

UC CAR Weekly Newsletter 9.1.2023

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](mailto: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**

Congratulations to **Caroline Freiermuth, MD (CAR Population Health and Health Services Core Co-Leader and CAR Member)**, Class of 2006, who was appointed Emergency Medicine Endowed Chair to Benefit the Acute Treatment of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder, Department of Emergency Medicine, effective July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2028, by the UC Board of Trustees at its August 22 meeting.

Stay up to date on research projects being conducted by CAR members: [Projects \(uc.edu\)](#)

Stay up to date on CAR member publications: [Publications \(uc.edu\)](#)

### **National News**

#### **'Pregaming' linked to risky substance use among college students**

New research from Texas A&M University School of Public Health suggests that college students who "pregame," or participate in tailgating and similar activities before athletic events, are also more likely to take part in unsafe alcohol and other substance use. Alcohol use has long been associated with American college students and the college sports culture. Pregaming frequently involves exposure to alcohol and increases participation in high-risk drinking. This, in turn, can lead those involved to participate in other risky behaviors with harmful consequences. The researchers who conducted this new...

## **Q&A: Alcohol use disorder treatment in sexually diverse and gender-diverse patients**

Alex Keuroghlian, MD, MPH, and Michal McDowell, MD, MPH, from the Department of Psychiatry at Mass General, have authored a new study in the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, titled "Alcohol Use Disorder Treatment in Sexually and Gender Diverse Patients: A Retrospective Cohort Study." Here, they discuss their work. What question were you investigating? While sexually and gender diverse (SGD) people have higher odds of alcohol use disorder (AUD) compared to heterosexual and cisgender people, AUD treatment access and use disparities are not well characterized. The purpose of this...

## **Fake Arizona rehab centers scam Native Americans far from home, officials warn during investigations**

PHOENIX (AP) — Autumn Nelson said she was seeking help for alcohol addiction last spring when fellow members of the Blackfeet Nation in Montana suggested a rehabilitation center in Phoenix, far to the south. The 38-year-old said the center even bought her a one-way airline ticket to make the 1,300-mile (2,100-kilometer) journey. But Nelson said after a month, she was kicked out after questioning why there was one therapist for 30 people and no Native American staff despite a focus on Native clients. "All of a sudden I was out in the 108-degree heat in Phoenix, Arizona," said Nelson. "I was scared, and didn't..."

## **1 in 5 Marijuana Users Struggle With Dependency on the Drug**

WEDNESDAY, Aug. 30, 2023 (HealthDay News) – Cannabis use disorder is a very real problem for a significant percentage of people who use marijuana, new research suggests. About 21% of those who use weed struggle with dependency, including recurring problems socially and with work, the study published Aug. 29 in the journal JAMA Network Open found. About 6.5% of those with this disorder had moderate to severe cases. "The results here underscore the importance of assessing patient cannabis use and CUD [cannabis use disorder] symptoms in medical settings," the study concluded. Researchers from the...

## **Understanding the surge in cannabis use among pregnant and postpartum women in the US**

Pregnant and recently postpartum women who suffer with mental health disorders may be vulnerable to using cannabis to self-medicate, according to a Rutgers-led study. In a nationally representative survey, Qiana L. Brown, an assistant professor at the Rutgers School of Social Work, examined the relationship between mental health disorders, cannabis use and cannabis use disorder (CUD) among pregnant and postpartum women in the US. The findings were published in the journal Drug and Alcohol Dependence. "Before this study, we didn't know much about the associations between cannabis use..."

### **Many people think cannabis smoke is harmless: A physician explains how that belief can put people at risk**

Though tobacco use is declining among adults in the U.S., cannabis use is increasing. Laws and policies regulating the use of tobacco and cannabis are also moving in different directions. Tobacco policies are becoming more restrictive, with bans on smoking in public places and limits on sales, such as statewide bans on flavored products. In contrast, more states are legalizing cannabis for medical or recreational use, and there are efforts to allow exceptions for cannabis in smoke-free laws. These changes mean an increasing number of people are likely to get exposed to cannabis smoke. But how safe...

### **THC Dose of Edible Cannabis Tied to Degree of Toxicity in Young Kids**

The tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) dose of edible cannabis correlated to the degree of toxicity in children under 6 years, a retrospective review showed. Among 80 kids with a median age of 2.9 years, THC weight-based dose was a significant predictor of severe toxicity (adjusted OR 2.9, 95% CI 1.8-4.7) and prolonged toxicity (aOR 3.2, 95% CI 1.6-6.5), while patient age and sex were not, reported Lesley Pepin, MD, of Denver Health and Hospital Authority, and colleagues. The area under the curve (AUC) was 92.9% for severe toxicity and 87.3% for prolonged toxicity, they noted in Pediatrics. THC ingestions of at...

### **Smokers who start below age 20 become more addicted and find it difficult to quit, research suggests**

Researchers urge governments to raise the legal age to purchase cigarettes to 22 years or higher as study finds it becomes less addictive and easier to quit as people get older. The research is presented at ESC Congress 2023. In 2020, more than one in five people worldwide used tobacco. Tobacco kills up to half of its users. Smokers below the age of 50 years have a five-fold higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease compared with their non-smoking peers. The legal age to purchase tobacco is 18 years old in many countries, but in some nations there are no age restrictions. It is estimated that nearly...

### **Smoking found to significantly increase the risk of depression**

Most of us know that smoking is unhealthy. Cigarette packets display shocking picture warnings of diseased lungs and rotting teeth. And we often hear in the media about how smoking can cause all sorts of cancer. But most of us probably do not know that smoking actually increases the risk of mental illness as well. In recent years, ever more research has indicated a strong correlation between smoking and mental illness. However, researchers have not been able to agree on whether smoking causes depression or other mental disorders, or whether we smoke because we need to lessen the...

### **Tobacco company coupons raise odds ex-smokers will light up again**

Coupons for tobacco products appear to have a big impact on relapse rates for smokers who have recently kicked the habit, researchers report. A study of more than 5,000 former smokers who participated in a national survey found double the relapse rate for those who received cigarette coupons by direct mail or email. "We hypothesized that people who received coupons would be more likely to relapse, but we were surprised by the magnitude of the effect," said lead author Jidong Huang, a professor in the Department of Health Policy and Behavioral Sciences at Georgia State University School of...

### **Study finds e-cigarette manufacturers use targeted marketing to lure in young adults**

Research led by Minji Kim, assistant professor of health promotion, education, and behavior, has found that marketing strategies used by e-cigarette manufacturers increase the likelihood of uptake among otherwise low-risk young adults. These widespread but under-researched strategies use psychographic targeting to appeal to new users based on lifestyles, attitudes and values. Kim published the results in *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*. "Young adults who currently don't use tobacco and nicotine products are susceptible to these advertisements, which may result in the initiation of e-cigarette use..."

### **Optimizing tobacco cessation treatment with lung cancer screening**

Lung cancer is the deadliest cancer in the United States, and 80% of lung cancer deaths are linked to one risk factor: smoking. While lung cancer screenings are a critical part of prevention and treatment for the disease and 15 million Americans qualify for yearly screenings, over half those eligible for screenings are still actively smoking. Without standard smoking cessation measures in place, the benefits of the screenings have not been fully realized. New research published in *JAMA Network Open*, led by the University of Minnesota Medical School, examined how different combinations of...

### **Juul plans to lay off 30% of workforce in cost-cut push, source says**

Aug 23 (Reuters) - Juul Labs is planning to lay off 30% of its workforce, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters on Wednesday, as the e-cigarettes maker aims to reduce its operating costs. The restructuring is aimed at maximizing profitability and cash-flow generation, the company said in a statement, adding that it would substantially reduce its headcount to deliver on the company's strategy. The e-cigarettes maker joins several companies across corporate America that have trimmed their workforce this year in a bid to rein in costs amid still-high inflation and rising interest rates. Juul would lay off about...

### **Opioid OD Rescue Drug Narcan Will Reach Drug Store Shelves Next Week**

WEDNESDAY, Aug. 30, 2023 (HealthDay News) -- Narcan, a lifesaving medication that reverses opioid overdose, will be available on U.S. drugstore shelves and online

starting next week. People who want to carry Narcan, the nasal spray version of naloxone, will be able to find it at Walgreens, Rite Aid, Walmart and CVS for a suggested retail price of \$44.99 for a box of two doses, the drug maker reported Wednesday. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Emergent BioSolutions' overdose antidote in March in response to record numbers of overdose deaths, largely due to powerful synthetic drugs like...

### **Moms With OUD: Improved Infant Care Seen With Use of Prenatal Addiction Meds**

For mothers with opioid use disorder (OUD), the use of medication for their addiction such as buprenorphine or methadone during the prenatal period was associated with improved outcomes in infants, a cross-sectional study showed. Using data from a multistate Medicaid database on over 10,000 mother-infant dyads, prenatal use of medications for OUD was found to be associated with 20% higher odds of infants receiving six well-child visits (adjusted OR 1.20, 95% CI 1.11-1.31) and 20% lower odds of readmissions (aOR 0.80, 95% CI 0.70-0.91) during the first year of life, reported Mir M. Ali, PhD, of the Office of...

### **Researchers prep fentanyl, heroin vaccines for human trials**

Researchers at the University of Montana and their partners are nearing human trials for vaccines to prevent fentanyl and heroin drug overdoses. The vaccines would protect people struggling with drug addiction or those at risk of accidental overdose. According to the National Institutes of Health, more than 106,000 U.S. drug overdose deaths were reported in 2021. Of those, 71,000 can be attributed to synthetic opioids like fentanyl. Researcher Jay Evans directs the UM Center for Translational Medicine, which is working on the vaccines. He also is co-founder of Inimmune, the corporate partner charged...

### **Artificial Intelligence May Influence Whether You Can Get Pain Medication**

Elizabeth Amirault had never heard of a Narx Score. But she said she learned last year the tool had been used to track her medication use. During an August 2022 visit to a hospital in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Amirault told a nurse practitioner she was in severe pain, she said. She received a puzzling response. "Your Narx Score is so high, I can't give you any narcotics," she recalled the man saying, as she waited for an MRI before a hip replacement. Tools like Narx Scores are used to help medical providers review controlled substance prescriptions. They influence, and can limit, the prescribing of painkillers, similar to...

### **Anesthesiologists should play bigger role in perioperative care of people with substance use disorders, say researchers**

As use and misuse of alcohol, opioids, and psychostimulants continues to increase, anesthesiologists can become a more integral part of the care team managing patients with a substance use disorder (SUD), according to a series of three articles published in the September issue of *Anesthesia & Analgesia*. The articles provide an

overview of SUDs specific to the anesthesiologist and offer insights into pain management for opioid use disorder and exposure to psychostimulants. "The series is timely because the fundamental philosophies that guide management of patients with SUDs have evolved...

### **Fentanyl gets into Washington state in 'any manner you can think of'**

Through vehicles on Interstate 5, through packages disguised as merchandise from abroad, or through smugglers traveling north, fentanyl has poured into the Puget Sound area. In the past couple of years, the symptoms of this crisis have become more apparent: Overdose deaths involving fentanyl have surged, less deadly opioids have decreased in demand, and policymakers are debating how to combat the epidemic. But why and how fentanyl is showing up in force in Seattle now, after years of ravaging the East Coast, is less obvious. Seattle police did not respond to repeated requests to explain the...

### **Overlooked part of brain could play critical role in addiction recovery**

Researchers from Indiana University School of Medicine have discovered a neglected brain region that could play a critical role in how likely a person with drug use disorders is to relapse, even after a long withdrawal period. Their findings were published recently in *Biological Psychiatry*. "Past studies in the field of addiction research have focused on the medial prefrontal cortex, which is the part of the brain that controls decision making, but no effective prevention or treatment for drug relapse is available," said Yao-Ying Ma, MD, Ph.D., associate professor of pharmacology and toxicology and an...

### **Do Most Americans Know How to Help Loved Ones Battling Addictions? New Poll Says Yes**

THURSDAY, Aug. 31, 2023 (HealthDay News) -- If a loved one were living with addiction, a majority of Americans say they would know how to get help. About 71% of 2,200 respondents to an American Psychiatric Association poll said they would know how to assist a friend or family members. Most, about 73%, would refer that loved one to treatment, and 74% would talk to them about their addiction. "It's promising, especially during Recovery Month, that Americans show such openness to talking with loved ones who may have substance use disorders or behavioral addictions," said APA President Dr....

## Funding Opportunities



### GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[NOT-DA-24-012](#)

[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Xylazine: Understanding Its Use and the Consequences](#)

[PAR-24-027](#)

[Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health \(PATH\) Study Biospecimen Access \(X01\)](#)

[NOT-AA-23-018](#)

[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Epidemiology and Prevention in Alcohol Research](#)

[NOT-OD-23-165](#)

[Notice of NIH Participation in the National Science Foundation Solicitation NSF 23-614: Smart Health and Biomedical Research in the Era of Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Data Science](#)

[RFA-MH-24-235](#)

[Biotypes of CNS Complications in People Living with HIV \(P01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

#### **UC Foundation Funding Opportunity**

Please contact Carol Russell at (513) 556-6169 or [carol.russell@uc.edu](mailto:carol.russell@uc.edu) **at least 5 business days before the deadline**, prior to applying to the below opportunity, to ensure coordination and to facilitate assistance with approaches.

#### **[Applications requested for research on responsible gambling and prevention](#)**

**Deadline:** [September 29, 2023](#)

The International Center for Responsible Gaming invites applications for research on online gambling and potential harms. Grants of up to \$150,000 over up to two years (plus 15 percent in facilities and administration costs) will be awarded to support proposals to investigate the risks of online gambling in the United States and strategies for minimizing harm. Although open to a wide range of topics, the following are potential areas for grant applications: Creating models for identifying behavioral markers of gambling problems among internet players in general and among specific bettors (sports wagering or casino games, for example) to distinguish players with gambling problems from players with no problems,

identifying the most valid and reliable algorithms to detect problem gambling patterns, evaluating responsible gambling strategies used by online gaming companies for safety and effectiveness (for example, pop-up warnings, self-exclusion, and self-imposed limits on time and money spent gambling), and testing the effectiveness of responsible gambling messaging with customers such as warning messages when self-imposed limits on budget and time have been exceeded. Eligible applicants include domestic or international, public or private, nonprofit or for-profit organizations. The principal investigator must have a PhD, MD, or other terminal degree. For complete program guidelines and application instructions, see the [International Center for Responsible Gaming](#) website.

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