

CANADA: "Health Outcomes Associated with Methamphetamine Use Among Young People: A Systematic Review"
Addiction Vol. 105; No. 6: P. 991-1002 (06..10):: Brandon D.L. Marshall; Daniel Werb

The authors noted that methamphetamine (MA) use among young people is a significant social, economic, and public health concern for affected communities as well as policymakers. A strong base of scientific evidence is needed to craft effective public health interventions in response.

The researchers conducted a systematic review to identify scientific studies of health outcomes associated with MA use among persons ages 10 to 24. The International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) was used to categorize outcomes and determine the level of evidence for each series of harms.

In all, 47 eligible studies were identified for review. The results showed consistent associations between MA use and several mental health outcomes, including depression, suicidal ideation, and psychosis. Among young MA users, suicide and overdose appear to be significant sources of morbidity and mortality. "Evidence for a strong association between MA use and increased risk of [HIV] and other [STDs] is equivocal," the authors wrote. "Finally, we identified only weak evidence of an association between MA use and dental diseases among young people."

"Available evidence indicates a consistent relationship between MA use and mental health outcomes (e.g. depression, psychosis) and an increased risk of mortality due to suicide and overdose," the authors concluded. "We found insufficient evidence of an association between MA use and other previously cited harms, including infectious diseases and dental outcomes. As such, future research of higher methodological quality is required to further investigate possible associations. Current interventions should focus attention upon MA-related health outcomes for which sound scientific evidence is available."