

The rise, risks, and realities of methamphetamine use among women: Implications for research, prevention and treatment

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Abstract

Methamphetamine (meth) is a highly addictive psychostimulant which activates the brains reward pathway like no other substance. It is associated with risky sexual practices, HIV/AIDS, antisocial behavior, and violence. For the first time, women are presenting for treatment with a primary methamphetamine use disorder at higher rates than men. Yet, current treatment and prevention initiatives may not be sufficiently sensitive to the unique risks associated with women's use of meth. This article describes the history and rise of methamphetamine and outlines the qualities of meth that contribute to its unique social and environmental impact. Specific attention is devoted to women's experiences with meth focusing on sexual practices, HIV/AIDS, antisocial and violent behavior. Implications for treatment, prevention and research are discussed.

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