

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

UC receives grant to explore alternatives to opioids in the ED

The Department of Emergency Medicine has been awarded a \$1.4M federal grant from the Emergency Department Alternatives to Opioids Demonstration Program (ED-ALT) through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to expand the use of available evidence-based options for pain management in the emergency department (ED), focusing on pain relief and empowering people with tools to use for pain management while minimizing the risk of potential harms from opioid exposure. Led by Caroline Freiermuth, MD, MS, Emergency Medicine Endowed Chair to Benefit the Acute Treatment of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder, **[CAR Population Health and Health Services Core Co-Leader and CAR Member]**, the overarching goal of this project is to provide alternatives to opioids for the management of pain in the ED and post-discharge by implementing Integrative Health approaches and expanding local injectable anesthetic initiatives. "Although the overall goal of the grant is to decrease the amount of opioids used, it is our hope that physicians and others in the ED become better educated and expand their armamentarium of options to treat pain to ensure patients receive the care they deserve while minimizing side effects and exposure to opioids," says Freiermuth. Richard Ryan, MD, professor and vice chair of operations, Sanjay Shewakramani, MD, Medical Director, West Chester Hospital and Osher Center for Integrative Health Academic Advisory Council Member, and Patrick Minges, MD, assistant professor, will also be key personnel on the project from the Department of Emergency Medicine. The ED will partner closely with the Osher Center for Integrative Health, and Center Director, Sian Cotton, PhD, Mladen Golubic, MD, PhD,

Medical Director, and Meriden McGraw, MS, MPH, Director of Workplace Mindfulness, to introduce a full menu of integrative health and medicine techniques for novel outpatient follow-up (e.g., acupuncture, yoga), with patients receiving information on mindfulness and stress reduction techniques to use immediately. Mindfulness and resilience training sessions will be offered to ED team members in an effort to decrease burnout and improve well-being through experiencing the benefits of mind-body therapies firsthand and allowing them to be more informed when offering these interventions to patients and families.

Specific factors associated with marijuana use among high-risk college students

The past decade has seen a significant increase in marijuana use among U.S. college students. This increase has coincided with notable changes in national and local cannabis laws and policies, and perceptions of the associated drug's risk over the same period. However, cannabis use by students continues to be a public health challenge throughout the country. Universities have long relied on education programs to address these risks; however, many of these programs have limitations and fail to consider some of the modern risk factors for cannabis use among young adults. A new study led by Benjamin Montemayor, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Health Behavior at... **(second author, Dr. Ashley Merianos, CAR member, see publication below in the newsletter)**

Ohio caseworkers strive to keep families together, reduce trauma for kids

The opioid crisis continues to plague communities across Ohio, and according to the state Department of Job and Family Services, more than 3,000 Ohio children were removed from their homes because of parental substance use in 2022. A silver lining is a program called START, which provides wraparound services to families and is seeing high success rates. Fawn Gadel, director of the Ohio START program for the Public Children Services Association of Ohio, said when a family interacts with Children's Services due to parental substance use, Ohio START steps in to pair the family with a caseworker and family peer mentor. "The family peer mentor is a person that is in long-term recovery from..."

BROWN ANNOUNCES NEARLY \$23 MILLION TO EQUIP LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIGHT OPIOID CRISIS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) announced that he secured \$22,631,908 for local government and community agencies in Ohio. These investments will help Ohio law enforcement secure critical tools and equipment to keep communities safe, as well as enhance access to prevention, treatment, and recovery services for individuals with substance abuse disorders. "Safe communities depend on well-trained and equipped law enforcement officers," Brown said. "These awards will allow law enforcement in cities across Ohio to keep our streets safe, and are a critical investment in safety and resources for the men and women who devote their lives to protecting Ohioans." The...

\$300,000 grant to support new Rowan County addiction recovery service

A recovery support organization in Rowan County will soon have a physical location thanks to a grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services. Recovery Rowan County was formed last year to support people in recovery from substance use disorders. Group leaders said the \$300,000 grant will allow them to establish the Rowan County Recovery Community Organization (RCO) through a partnership with St. Claire Healthcare. The grant will support the RCO for one year. Officials said the goal is to reduce social barriers that cause a stigma for individuals with a substance or opioid use disorder so they can access treatment and counseling. Gene Detherage is the Chairman of the Board for...

National News

SMART alcohol recovery meetings appeal to those with more social, economic stability, lower spiritual leanings: Study

Certain characteristics of people seeking remission from alcohol use disorder (AUD) are linked to their choice of recovery meeting, a new study suggests. Informal peer recovery groups—mutual-help organizations—play a crucial role for many individuals with AUD or other drug disorders. Such groups are proliferating and differ substantially in approach. SMART Recovery meetings emphasize individual empowerment through learned, evidence-based therapeutic techniques, while Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings offer a 12-step program emphasizing a "higher power" and social support. While...

Scientific Study Challenges the “Holding Your Liquor” Myth

Those with alcohol use disorder who consumed a high amount of liquor showed significant impairment in study. New research shows that drinkers with alcohol use disorder display the same level of fine motor and cognitive impairment as light drinkers when consuming their usual excessive amount. The study suggests that the concept of “holding your liquor” is more nuanced than commonly believed. They found heavy drinkers could tolerate some alcohol better than light drinkers, but that disappeared when the heavy drinkers drank their typical amounts. “There’s a lot of thinking that when experienced...

Fathers' parental leave might protect men against alcohol-related morbidity

Men who have been on parental leave have a significantly reduced risk of being hospitalized due to alcohol consumption. This is shown by a study published in *Addiction* from researchers at the Department of Public Health Sciences, Stockholm University. The aim of the study was to assess whether fathers' parental leave influences alcohol-related morbidity and mortality. In order to try to find out if that is the case, the researchers have investigated the effects of parental leave policy that was implemented in Sweden in 1995. The policy encouraged fathers to use parental leave by reserving 30 days...

Five years of legal cannabis in Canada: Mixed success

Five years after cannabis legalization in Canada, it appears to be a mixed success, with social justice benefits outweighing health benefits, write authors in a commentary published in CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal). Cannabis use was legalized in Canada in October 2018, with the goal to improve cannabis-related public health and safety, and reduce youth access and illegal activities related to cannabis. There was concern among some health professionals that legalization could lead to adverse health effects in Canadians. "Limited evidence exists to support benefits as they relate to the original...

Supreme Court declines to hear case challenging FDA authority to reject flavored e-cigarettes

The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to hear arguments in a case challenging the Food and Drug Administration's authority to reject approvals of flavored electronic cigarettes. The case is one of several challenges to the FDA's regulation of the vaping industry, which has hooked members of a new generation on nicotine, and ballooned into an \$8.2 billion market in less than a decade. The 4th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in December ruled that the FDA has the power to deny applications for flavored e-cigarette products because of its mandate to protect public health by discouraging younger people from...

As Menthol Ban Nears, Big Tobacco Is Adding Synthetic Version to Cigarettes Instead

WEDNESDAY, Oct. 11, 2023 (HealthDay News) -- Cigarette makers are using synthetic menthol substitutes in what appears to be an effort to skirt a looming federal menthol ban, researchers say. The menthol flavor appeals to younger and newer smokers, according to investigators at Duke Health in Durham, N.C., and Yale University in New Haven, Conn. These new "non-menthol" cigarettes are being introduced in states that have already banned actual menthol in advance of a U.S. Food and Drug Administration ban later this year. In studying these "non-menthol" products, researchers identified new...

Researchers document how surge of cheap, flavored cigars targets young consumers

As the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) prepares to issue a final rule prohibiting flavored cigars, a report issued today by the Rutgers Institute for Nicotine and Tobacco Studies (INTS) and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids documents how tobacco companies have flooded the market with cheap, flavored cigars that appeal to children and have used a variety of marketing strategies to attract young people. According to a report compiled by the two organizations, sales of all cigars more than doubled between 2000 and 2021, largely driven by increased sales of smaller cigars, many of which are flavored. The...

Trial Design, Treatment Options Highlighted in Xylazine Conference

Longer observation periods following treatment and safety considerations for chronic and frequent users are among the many research issues about xylazine-laced fentanyl that need addressing, Rachel Wightman, MD, said at a meeting on mitigating risks from human xylazine exposure sponsored by the Reagan-Udall Foundation. "I take care of patients that are using fentanyl 10 plus times a day," Wightman, who is associate professor of emergency medicine and epidemiology at Brown University, in Providence, Rhode Island. "I have patients that wake up in the middle of the night in active withdrawal and have to...

Researchers describe horrific effects of new drug threat, xylazine, or 'tranq'

An animal sedative approved by the FDA, xylazine has now made its way to the illicitly manufactured fentanyl supply, creating new challenges for physicians caring for its victims. Xylazine, an animal sedative that is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for veterinary use only, has made its way into the illicitly manufactured fentanyl (IMF) supply and has significantly increased in prevalence in recent years, likely due to its low cost, easy availability, and presumed enhanced "high." Researchers reviewed pertinent xylazine research and pulled from their own clinical experience to offer...

Tranq Update: A Killer on the Loose

A recent tranq episode at our center left a strong impression on many of us. When a patient arrived for his treatment, we gave him the same physical exam that all of our new residents receive. When he removed his shirt, our nursing team was stunned to see deep, open wounds on his arms. We admitted him, and immediately began wound care for him, along with his substance use treatment. Seen in patients who are abusing opioids such as fentanyl, these kinds of wounds often result from heavy xylazine use. When this veterinary sedative is mixed with the potent opioid fentanyl, it creates a highly addictive and...

DEA again extends telemedicine flexibilities

With a November cutoff looming, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration has for a second time extended temporary rules allowing prescription of controlled medications via telehealth. These rules, established during the Covid-19 pandemic, are an exception to the conditions of a law known as the Ryan Haight Act, which require at least one in-person medical examination before a doctor can prescribe a controlled medicine, including stimulant medications for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, benzodiazepines for anxiety, and drugs for opioid use disorder, sleep or pain, said...

Rise in overdose deaths increasingly affects those with lower educational attainment, study finds

Drug overdose deaths increased sharply among Americans without a college education and nearly doubled over a three-year period among those who don't

have a high school diploma, according to a new RAND Corporation study. The findings further highlight a potential association between the rise in drug overdose deaths and barriers to education access, a social determinant of health. Lower educational attainment has been one of the socioeconomic factors historically associated with drug use and overdose deaths, but the emergence of fentanyl in street drugs and the rise of the COVID-19...

Psychotherapy for addictions: Motivation is key, research finds

Psychotherapeutic approaches are, at best, moderately effective in helping people with substance abuse or addiction problems reduce their dependence. That is the conclusion of a meta-review of the literature by a research team led by Alexandre Dumais, a professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Addiction at Université de Montréal and a researcher at the Institut universitaire en santé mentale de Montréal. Their findings were published in June in the journal *Psychiatry Research*. The team looked at 23 meta-analyses of studies with samples ranging from 130 to 33,000 subjects and sought to evaluate...

Scientists says identifying some foods as addictive could shift attitudes, stimulate research

Researchers from the United States, Brazil, and Spain, including scientists with the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC, published an analysis in a special edition of the *British Medical Journal* with a timely and controversial recommendation: It's time for an international shift in the way we think about ultra-processed food. "There is converging and consistent support for the validity and clinical relevance of food addiction," said Ashley Gearhardt, the article's corresponding author and a psychology professor at the University of Michigan. "By acknowledging that certain types of processed...

Funding Opportunities



[RFA-DA-25-011](#)

[Exploratory studies to investigate mechanisms of HIV infection, replication, latency, and/or pathogenesis in the context of substance use disorders \(R01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[RFA-DA-24-034](#)

[Mechanistic Research on Neuromodulation for Substance Use Disorders Treatment \(R61/R33 Basic Experimental Studies with Humans Required\)](#)

[RFA-DA-25-059](#)

[Ending the Epidemic: New Models of Integrated HIV/AIDS, Addiction, and Primary Care Services \(R34 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[NOT-OD-24-002](#)

[Request for Information: Developing Consent Language for Research Using Digital Health Technologies](#)

CAR Member New Publications

Risk Factors for Quantity of Cannabis Use Per Day among College Students Who Violated Their University Drug Use Policy

Benjamin N. Montemayor, PhD, Anas K. Nabil, MPH, MSPH, Ashley L. Merianos, PhD

Cannabis

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.26828/cannabis/2023/000191>

ABSTRACT

Background: Cannabis use among college students represents a continued public health issue. The objective was to assess risk factors and reasons for cannabis use among students who violated their university's drug use policy, and whether risk factors influenced cannabis use quantity.

Methods: This cross-sectional survey study included 99 college students enrolled at a large U.S. public university. Descriptive statistics were calculated, and an ordinary least squares regression analysis was conducted.

Results: Students reported using cannabis an average of 7.4 (SD=10.2) days in the past month, with 8% reporting daily use. On average, students consumed slightly over 0.25 (SD=0.25) grams per day, with 40% reporting greater than one gram per day. The average age of onset of cannabis use was 16.8 (SD=1.8) years old. The top reasons for cannabis use were to: relax or relieve tension (75.8%), feel good or get high (62.6%), and have a good time with friends (60.6%). Students perceived an average of 47% of their peers engaged in past-month cannabis use and only slight risk was associated with regular use. Students perceived their loved ones would mostly approve of a reduction in their cannabis use. Regression results indicated past-month cannabis frequency ($p=.002$) and being of racial/ethnic minority descent ($p=.05$) were positively associated with quantity of cannabis per day, while perceived risk of regular cannabis use ($\beta=-0.21$) was negatively associated.

Conclusions: Evidence-based cannabis interventions for students who violate their university's drug use policies are critically needed that aim to reduce cannabis use and mitigate its associated negative consequences.

