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News

July 2007

NIDA Study Suggests Crystal Methamphetamine Use in Young Adults Higher than Previously Reported

Crystal methamphetamine use among young adults in the United States is considerably higher than previous surveys indicate, according to new research funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The study, published in the July issue of the journal *Addiction*, found 2.8 percent of young adults (ages 18-26) reported the use of crystal methamphetamine in the past year during 2001-2002. This is higher than the annual prevalence of crystal methamphetamine use by young adults (ages 19-28) of 1.4 percent reported by NIDA's 2002 Monitoring the Future Survey.

Previous national surveys indicate that methamphetamine prevalence is highest among young adults, but until now, few scientific papers have looked at the characteristics and behaviors associated with its use in this age group. Using nationally representative data, and examining the age group most prone to methamphetamine use (ages 18-26), the study found that young adult users are disproportionately white and male and live in the West, and that the odds of use for Native Americans were 4.2 times higher than that for whites. Users also tend to have lower social economic status, use other substances, such as alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine, and the male users are more likely to have had incarcerated fathers.

"This new information gives us a clearer picture of use among young adults, and also raises new concerns, said NIH Director Dr. Elias A. Zerhouni." Use of crystal methamphetamine is associated with multiple health and social risks, including a negative impact on families as well as straining emergency departments and law enforcement resources."

"The study showed not only greater use of crystal methamphetamine, it also suggests the drug is associated with risky and antisocial behaviors, including other illicit drug use," said NIDA Director Dr. Nora D.

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Volkow. "By examining these connections, we hope to identify new avenues for treatment and prevention."

The study authors based their findings on data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), which asked respondents about their use of crystal methamphetamine in the past year and past 30 days. They examined certain characteristics of crystal methamphetamine users, such as their use of other substances, sociodemographics, and novelty-seeking behavior. They also looked at what was unique about crystal methamphetamine users compared to other drug users, and the associations between past year crystal methamphetamine use and antisocial or risk behaviors, such as crime/violence and risky sexual behavior. To maintain confidentiality, Add Health administered questionnaires via laptop computer using computer-assisted self-interviewing (CASI) technology.

The study found that use of crystal methamphetamine and associations with both criminal behavior and risky sex differed between men and women. Associations with both types of behaviors tended to be stronger among women than among men. Among women, the study found crystal methamphetamine use to be significantly associated with drug sales and risky sexual behavior, such as low condom use. However, the authors emphasize that more research is needed to determine whether women who sell drugs are more likely to use crystal methamphetamine or whether use of the drug leads to criminal drug sales among women.

Crystal methamphetamine (also referred to as "ice," "crystal," "glass," and "tina") is a common form of methamphetamine, a highly addictive stimulant that affects the central nervous system. As with the powdered form, users of crystal methamphetamine are drawn to its euphoric and stimulant effects, but the drug has higher purity and more potential for abuse. Typically smoked, it produces an immediate, intense sensation and has longer acting physiological effects than powder, which also amplifies its addiction potential and adverse health consequences. Those can include: mood disturbances, cardiovascular problems, heat stroke, convulsions, and psychotic symptoms that can sometimes last for months or years after methamphetamine abuse has ceased.

"This study presents a new perspective on crystal methamphetamine users in the United States," said Dr.

Denise D. Hallfors, of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation and a co-author on the study. "We hope that this new information will aid in the development of appropriate interventions and help to inform public policy" (from [NIDA News Release](#), June 15, 2007).

Iowa Bears Deep Scars from an Intractable War

LAURENS, Iowa -- Methamphetamine has claimed every tooth in Dennis Patten's head, which is why his face is caving into his jaw and why just about everything south of his neck is falling apart.

The squat Patten is a 28-year veteran of Iowa's drug wars, 25 of them spent as an addict, and the last three as an uncertain just-say-no convert torn by gnawing cravings for the drugs that have crippled him.

"I can't honestly say that if you dumped some [meth] right here," he said, tapping a couple of fingers on a table in front of him, "that I'd turn it down."

Like Patten, Iowa is struggling with meth.

In the two years since the state enacted a law limiting the availability of pseudoephedrine, a major ingredient in the manufacture of methamphetamine, the number of homemade meth lab incidents across the state has plummeted. At the same time, though, investigators say imports of a more powerful form of meth called "ice," from the Southwest U.S. and Mexico, are soaring.

"Ice trends in Iowa over the last three years have an eerie resemblance to the explosion of meth labs in our state in preceding years," a recent state report said.

And in Iowa as well as the Midwest, it's not clear that anyone is winning the drug war. In 2006, the Midwest had six of the nation's top 10 states in the number of meth lab incidents, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

"If I run into someone who's used [drugs], I get cravings," Patten said, silently acknowledging that, as drug counselors point out, 9 out of 10 meth addicts fall back into meth abuse.

The battle against illegal drugs is often measured in

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numbers -- grams, ounces and pounds, street sale value, state and federal dollars available for drug investigations, and arrests and convictions.

But numbers alone often obscure the struggles of police agencies battling the gopher-hole-type challenge of illegal drugs and of addicts trying to recover from years of addiction and the physical toll on their bodies. Addiction produces its own set of numbers, such as rising health-care costs, increased caseloads at drug treatment centers, more children exposed to drugs and higher rates of burglaries and domestic abuse.

Iowa is a sparsely populated state, ranking 30th nationally, with just under 3 million people. But the combination of wide-open spaces and a good road system has helped make Iowa and other agriculture-oriented states in the Midwest a haven for homemade meth. Just about any farm will have anhydrous ammonia, a key ingredient in fertilizer and in the production of meth.

There has been a big drop in homemade meth lab incidents, and that, said Gary Kendell, director of the Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy, has reduced the threat to the environment and to children.

"But we still have a real problem," Kendell said, pointing to a rising number of adults treated for substance abuse other than alcohol -- up 36 percent since 2000. Over the same time period, cocaine and crack cocaine seizures have soared.

At the Clay County Sheriff's office, in Spencer, Investigator Casey Timmer tries to put the progress into perspective. "I think we win the battles we get into, but I don't know if that's winning the war," Timmer said (as reported by Tim Jones for the Chicago Tribune, June 3, 2007).

Meth Adds Scourge to Troubled Native American Lands

HOGBACK, New Mexico (Reuters) - A brutal triple slaying in this remote corner of the vast Navajo reservation brought home what experts have seen coming for years: an explosion in crime on tribal lands linked to the cheap, potent and highly addictive stimulant methamphetamine.

"Meth is the biggest scourge," says Francis Bradley, the chief of police for the Hualapai reservation in northern Arizona, located on the high desert flanking the south rim of the Grand Canyon.

"Alcohol is a big issue, too. But when you look at meth, it has a far more devastating effect."

In 2001, the Indian Health Service recorded 2,980 emergency room visits and paramedic calls on reservations related to the drug, which is also known as speed, crank, ice, crystal and glass. By 2006, that number had mushroomed to 8,873.

"Alcohol continues to be a bigger destroyer of lives than meth," said James Stone, acting director in IHS's division of behavior. "But meth makes more of an impact because of the, frankly, wild behavior it triggers."

The savageness of the Hogback slayings in November 2005 provided an all-too-vivid illustration of that. The three victims, all tribal members, were each shot multiple times -- one 14 times. The government alleges the four suspects, also tribal members, were meth dealers bent on revenge. All four await trial in Albuquerque on first degree murder charges.

Last year, in the wake of the Hogback killings and other signs of the impact meth was having on reservations, the Bureau of Indian Affairs surveyed tribal law enforcement agencies across the country about drug threats on their lands.

Three quarters identified meth as their No. 1 problem and linked it to a rise in domestic violence, assaults, burglaries and child abuse and child neglect.

"So people are not only destroying their own lives by using this illegal substance, but they're perpetrating new crimes, primarily violent crimes," says Chris Chaney, the deputy director of the office of justice services at the bureau. "That's the even more tragic story. It's drawing in innocent victims."

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While meth use in the general population is falling, it appears to be rising in the 500 Native American tribes from Alaska to New England

Experts say a number of factors -- including the long use of hallucinogens like peyote for rituals and herbs for medicines by the tribes as well as a more recent problem of alcohol abuse -- help account for the rise in meth use.

In addition, many reservations are located in remote, rural areas. As a result, they are places of underemployment, grinding poverty and reliance on government assistance, where residents live in aged mobile homes or poorly constructed conventional houses.

The bureau's Chaney said there was also evidence that meth dealers are now specifically targeting Indian communities.

"They know that on many reservations there are high levels of substance abuse already," he says. "So some drug cartels figure they can move in and take advantage of that addictive behavior and replace whatever the substance being abused -- alcohol, marijuana or something else -- with meth addiction."

To combat the problem, the bureau has asked for an additional \$16 million (8 million pounds) in its 2008 budget to battle the rise of methamphetamine on reservations. But Dirk Kempthorne, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, which oversees bureau, earlier this year warned that the problem was approaching crisis.

"It has the potential of wiping out an entire generation of Native American youth," he said (as reported by [Reuters UK](#) on June 11, 2007).

Navajo County Coalition Breaks Through Stigma to Curb Methamphetamine Abuse

For coalition leaders in Navajo County, Ariz.—where methamphetamine abuse is the number one problem—the toughest challenge was not only keeping more youth from joining the ranks of meth users, it was getting the community to accept that it had a problem.

The statistics speak for themselves. Among Arizona counties, Navajo County ranks as the highest in methamphetamine use among 12th graders; and the second highest among 8th and 10th graders. In addition, 90 percent of Navajo County inmates are charged with meth-related crimes; and 62 percent of DUI arrests in the county are meth-related.

However, when the Navajo County Coalition Against Drug Abuse began trying to address the problem three years ago few people would even talk about the issue. This was due largely to the dynamic make-up of the county, where 48 percent of the population is Native American, 8 percent is Hispanic and many hold strong religious beliefs where talking openly about problems is frowned upon.

"For us, it was all about breaking through the stigmas and stereotypes in the community. Many families didn't see it as their problem and in communities like the large Mormon community, this was not something they were open to discussing," explained Debe Campbell, Director of the Navajo County Coalition Against Drug Abuse. Campbell noted that it also didn't help that methamphetamine remains legal on some Native American reservations, such as the Hopi Reservation. The Navajo Nation Council only made the drug illegal in February 2005.

To break down some of the community barriers, the group held town halls and community forums across the county, featuring people in recovery from the local area, and are running public service announcements highlighting local stories of recovery on major county radio stations, cable television and theater screens. "By doing this, people began to realize that it was not about 'those people talking to us about their problem,' it was about 'people talking to us about our problem,'" Campbell explained. "They could see how it was impacting their own communities."

The group also conducted in-service training for teachers throughout the school district and interactive forums with students. For many of the kids who participated in the forums, it was evident that methamphetamine was nothing new to them. "It struck a nerve with some of them because they recognized what was happening in their own households," Campbell noted. "Some kids left in tears." These sessions were coupled with a two-week

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summer program designed to help at-risk youth develop their self-esteem and better deal with anger and anxiety.

The group is now developing a curriculum that it hopes to implement in the schools next year, and is holding parent-student sessions in the evening to get parents involved in the conversation.

"It's amazing that we've seen a complete turnaround in the community. Just by bringing it out of the closet and on to the table, people now see methamphetamine use as everybody's problem," Campbell said.

Navajo County is one of 10 counties participating in Arizona's Methamphetamine Project, designed to address the state's growing methamphetamine problem. According to the 2006 Arizona Youth Survey, more than 3,000 Arizona middle- and high-school students reported using meth at least once in the past 30 days. The issue is among the state's top priorities.

For more information on the Arizona Meth Project, visit www.arizonamethproject.org (as reported by [Coalitions Online](#), June 21, 2007).

A National Movie-Making Campaign to Stop the Spread of Methamphetamine

BAY CITY, WI - June 11, 2007 - A grassroots campaign is just beginning; one designed to stop methamphetamine with the help of local community youth, their talent and their love for the movies.

Methamphetamine is systematically sweeping across the United States from west to east ravaging families and communities as it goes. It's a devastating drug that crosses the line for recreational use and it has to be stopped. Taproot, Inc. believes it can; on the grassroots level, by promoting the creative talent of each community's youth. Taproot is sponsoring a National "Meth-Movie" contest opportunity for all students.

According to Taproot CEO, Linda Flanders, "Communities can encourage their young people to use their talent and love of pop culture to jump in and make a short movie that is entertaining, but more importantly, educates everyone about the dangers of methamphetamine." The final big national premiere is

November 30th, the day all movie entries are shown in their own hometown for National Methamphetamine Awareness Day. Says Flanders, "Everyone involved learns while making the movie, then learns even more by watching their own creation."

The rules of the movie making contest are simple: 1) Follow the researched script, 2) Film like a silent movie with action, gestures and expressions, 3) Add a narrator who tells the story, and 4) Showcase local music. Show the movie in town as part of National Methamphetamine Awareness Day on November 30th and send it in. Student filmmakers can win cash, Apple Computers, Final Cut professional editing software and a Panasonic DVX 100 camera. Communities can continue to use the movie in schools and community venues until everyone in town is educated. Says Flanders; "We want to offer an alternative to drugs and alcohol by engaging today's youth in the excitement that movies and music offer; plus promote their creative skills with today's digital technology." Taproot's Vice President, Dr. Dorothy Halla-Poe adds, "We also want to help young people learn to solve their own generation's problems and become constructive activists in their own community." Research for the movie script came from families and experts in Minnesota and Western Wisconsin. The structure of the movie script is based on Dr. Stanley Greenspan's work in early childhood development, Dr. Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences and interests, Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais' work with functional learning and Ron Davis' work on learning difficulties from the Davis Dyslexia Institute. "If you want someone to learn something, have them create it," says Davis.

Taproot, Inc. was founded in 1997 to promote the use of the media arts for learning. They research and design short movie, song and stage play scripts into production templates that can be replicated by any community. The "meth-movie" contest is open to all students, regardless of age. Movies are to be shown locally on November 30th and sent in by December 10, 2007. Prizes are awarded in February 2008 (as reported by [MMD Newswire](#) on June 11, 2007).

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San Francisco Campaign Launched to Target Meth Epidemic

The San Francisco Department of Public Health is launching a "Resist Meth" campaign today that targets gay and bisexual men.

Use of methamphetamine is 10 to 20 times higher in gay men than in the general population, according to the health department. The drug increases sexual desire and stamina and reduces inhibitions, often leading to a higher frequency of unprotected sex, officials said.

"Methamphetamine use is the primary driver of HIV transmission among gay men in San Francisco," said Tracy Packer, the health department's director of HIV Prevention. "By addressing the issue of meth use head on, we will directly impact the spread of HIV."

Jason Riggs, deputy director of the STOP AIDS Project and a member of the campaign's advisory group, said gay and bi men who use crystal meth are three to four times more likely to contract HIV, or human immunodeficiency virus.

The campaign, which includes posters, postcards, a brochure and advertisements, was developed in cooperation with Mayor Gavin Newsom's Task Force on Methamphetamine and Boston's Fenway Community Health.

It is being launched simultaneously in San Francisco and Boston (as reported by [CBS5 Bay City Newswire](#) on June 12, 2007).

NACo will hold a Methamphetamine Discussion Session at Annual Conference

The Methamphetamine Discussion Session Breakfast held at NACo's Annual Conference in Richmond, VA will be an opportunity for county officials to discuss what is happening with methamphetamine in their county, how they are addressing the distribution and use of the drug and any challenges they are facing in the process. Breakfast will be provided and it will be a good opportunity for folks to pool resources and exchange their experiences in addressing this epidemic at the county

level. The Methamphetamine Discussion Session Breakfast will be held on Sunday, July 15, 8:00AM – 9:00AM in Room B14 (for more information on this session contact Justin Carmody at jcarmody@naco.org or 202.942.4279).

Studies/Reports

New Jersey Profile of Drug Indicators

The Office of National Drug Control Policy has released a [profile](#) of the state of New Jersey, containing information on demographics, political figures, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, enforcement, and drug treatment.

Resources

National Congress of American Indians Meth Toolkit

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Methamphetamine Task Force unveiled its new interactive toolkit to fight methamphetamine abuse in Indian Country at the organization's Mid-Year Session in Anchorage, AK. NO METH in Tribal Communities is a comprehensive planning toolkit for tribal leaders and educators to utilize in the fight on methamphetamine abuse and trafficking.

The toolkit includes a leader's guide, examples of tribal codes for criminalizing meth and helping with meth lab clean up, and presentation guides focusing on the effects of meth, as well as information cards for businesses in the community. For more information or to order a toolkit, visit <http://www.ncai.org>.

Methamphetamine: A Practitioner's Reference, 2007

The California Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs has made available online a publication, [Methamphetamine: A Practitioner's Reference, 2007](#). The publication provides an overview of methamphetamine and the effects of addiction, as well as

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guidelines for assessment, treatment, and recovery. The publication provides information on clinical issues related to methamphetamine use, along with suggested treatment strategies for practitioners working with individuals addicted to methamphetamine.

California Meth Action

[California Meth Action](#) is website maintained by the Community Prevention Initiative that features a comprehensive list of documents and resources to aid communities in their efforts to address methamphetamine. The website includes materials on prevention, as well as training guides and resources for community action.

Surveys

NACo's Criminal Effect of Meth on Communities Survey Available

If you are interested in obtaining a hard copy of our July 2006 survey exploring the impact of meth use on local criminal justice systems and the communities they serve, we have a number of copies. To obtain the survey please just contact Justin Carmody at jcarmody@naco.org or (202) 942-4279 giving your address and number of copies you would like to receive.

Funding

ACF Grants to Fund Programs for Children Affected by Methamphetamine

The Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau, has announced the [availability of competitive grant funds](#) authorized by the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program. The grants will be awarded to regional partnerships which promote interagency collaboration and integration of services to enhance the safety and well-being of children affected by a parent's or other caretaker's methamphetamine or other substance abuse. **Please note that application**

procedures have been modified – see the announcement for details. Applications are due July 3, 2007.

Meth Training and Technical Assistance Grants

The Community Oriented Policing Services will award grants of \$5000-\$500,000 through the [Methamphetamine Training and Technical Assistance program](#). Nonprofits, schools, government agencies, and businesses are among those eligible to submit proposals for training and technical assistance initiatives that advance community policing and problem-solving strategies to combat methamphetamine. Proposals should demonstrate the capacity to have a national impact, either through direct training or the distribution of information and resources. Applications are due July 2, 2007.

Advancing Recovery: State and Provider Partnerships for Quality Addiction Care

[Advancing Recovery](#) is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation designed to support innovative partnerships between provider organizations and single state agencies (SSAs) to promote the use of evidence-based practices by making systemic changes to regulatory, clinical and administrative practices. Proposals must represent a partnership involving the SSA and at least three treatment provider organizations involved in a plan to identify and address barriers that impede the use of evidence based practices. Up to six two-year grants of up to \$180,000 each will be awarded. Online application deadline is August 16, 2007.

Events/Training Opportunities

National Indian Justice Center Conference: For All My Relations

Date: July 12-14, 2007. Location: Garden Grove, CA.

The eighth annual conference of the National Indian Justice Center, [For All My Relations](#), will feature special

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workshops for youth and will include a training session on methamphetamine and its effects. For more information

July 2007 PESI Seminars on the Meth Epidemic

PESI, LLC. Date: July 25 – 27, 2007. Location: Towson, MD, Columbia, MD, and Fairfax, VA

In July 2007, PESI will lead a series of seminars on the meth epidemic in Towson, MD (July 25), Columbia, MD (July 26), and Fairfax, VA (July 27). Each seminar will provide information about methamphetamine and approaches to prevent relapse and rearrest. Information on the seminar and registration is available in their [online brochure](#).

State and Local Law Enforcement Training Symposium

Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. Date: August 21-23, 2007. Location: Bismarck, ND.

This [free training opportunity](#) for law enforcement officers, co-hosted by the Bismarck Police Department, will feature a series of workshops led by federal, state, and local law enforcement experts. Workshops will include sessions on clandestine methamphetamine labs and lab identification.

14th National Conference on Drugs and Crime

National Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC). Date: October 14-17, 2007. Location: Westminster, Colorado

This year's conference will emphasize community efforts to aid successful recovery and reentry and will include a session on methamphetamine. Information and registration are available [online](#).

The purpose of this monthly electronic newsletter is to provide county officials, administrators, criminal justice and mental health professionals, and other interested parties relevant information on the nation's methamphetamine problem. Information is gathered from many sources each month through a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

If you have questions or comments regarding the content of this newsletter, please send a message to jcarmody@naco.org.