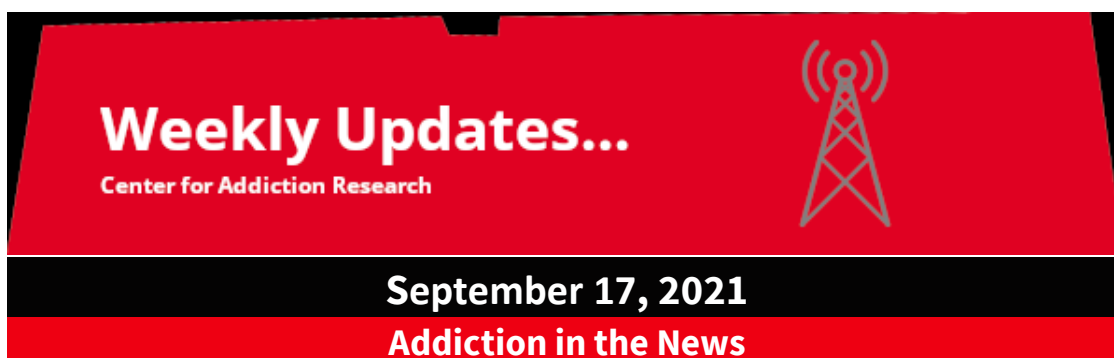


UC CAR Weekly Newsletter 9.17.2021

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

Opioid Overdose Death Rate Increases 40% Among Black Individuals.

[Healio](#) (9/13, Gramigna, 40K) reports, "Opioid overdose death rates increased among non-Hispanic Black individuals between 2018 and 2019, despite having leveled off overall," investigators concluded after evaluating "trends in opioid overdose deaths according to race/ethnicity between 2018 and 2019 across 67...communities in Kentucky, New York, Massachusetts and Ohio, for which they determined opioid overdose death rates per 100,000 adult residents using state death certificate records." In a related press release, [National Institute on Drug Abuse Director Nora D. Volkow, MD](#), "noted the importance of considering the role of structural racism in drug use." Volkow said, "We must explicitly examine and address how structural racism affects health and leads to drug use and overdose deaths. ... Systemic racism fuels the opioid crisis, just as it contributes mightily to other areas of health disparities and inequity, especially for Black people. We must ensure that evidence-based interventions, tailored to communities, are able to cut through the economic and social factors that drive disparities in substance use and addiction, to reach all people in need of services." The findings were published online Sept. 9 in the American Journal of Public Health. **(Article attached.)**

National News

Study: Social Support Reduces Genetic Risk Factors That Can Lead To Alcohol Use Problems.

[ASU News](#) (9/10, D'Ardenne) reported, "New research shows that social support from friends can shield people at risk of alcohol use disorders." The study, which was funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and the National Institute on Drug Abuse, "found that the combination of genetic predisposition and personality type can lead to problematic alcohol consumption. Having strong social support from friends protected against excessive drinking." The findings we published in the Journal of Abnormal Psychology.

Marijuana Use Among College-Aged Adults At Highest Level Since 1980s.

[Healio](#) (9/9, Weldon, 40K) reports in continuing coverage, "College students and peers of the same age are using marijuana at a rate not seen since the 1980s, according to" the National Institute on Drug Abuse-funded Monitoring the Future study. For the study, researchers at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research have "been tracking substance use among young adults aged 19 to 22 years since 1980." According to Healio, "Findings from the report, released this week, show that in the year 2020, marijuana use reached its highest level in over 3 decades, with a reported 44% of college students surveyed saying they used the drug in the past year, an increase from the 38% who reported using it in 2015." NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow said in a news release, "The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed the way that young people interact with one another and offers us an opportunity to examine whether drug taking behavior has shifted through these changes."

NIH, NIDA Announce New Funding For Unprecedented Cannabis Research.

[CannabisWire](#) (9/14, Martin) reports that the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) "is leaning into funding for cannabis research." The agency "announced a funding opportunity 'to support human and animal research on the pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic effects of Δ 9-tetrahydrocannabinol that is present in cannabis and cannabis products,' or in other words, what different concentrations of THC delivered through various vehicles of consumption do to the body." The announcement "notes that applications are due in February, and comes on the heels of NIDA's establishment of a standardized dose of THC for research, which became a requirement in May." NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow told Cannabis Wire in May, "Past research has been important, but has limitations. And as a result of that, there has been a lot of questioning of the results that have emerged from that research. And we want to change that, such that the future studies can not be criticized for the lack of rigor in quantifying the level of exposure."

Pregnant Arizona Woman Charged For Using Marijuana Could Set Precedent For Future Moms.

[Miami Herald](#) (9/14, Mazhukhina, 647K) reports Arizona resident Lindsey Ridgell “is facing child neglect charges for using” medical marijuana during her pregnancy, potentially setting a national precedent. The article describes Ridgell’s use of medical marijuana, adding that soon after her delivery, “a social worker came to Ridgell’s hospital room and told her that she planned to report her to the Department of Child Safety, where Ridgell worked at the time.” McClatchy adds that “it is generally not recommended to use marijuana to treat severe nausea associated with pregnancy, and there is no research confirming that it’s safe to do so, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.”

Top Federal Drug Official Discusses Rise In Psychedelics Use And The Need To Study Marijuana From Dispensaries.

In an interview with [Marijuana Moment](#) (9/13, Jaeger), National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Director Nora Volkow on Thursday “spoke...about the need to decriminalize drug possession and her surprise that teen marijuana use has not increased as more states enact legalization.” Furthermore, “when it comes to cannabis research, she said scientists should be allowed to investigate products from state-legal dispensaries instead of using only government-grown plants.” Volkow “also discussed a new federal survey revealing that fewer college-aged adults are drinking alcohol and are instead opting for psychedelics and cannabis.” According to the article, “Monitoring the Future (MTF), a long-term epidemiological study, is meant to highlight patterns of behavior for the use of legal and illicit drugs, and its latest iteration found that past-year use of psychedelics like psilocybin and LSD among college students nearly doubled from 2019 to 2020, from five to nine percent.”

What’s The Most Used Illegal Drug In The Northeast?

[WTEN-TV](#) Albany, NY (9/9, Darmanjian, 58K) reports that “out of cocaine, heroin, LSD, and a host of other federally illegal drugs, marijuana is the most used in the Northeast.” Marijuana use “far surpasses” the use of “all other federally illegal drugs in the Northeast as well as the nation, according to the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA).” WTEN-TV adds that “the second most used illegal drugs in the Northeast are cocaine and hallucinogens, tied at 1.6%.”

FDA Announces Delay In Decisions On E-Cigarette Products, Including Juul.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/9, Maloney, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports the FDA has announced it needs to extend its deadline for deciding whether or not e-cigarette products can stay on the US market. The original deadline was Thursday, Sept. 9. The agency reported it had acted on 93% of the received applications.

The AP (9/9, Perrone) reports the FDA “said it rejected applications for nearly 950,000 e-cigarettes and related products, mainly due to their potential appeal to underage teens,” but has yet to rule on Juul, the most popular brand. In a statement, the agency said, “There’s more work to be done to complete our remaining reviews and ensure that we continue taking appropriate action to protect our nation’s youth from the dangers of all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.”

Fentanyl-Laced Drugs, Disguised As Prescription, Are Killing Teens Buying Them Online.

Filter Free Parents (9/9, Hamm) reported, “According to the CDC, deaths from drug overdoses have soared to over 95,000 over the past year,” which “is an increase of over 30% from 2019.” This is “the equivalent of 260 people dying PER DAY. Thousands of these overdose victims are teenagers and young adults. In the majority of cases, fentanyl-laced drugs are to blame.” National Institute on Drug Abuse Director Dr. Nora Volkow said, “It’s rare to find people who only overdose on cocaine or who only overdose on methamphetamines. Fentanyl is being used to lace the illicit drug market because it’s very profitable.”

Social Media Company Reps Meet With FDA Online To Discuss How To Curb Sale Of Opioids Online.

NBC News (9/10, Solon, 4.91M) reported, “Representatives from social media companies including Twitter, Facebook, Snap and TikTok met with the” FDA “on Thursday to discuss how to reduce the availability of opioids online.” The online event “included academics and law enforcement officials, and was not open to the public or media, focused on how the attendees could be more proactive and collaborative in their approach to identifying drug dealers and organized crime groups marketing opioids or certain ‘precursor’ ingredients used to bulk manufacture opioids such as fentanyl, according to” University of California San Diego Associate Professor Tim Mackey, who presented at the event.

Recro Takes On Big Brother Role With Opioid Addiction Drug Maker, Handling Manufacturing Duties And Advising On FDA Work.

Endpoints News (9/9, Sullivan) reports that CDMO Recro Pharma three weeks ago “acquired San Diego-based Irisys for \$50 million cash.” According to Endpoint News, “Recro will serve as both an advisor to BioCorRx in its small molecule development for its opiate addiction treatment drug, dubbed Bicx104, in addition to manufacturing it.” The FDA has approved the subcutaneous pellet of naltrexone “to start in-person trials, largely funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the NIH.”

Healthcare Company Groups Recover Together Finds Success In Telehealth Treatment Of Opioid Use Disorder.

[Healthcare IT News](#) (9/13, Siwicki, 2K) reports [healthcare company Groups Recover Together has seen success treating opioid use disorder through telehealth.](#) “Access to care is an ongoing issue in addiction therapy as the opioid epidemic has heavily impacted rural areas of the country where resources for in-person treatment are scarcer than in urban areas” but “by making telehealth more broadly available, Groups Recover Together can reach more patients who live outside the range of a reasonable drive to one of its brick-and-mortar clinics and address the opioid crisis in those communities that are hard to reach.”

White House Proposal To Criminalize Fentanyl Faces Resistance From Both Progressives And Conservatives.

[HuffPost](#) (9/15, Robillard, 363K) reports, “White House attempts to reach a middle ground on how to confront the still-raging opioid epidemic have drawn fire from across the ideological spectrum.” Both parties have issues with “the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy’s recommendation to permanently criminalize fentanyl” which is “a synthetic opioid that played a major role in driving a 30% increase in drug overdose deaths in 2020, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.” In response, the Administration “touts its public health steps to deal with the crisis” like requesting “more than \$10 billion for the Department of Health and Human Services to expand substance abuse treatment programs” and backing legislation “designed to eliminate sentencing disparities between white and Black drug users.”

Florida ‘Drug House’ With Enough Fentanyl To Kill 481K People Raided By Police.

[Newsweek](#) (9/8, Santora, 2.67M) reports [a Flagler County Sheriff’s Office raid operation in Florida led to the seizure of “916 grams” of illicit fentanyl.](#) The fentanyl was allegedly found in a Palm Coast home that is owned by Brian Pirraglia, according to the Newsweek article, which says Pirraglia and a tenant in that home, Michael Connelly, “were both arrested on various drug paraphernalia charges.” The arrests prompted Flagler County Sheriff Rick Staly to say, “Between these two poison peddlers, they had enough fentanyl to kill 481,000 people, which is more than the population of Flagler and St. Johns County combined.” The National Institute on Drug Abuse is mentioned.

Commentary Examines How To Change The Healthcare Industry To Ensure Physicians Have Mental Healthcare.

In a commentary for [US News & World Report](#) (9/9, 1.91M), Jennifer and Corey Feist write the [US healthcare industry needs a culture change regarding mental healthcare for physicians.](#) While “statistically, physicians have higher rates of

suicide than the general population,” many of them “don’t seek mental health care due to fear of negative consequences in the workplace, including retribution, exclusion, loss of license or even their job.” The Feists outline “six structural barriers that play a role in inhibiting them from seeking and obtaining mental health care” and “call on our nation’s health systems to circulate the facts related to their institution and state on each of the six structural barriers to mental health care for health care workers.”

How The Pandemic Is Changing Mental Health.

In an op-ed for [Scientific American](#) (9/14, 3.1M), mental health experts P. Murali Doraiswamy, Cameron Fox, and National Institute of Mental Health Director Joshua Gordon write, “While COVID is prima facie a physical malady, the disease has placed a massive burden on already strained mental health systems around the world,” but it “has forced us to confront this growing issue, and innovative thinkers have stepped up to the challenge.” So much so that “the World Economic Forum’s Global Future Council on Mental Health...set out to highlight the most innovative and game-changing advances in mental health.” The council examined “more than 60 nominations with an eye for solutions that are novel, bridge current gaps in access or care, improve on existing ways of doing things, have the highest near-term potential to spur progress in society, and enhance people’s mental lives.”

Increase In Suicide Rates From 1992-2019 Worse Among Those Without College Degrees, Data Show.

[Bloomberg](#) (9/13, Dmitrieva, 3.57M) reports, “While the suicide rate almost doubled among White non-Hispanics without a bachelor’s degree in the 1992-2019 period to about 31 per 100,000 people, there was almost no increase among those with a degree,” according to National Bureau of Economic Research [data](#). According to Bloomberg, “the broader issue...is that the U.S. economy and society ‘are no longer providing the basis for a good life’ for the less-educated.”

How Virtual Reality Therapy Can Help Make Bad Memories More Manageable.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/10, Rosen, 10.52M) reported virtual reality therapy “treatments use computer graphics, visual displays and various body motions and sensory inputs to plunge survivors of car crashes and roadside bombings, first responders, and those who suffer from a debilitating phobia back to the moment that started their trauma and fear.” This form of therapy is “gathering support,” and “recent papers published by the National Institutes of Health suggest a high efficacy rate.”

DIA:

Physician Telehealth Use Spiked From 25% In 2018 To 80% In 2020, Data Show

mHealth Intelligence (9/15, Wicklund) reports “telehealth use by physicians jumped from 25 percent in 2018 to almost 80 percent in 2020, while almost 85 percent of psychiatrists connected with the patients via video visit or telephone during the height of the pandemic, according to” an American Medical Association [survey](#) (PDF). The data show “psychiatrists were most likely to adopt telehealth,” pediatricians “scored above 76 percent,” and dermatologists “topped the list of those using video visits, at 87.3 percent, followed by urologists at 87.2 percent.”

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[NOT-DA-21-074](#)

[Notice of NIDA's Participation in RFA-AI-20-076, "New Technologies for the In vivo Delivery of Gene Therapeutics for an HIV Cure \(R01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)"](#)

[NOT-DA-21-082](#)

[Notice of Intent to Publish a Funding Opportunity Announcement for Accelerating the Pace of Drug Abuse Research Using Existing Data \(R21 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[NOT-DA-21-081](#)

[Notice of Intent to Publish a Funding Opportunity Announcement for Accelerating the Pace of Drug Abuse Research Using Existing Data \(R01 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[NOT-DA-21-080](#)

[Notice of Correction to the Key Date Section in PAR-21-320, "NIDA Research Education Program for Clinical Researchers and Clinicians \(R25 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)"](#)

[NOT-DA-21-020](#)

[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Evaluation of sex differences on HIV-associated comorbidities in the context of stimulant use](#)

[NOT-AA-21-042](#)

[Request for Information \(RFI\): Unhealthy Alcohol Use in Active Duty Military](#)

[PAS-21-270](#)

[AIDS-Science Track Award for Research Transition \(R03 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

CAR Member New Publications

Racial/ethnic equity in substance use treatment research: the way forward

Kathleen Burlew, Caravella McCuistian & José Szapocznik

Addiction Science & Clinical Practice Journal,

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13722-021-00256-4>

ABSTRACT

Background: Opioid use and opioid-related overdose continue to rise among racial/ethnic minorities. Social determinants of health negatively impact these communities, possibly resulting in poorer treatment outcomes. Research is needed to investigate how to overcome the disproportionate and deleterious impact of social determinants of health on treatment entry, retention, drug use and related outcomes among racial/ethnic minorities. The current commentary provides recommendations that may help researchers respond more effectively to reducing health disparities in substance use treatment.

We begin with recommendations of best research practices (e.g., ensuring adequate recruitment of racial/ethnic minorities in research, central components of valid analysis, and adequate methods for assessing effect sizes for racial/ethnic minorities). Then, we propose that more NIDA research focuses on issues disproportionately affecting racial/ethnic minorities. Next, techniques for increasing the number of underrepresented racial/ethnic treatment researchers are suggested. We then recommend methods for infusing racial/ethnic expertise onto funding decision panels. This commentary ends with a case study that features NIDA's National Drug Abuse Treatment Clinical Trials Network (CTN).

Conclusions: The proposed recommendations can serve as guidelines for substance use research funders to promote research that has the potential to reduce racial/ethnic disparities in substance use treatment and to increase training opportunities for racial/ethnic minority researchers.

