



THE INFORMANT



Meth Watch Member e-Letter

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Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council's (GSSAC) Prevention Center
Spokane County Meth Action Team (MAT)

ONE HIT OF CRYSTAL METH CAUSES BIRTH DEFECTS & AFFECTS FETUS AT ALL STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

A single prenatal dose of methamphetamine may be enough to cause long-term neurodevelopmental problems in babies, say University of Toronto researchers.

In research published in the August issue of *Free Radical Biology and Medicine*, U of T pharmacy and pharmacology professor Peter Wells and his colleagues determined that exposing pregnant mice only once to methamphetamine led to delivery of offspring with long-term neurodevelopmental problems, including reduced motor coordination. Methamphetamine is a potent and addictive stimulant.

"We've known for a while that meth abuse during pregnancy is associated with low birth weight, cleft palates and other malformations but this is the first research demonstrating that even a single exposure can cause long-term damage," says Wells. "It's pretty remarkable that a single low dose can have such an effect."

The developing fetus appears to be vulnerable to DNA damage from methamphetamine exposure because it hasn't yet developed the enzymes that protect it against free radicals -- highly activated, destructive oxygen molecules that have been implicated in cancer and neurodegenerative diseases, says Wells. This vulnerability lasts from the embryonic stage through the later fetal period, times when organ structures and mental functions develop.

"Methamphetamine has very different toxic effects in the fetal brain than in adult mice, which surprised me," says Wells. "In adults, you can see actual structural degeneration of the brain."

ScienceDaily

True or False:

Mothers charged with child maltreatment using Meth have the same characteristics as women who use alcohol or opiates.

False: Meth's effects are like no other drug. Meth forces the user to lose the cognitive ability to rationalize what's important (food, shelter, children).

Children with parents who are addicted to meth: lack supervision, have poor hygiene, lack consistent physical care but also uncovered additional behaviors, beliefs and practices detrimental to children.

In addition to the physical abuse, children are also at risk of sexual abuse, because it is believed that meth users experience heightened sexual desire while on the drug.





Washington State Rx Watch Community Presentation



*** In 2005, 2.1 million teens abused prescription drugs ***

*** Accidental poisonings, primarily Rx drug overdoses, now kill more people than car accidents ***

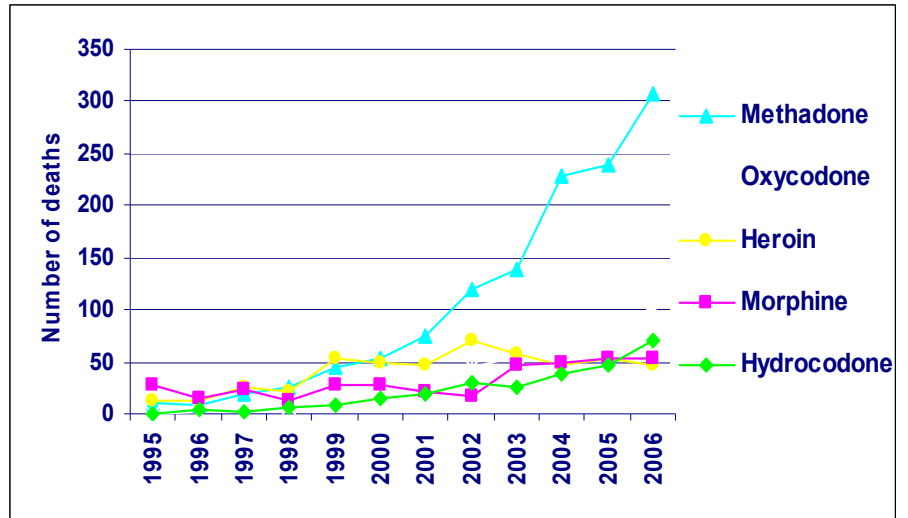
Teens (and adults) are turning away from street drugs and using prescription drugs to get high. New users of prescription drugs have caught up with new users of marijuana.

Those who are abusing prescription drugs generally believe the myth that these drugs are safer than 'illicit drugs.' In reality, prescription drugs are just as dangerous & just as addicting as any street drug.

Prescription drug overdoses have increased 800 percent in Washington between 1995, when 260 overdoses deaths were reported, to 2004, when 555 state residents died from overdoses on opiate pain medications.

Pain relievers such as OxyContin, Methadone & Vicodin are the most commonly abused prescription drugs.

Doctors are prescribing more of these controlled substances; the number of prescriptions escalated from 40 million in 1991 to 190 million in 2007 (350% increase). Living in a society where popping a pill can fix any problem, there are more of these medications readily available for people to get their hands on.



Unintentional Poisoning Deaths WA State Death Certificate Data, 2005-2006

<u>TYPE OF DRUG</u>	<u>NUMBER OF DEATHS</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Prescription	709	63
Illicit	118	11
Both	243	22
Neither	46	4
TOTAL	1116	

WA State Rx Watch presentations coming soon...
For more information contact: Lacey Jones @ 922-8383

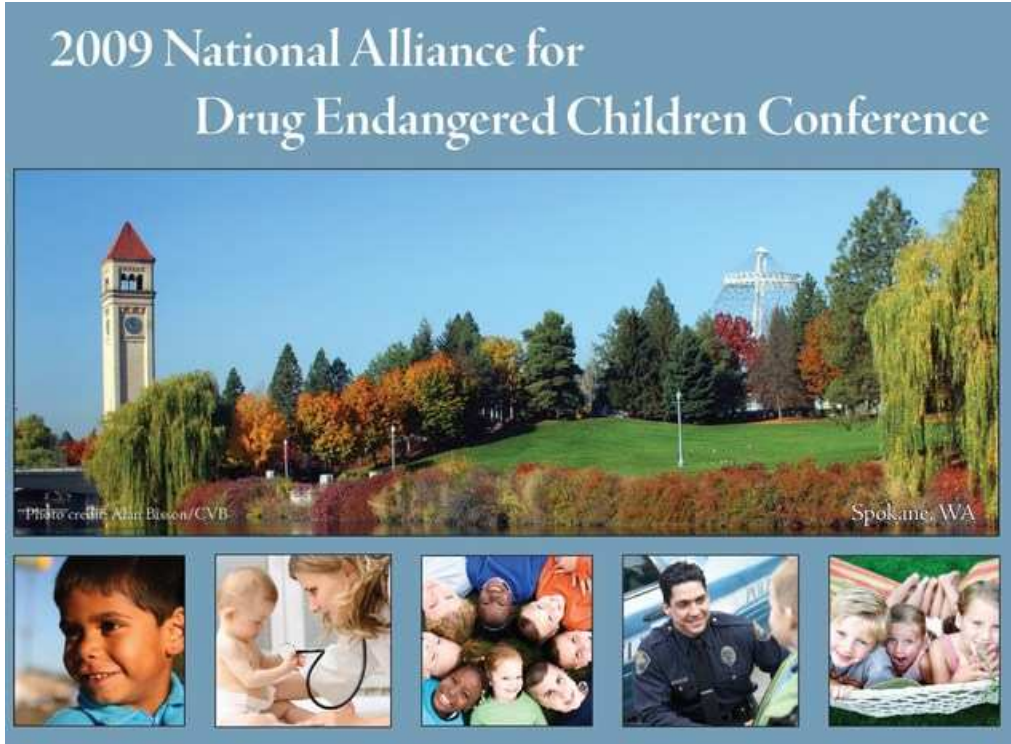
Events

September 22-24

**Red Lion Hotel at the Park
303 W. North River Drive
Spokane, WA 99201**

**6th Annual National Alliance
for Drug Endangered Children
(DEC) Conference**

**3-day training for both
practitioners & community
members on research and
best practice strategies to
address DEC issues at the
community, state &
national levels.**



For more information and to register online, go to www.nationaldec.org OR Lee Lingard @ 922-8383

From Hurt to Hope Conference

**October 20-21st
Wenatchee, WA**

Featuring Dr. Robert Anda
Co-author of the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

Sessions on the implications of childhood trauma on our communities' health

**For additional information, contact:
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