

The Methamphetamine Use Problem: From a Health System Lens

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October 9, 2019



According to Research and News Reports...



- Methamphetamine use has returned with a vengeance with double the case numbers identified over the course of the decade – *New York Times*
- Methamphetamine use vastly outpaces opioid use, but is overshadowed by all the attention on the opioid epidemic - *HealthDay*
- A large percentage of methamphetamine use involves alcohol and other drugs – *SAMHSA*
- Significant crossover between methamphetamine use and mental illness – *National Center for Biotechnology Information*
- Methamphetamine use results in serious medical conditions and complications requiring long hospital stays – *National Institute of Drug Abuse*
- Social consequences of long term methamphetamine use tragic – *Medical News Today*
- Methamphetamine is increasing among older individuals – *Journal of Addiction*

Health Systems See the Reality of a Frightening Health Issue

Methamphetamine use has returned with a vengeance with double the case numbers identified over the course of the decade – New York Times

- What do the numbers say at Dignity Health hospitals (Mercy San Juan, Methodist, Mercy General and Mercy Hospital Folsom)?

	Aug. 2016 – Aug. 2016	Aug. 2018 – Aug. 2019	Percent Change
Methamphetamine Cases (Primary and Secondary Conditions)	2,412	4,044	68% increase!

- 3,543 of the total 4,044 cases were unique encounters

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Methamphetamine use vastly outpaces opioid use, but is overshadowed by all the attention on the Opioid epidemic - HealthDay

- How do cases related to methamphetamine use compare to cases for opioid use disorders in our hospitals?

	Aug. 2015 – Aug. 2016	Aug. 2018 – Aug. 2019	Percent Growth
Methamphetamine Cases	2,412	4,044	68% increase
Opioid Cases	600	640	7% increase

- The prevalence of methamphetamine cases in Dignity Health hospitals is almost 7 times greater than opioid cases!

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A large percentage of methamphetamine use involves alcohol and other drugs – SAMHSA

- 28% of the total 4,044 methamphetamine cases seen in Dignity Health hospitals involved other substance use
 - Alcohol most common
 - Cannabis
 - Cocaine
 - Opioids
 - Other unspecified stimulants



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Significant crossover between methamphetamine use and mental illness

— National Center for Biotechnology Information

- 18% of the individuals presenting to our hospitals for methamphetamine abuse have mental illnesses
- Wide range of mental disorders:
 - Schizophrenia and paranoia
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Homicidal and suicidal ideation
 - Bi-polar
 - Hallucinations
- Methamphetamine users are often violent, aggressive, dangerous to themselves and others and hard to manage

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Methamphetamine use results in serious medical conditions and complications requiring long hospital stays – *National Institute of Drug Abuse*

- Of the total 4,044 individuals presenting to Dignity Health emergency departments, 343 were discharged home
- The remaining 3,701 had medical conditions that required admission to the inpatient units
- Most common and serious medical conditions we see:
 - ✓ Respiratory disease
 - ✓ Heart disease
 - ✓ Stroke
 - ✓ Kidney disease
 - ✓ Infections (sepsis, skin, dental)
- Pregnancy and labor complications are significant
- Also numerous cases of HIV and Hepatitis
- Average length of stay in the hospital for all 4,044 cases is 5.33 days
 - *This represents over 21,500 hospital days a year*

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Social consequences of long term methamphetamine use tragic – *Medical News Today*

- Of the total 4,044 methamphetamine cases at Dignity Health hospitals:
 - 2,636 or 65% were unemployed
 - 1,008 or 25% were disabled
 - Only 28 reported being homeless



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Methamphetamine is increasing among older individuals – Journal of Addiction

- Overwhelmingly, the majority of methamphetamine cases seen in Dignity Health hospitals are actually younger individuals – 91%
 - Between the ages of 20 and 39
 - Average age is 29
 - Youngest age was 8
- The remaining 9% of methamphetamine cases are individuals 40 years and older
 - Average age is 51
 - Oldest age is 90
- The prevalence of methamphetamine use continues to be more prominent among males than females – with males representing 56% of the total cases

Methamphetamine Use Crosses Many Demographic Boundaries

- Methamphetamine cases presenting to our emergency departments are concentrated in several communities:
 - City of Sacramento
 - Citrus Heights
 - Carmichael
 - North Highlands
 - Rancho Cordova
 - Elk Grove
- However, cases are widespread across the region - Rio Linda, Fair Oaks, Orangevale, Folsom, communities in El Dorado, Placer and Nevada Counties, the Bay Area and elsewhere
- 71% of all individuals seen are insured by Medi-Cal or Medi-Medi
 - 15% Medicare
 - 9% Commercial
 - 4% Uninsured
 - 1% Veterans



Recidivism Rates are High Among this Patient Population

- For many methamphetamine users, the emergency department has become a revolving door
- Case studies:

Male, 62 years of age has had 30 encounters at Dignity Health hospitals in past 12 months.

Health issues: thrombosis, hepatitis C, uncontrolled asthma, diverticulitis, major depressive orders, schizophrenia, alcohol and other substance abuse in addition to methamphetamine.

15 inpatient psychiatric hospitalization in past seven years.

Currently linked to services, but non-compliant with appointments and medications.

Female, 42 years of age has had 16 encounters at Dignity Health hospitals in past 12 months.

Health issues: homeless, congestive heart failure, liver cirrhosis, hypertension, bipolar disorder in addition to methamphetamine addiction.

No history of linkage to services or inpatient psychiatric hospitalization.

How Do We Reach This Patient Population?

- Emergency Departments present an important opportunity to intervene with methamphetamine users
- Hospital staff can be instrumental in educating patients and their families about the negative physical, mental and social health consequences of continued use
- Can offer referrals to treatment and counseling services
- Doing this now for individuals with opioid use disorders
- Welcome ideas for partnering with our community to address this health issue

Questions?

Thank You!