannabis offers fascinating and heartbreaking insights—an expert explains

When I tell people that I research cannabis, I sometimes receive a furtive gesture that implies and presumes: "We're both stoners," as if two members of a secret society have met. Other times, I receive looks of concern. "You don't want to be known as the guy who studies marijuana," a professional colleague once counseled. Lastly, some respond with blank stares: "Why do academics spend time on such frivolous topics?" I've learned that all these attitudes reflect ignorance about the plant, which few people have learned about except through popular media or their own experiences with it. I study cannabis...

Biden's menthol ban pits civil rights groups against each other

Opposition from prominent Black and civil rights groups is threatening to permanently derail Biden administration efforts to ban menthol cigarettes. The ban has also pitted organizations that are often allies, like the NAACP and the Rev. Al Sharpton's National Action Network (NAN), against each other. The tobacco industry has long been accused of targeting the Black community, especially with menthol products, while simultaneously courting and funding Black-led organizations, politicians and civil rights leaders in an effort to neutralize criticism. Menthol is a lucrative industry. Menthol-flavored cigarettes accounted...

Human beliefs about drugs could have dose-dependent effects on the brain

Mount Sinai researchers have shown for the first time that a person's beliefs related to drugs can influence their own brain activity and behavioral responses in a way comparable to the dose-dependent effects of pharmacology. The implications of the study, which directly focused on beliefs about nicotine, are profound. They range from elucidating how the neural mechanisms underlying beliefs may play a key role in addiction, to optimizing pharmacological and nonpharmacological treatments by leveraging the power of human beliefs. The study was published in the journal *Nature Mental*...

Want to quit smoking in 2024? Cytisine can help ... if you live in the right country

A new study published in *Addiction* has found that cytisine, a low-cost, generic stop-smoking aid that has been used in Eastern Europe since the 1960s, increases the chances of successful smoking cessation by more than two-fold compared with placebo and may be more effective than nicotine replacement therapy. It has a benign safety profile, with no evidence of serious safety concerns. Sounds perfect for your New Year's resolution, doesn't it? But there's a catch: Cytisine is not licensed or marketed in most countries outside of central and eastern Europe, making it unavailable in most of the world, including many...

FDA ordered to reconsider denial of approval for vape products

Jan 3 (Reuters) - A federal appeals court on Wednesday ordered the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to reconsider its decision barring two makers of flavored liquid for e-cigarettes from marketing their products, saying the agency had been arbitrary and capricious in refusing to consider the companies' marketing plans. The 9-5 decision by the New Orleans-based 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a July 2022 decision by a three-judge panel of that court. Circuit Judge Andrew Oldham, who was appointed to the court by Republican former president Donald Trump, wrote for the majority...

US seizes more illegal e-cigarettes, but thousands of new ones are launching

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal officials are seizing more shipments of unauthorized electronic cigarettes at U.S. ports, but thousands of new flavored products continue pouring into the country from China, according to government and industry data reviewed by The Associated Press. The figures underscore the chaotic state of the nation's \$7 billion vaping market and raise questions about how the U.S. government can stop the flow of fruit-flavored disposable e-cigarettes used by 1 in 10 American teens and adolescents. More than 11,500 unique vaping products are being sold in U.S. stores, up 27% from 9,000 products...

California banned sales of flavored e-cigarettes in 2022, but a new study finds online stores are still selling them

Californians—including minors—are still able to buy flavored electronic cigarettes online, even after the state's much-publicized ban went into effect. That's the key finding of my team's new study, published in *JAMA Network Open*. On Dec. 21, 2022, California enacted Senate Bill 793, which prohibited the sale of most flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, to people of all ages. Hookahs, premium cigars and loose-leaf tobacco were exempted from the legislation. The ban was motivated, in large part, by a desire to reduce to reduce consumption of tobacco among young people—who are...

Illinois to ban indoor vaping in 2024

CHICAGO (CBS) -- Vaping will be banned indoors in public places in Illinois in the new year. Effective Jan. 1, 2024, an amendment to the Smoke Free Illinois Act will ban the use of "electronic smoking devices" such as vape pens and electronic cigarettes inside public spaces. That means vapers will have to join smokers outside, and be at least 15 feet away from the doors of any public entrance. "E-cigarettes contain nicotine and other chemicals which can be harmful to both those who use them and those who are exposed to them," said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. "Just..."

How opioid overdoses in public restrooms led an electrician to invent 'safe bathrooms'

First, a light starts to flash. Then a high-pitched siren starts to blare. Then come the sounds of nearby doors being flung open, and the frantic footsteps of doctors and nurses rushing toward a restroom at the end of a hallway. They're in a hurry for good reason. These distress signals have a specific meaning: Somebody in the bathroom is overdosing. Thankfully, it's a false alarm. But at Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, a clinic that caters to Boston's unhoused population in the heart of the city's infamous "methadone mile," bathroom overdoses are a near-daily occurrence. They happen so...

U.S. Attempts to Get Its Xylazine Problem Under Control

Early in 2023, word started to spread among physicians that a veterinary tranquilizer called xylazine -- also known as "tranq" -- was being added to fentanyl sold on the streets, to boost the opioid's effects and extend its high. Xylazine's complications were startling -- particularly the necrotizing wounds that would affect injection drug users. These often required extensive treatment, and sometimes, amputation. "We've been doing a lot more amputations over the last couple of years for really bad necrotic wounds and dysfunctional limbs and infections that go all the way down to the to the bone," Philadelphia emergency...

Personalized protocol cuts opioid prescribing after C-section, suggests study

A personalized protocol for opioid prescriptions after cesarean delivery reduces the median morphine milligram equivalents prescribed at discharge, according to a study recently published in the American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology. Chinonye S. Imo, M.D., from Parkland Health in Dallas, and colleagues examined whether a transition from universal opioid prescribing to a personalized, patient-specific protocol decreases morphine milligram equivalents prescribed at discharge after cesarean delivery. Each patient was prescribed scheduled ibuprofen and acetaminophen, with a prescription for...

Honolulu mandates that bars, nightclubs, restaurants carry anti-overdose medication

Honolulu on Monday became the first American city to require that bars, nightclubs and restaurants carry the anti-overdose medication naloxone. “Naloxone is a necessary tool these days in light of the national opioid epidemic,” Tyler Dos Santos-Tam, a member of Honolulu City Council, told the Honolulu Star-Advertiser. “It should be available and accessible in as many places as possible, in the same way we have fire extinguishers and defibrillators in case of emergencies.” “This new law will not only save lives, it will hopefully set an example for other cities throughout the United States,” he added. The drug, known...

In 2023 fentanyl overdoses ravaged the U.S. and fueled a new culture war fight

When the history of the fentanyl crisis is written, 2023 may be remembered as the year Americans woke up to an unprecedented threat scouring communities - and a deepening cultural divide over what to do about it. For the first time in U.S. history, fatal overdoses peaked above 112,000 deaths, with young people and people of color among the hardest hit. Drug policy experts, and people living with addiction, say the magnitude of this calamity now eclipses every previous drug epidemic, from crack cocaine in the 1980s to the prescription opioid crisis of the 2000s. "We've had an entire community swept...

Fights over methadone, harm reduction, and more: 3 addiction stories to watch in 2024

The U.S. drug crisis is as bad as it's ever been, and there are few signs things are getting better. About 110,000 people died of drug overdoses in 2023, about the same as in previous years. Fentanyl, the powerful synthetic opioid that now dominates the illicit drug market, remained the main culprit. Xylazine, the veterinary sedative known as “tranq,” only became more common. And more and more Americans are using other drugs — namely methamphetamine and cocaine — alongside opioids. Nonetheless, addiction medicine and drug policy hasn't changed much in the past year. Despite strong...

McKinsey to pay \$78M US opioid settlement with health insurers, company benefit plans

Consulting giant McKinsey & Company agreed to a \$78 million settlement in a case over its role in advising opioid manufacturers to design misleading marketing campaigns. A group of U.S. health insurers and company benefit plans, referred to in court documents as third-party payors, alleged in the suit that the firm helped add fuel to the fire in the opioid abuse epidemic by advising drug manufacturers such as Purdue Pharma in crafting deceptive marketing campaigns for opioids. The potential settlement, the agreement to which was filed Friday, still requires a judge's approval. If presiding judge Charles...

The year in opioid settlements: 5 things you need to know

This year, about \$1.5 billion has landed in state and local government coffers from court settlements made with more than a dozen companies that manufactured, sold, or distributed prescription painkillers and were sued for their role in fueling the opioid crisis. That money has gone from an emerging funding stream for which people had lofty but uncertain aspirations to a coveted pot of billions of dollars being invested in real time to address addiction. Altogether, the companies are expected to pay more than \$50 billion to state and local governments over nearly two decades. Meanwhile, more than...

What are nitazenes? What to know about the drug that can be 10 times as potent as fentanyl

An overdose death in Colorado has been linked to a new formulation of nitazenes, a class of powerful opioid analgesics being increasingly seen in the illicit drug market. It was one of two deaths in the Boulder area involving nitazenes in recent months, CBS Colorado reported. Nitazenes have been around for decades, experts told CBS News, and have been seen in multiple formulations. One of the Colorado deaths involved a formulation called N-Desethyl etonitazene. The man died in mid-2023, officials said, but laboratory testing about the substance he overdosed on was not returned until recently. It's believed...

Professor advises against adopting the term 'preaddiction'

Labels aren't everything. From something as trivial as a relationship status to something as important as a medical diagnosis, an identification is not the end all to what makes a person. In fact, previous studies have shown labels affect performance, stereotypes and create a self-fulfilling prophecy for behaviors. That's why Center on Alcohol, Substance Use and Addictions (CASAA) Research Assistant Professor Cassandra Boness is cracking down on one: Peaddiction. "I've started advocating against it. A lot of my research to date speaks directly to this issue. There is a need to capture people who are at risk for later..."

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[PAR-24-075](#)

[Stephen I. Katz Early Stage Investigator Research Project Grant \(R01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[PAR-24-076](#)

[Stephen I. Katz Early Stage Investigator Research Project Grant \(R01 Basic Experimental Studies with Human Required\)](#)

[PAR-24-089](#)

[NIDA Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Program Award in Substance Use and Substance Use Disorder Research \(K12 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[RFA-DA-25-007](#)

[Chemical Probes and Drugs for Modulating HIV Transcription in the Context of Substance Use Disorders \(R01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[RFA-DA-25-008](#)

[Chemical Probes and Drugs for Modulating HIV Transcription in the Context of Substance Use Disorders \(R21 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[RFA-AA-24-001](#)

[High-Throughput Screening \(HTS\) Platform for Discovery of Medications to Treat Alcohol Use Disorder \(R43/R44 Clinical Trials Not Allowed\)](#)

[RFA-AA-24-002](#)

[High-Throughput Screening \(HTS\) Platform for Discovery of Medications to Treat Alcohol Use Disorder \(R41/R42 Clinical Trials Not Allowed\)](#)

CAR Member New Publications

Lessons learned and future directions: A scoping review of American Indian and Alaska Native participants in the National Drug Abuse Treatment Clinical Trials Network

Maria C Crouch, Kamilla L Venner, Dennis C Wendt, Ann Kathleen Burlew, Paulette Baukol, Melissa C Funaro, Tanya Sorrell, Angela M Haeny

Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations are disproportionately affected by substance use disorders (SUDs) and related health disparities in contrast to other ethnoracial groups in the United States. Over the past 20 years, substantial resources have been allocated to the National Institute on Drug Abuse Clinical Trials Network (CTN) to disseminate and implement effective SUD treatments in communities. However, we know little about how these resources have benefitted AI/AN peoples with SUD who arguably experience the greatest burden of SUDs. This review aims

to determine lessons learned about AI/AN substance use and treatment outcomes in the CTN and the role of racism and Tribal identity.

Method: We conducted a scoping review informed by the Joanna Briggs framework and PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews checklist and explanation. The study team conducted the search strategy within the CTN Dissemination Library and nine additional databases for articles published between 2000 and 2021. The review included studies if they reported results for AI/AN participants. Two reviewers determined study eligibility.

Results: A systematic search yielded 13 empirical articles and six conceptual articles. Themes from the 13 empirical articles included: (1) Tribal Identity: Race, Culture, and Discrimination; (2) Treatment Engagement: Access and Retention; (3) Comorbid Conditions; (4) HIV/Risky Sexual Behaviors; and (5) Dissemination. The most salient theme was Tribal Identity: Race, Culture, and Discrimination, which was present in all articles that included a primary AI/AN sample ($k = 8$). Themes assessed but not identified for AI/AN peoples were Harm Reduction, Measurement Equivalence, Pharmacotherapy, and Substance Use Outcomes. The conceptual contributions used AI/AN CTN studies as exemplars of community-based and Tribal participatory research (CBPR/TPR).

Conclusions: CTN studies conducted with AI/AN communities demonstrate culturally congruent methods, including CBPR/TPR strategies; consideration/assessment of cultural identity, racism, and discrimination; and CBPR/TPR informed dissemination plans. Although important efforts are underway to increase AI/AN participation in the CTN, future research would benefit from strategies to increase participation of this population. Such strategies include reporting AI/AN subgroup data; addressing issues of cultural identity and experiences of racism; and adopting an overall effort for research aimed at understanding barriers to treatment access, engagement, utilization, retention, and outcomes for both treatment and research disparities for AI/AN populations.

Keywords: Alaska Native; American Indian; Clinical trials network; Scoping review; Substance use; Treatment

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