IMPAIRMENT BASED LEGISLATIVE LIMITS FOR DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF NON-ALCOHOL DRUGS IN NORWAY


Aims: When non-alcohol drugs are detected in blood samples from apprehended drivers in Norway, individualised expert opinions are required to evaluate degree of impairment. For alcohol, legislative limits have been in use since 1936. To harmonize the current practice for driving under the influence of alcohol and non-alcohol drugs, a judicial reform with legislative limits for non-alcohol drugs has been suggested.

Methods: Impairment limits, representing drug concentrations in blood likely to be accompanied by a degree of impairment comparable to a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.02%, were proposed for 20 psychotropic drugs, including the most prevalent benzodiazepines, cannabis, GHB, hallucinogens and opioids. Limits for graded sanctions, representing drug concentrations in blood likely to induce impairment comparable to BACs of 0.05% and 0.12%, were defined for 13 of the 20 substances. The suggested limits were based on assessments of impairment after single doses of the drugs in naive individuals. The proposed limits will not apply to individuals with valid prescriptions for medicinal drugs, where the present system with individualised expert evaluations will be maintained.

Conclusion: Norway is the first country planning to implement legislative limits for non-alcohol drugs corresponding to impairment seen at increasing BACs. The background and justification for the suggested limits are presented herein.

ALCOHOL IN MOVIES MAY INFLUENCE TEENS’ DRINKING HABITS, STUDY SUGGESTS

By Join Together Staff | March 7, 2012

The amount of drinking children and teens see in movies may influence their own drinking habits, suggests a new study conducted in six European nations. Researchers gave surveys to more than 16,000 students, ages 10 to 19, in Germany, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Scotland. They were asked to check off which of 50 movies that were popular in their country they had seen. For each movie,
the researchers counted how many times characters were shown drinking alcohol, according to Reuters. At least 86 percent of the movies had at least one drinking scene. The researchers compared the students’ exposure to alcohol in the movies with how many of them reported ever engaging in binge drinking (having five or more drinks on a single occasion). Twenty-seven percent of the students reported binge drinking at least once, they reported in *Pediatrics*.

The study found an association between viewing on-screen drinking and students’ own drinking behavior. Between 10 to 20 percent of students who viewed the least on-screen drinking had binged themselves, compared with 40 percent who had seen the most on-screen drinking.

It is not known whether the students started binge drinking before or after they saw the movies, the researchers point out. They did take into account other factors, such as the students’ risk-taking behavior, their academic record, and how much their friends and family drank.

Study author Reiner Hanewinkel, PhD, told Reuters that teenagers “have seen at least thousands of impressions of smoking and drinking, so it shapes their attitude that these kinds of behavior are adult-like behavior. It makes the alcohol drinking look cool and sexy and so-on.”

**TEENS DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MARIJUANA**

By Join Together Staff | February 23, 2012

According to a recent study, nearly one in five (19 percent) of teens say they have gotten behind the wheel after smoking marijuana. As reported in USA Today, the national study of nearly 2,300 11th- and 12th-graders was commissioned by Liberty Mutual Insurance and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD). It showed that a growing percentage of teens do not see marijuana use as a distraction while driving, with 70 percent of teens saying it is “very” or “extremely” distracting, down from 78 percent in 2009.

Stephen Wallace, senior advisor for Policy, Research and Education at SADD, said the findings reflect a “dangerous trend toward the acceptance of marijuana and other substances compared to our study of teens conducted just two years ago…both in terms of the increased use of marijuana and from the perspective that many think this is not a danger.”

Other studies, like the University of Michigan’s “Monitoring the Future” of 47,000 eighth-, 10th and 12th-graders, reflect this trend. That study revealed marijuana use rose in 2011 for the fourth straight year, with daily use at a 30-year peak level among high school seniors.
Of those teens who have driven after smoking pot, 36 percent say it presents no distraction when operating a vehicle. Nineteen percent say alcohol is no distraction, and 13 percent of teens report driving under the influence of alcohol.

ACAMPROSATE FOR ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE: A SEX-SPECIFIC META-ANALYSIS BASED ON INDIVIDUAL PATIENT DATA.


**Background:** It is unknown whether women derive comparable benefits and have a similar safety and tolerability profile as men from acamprosate, a widely prescribed drug for the maintenance of abstinence in alcohol dependence. The objective of this study was to assess sex-specific differences in the efficacy, safety, and tolerability of acamprosate in the treatment of women and men with alcohol dependence.

**Methods:** A sex-specific meta-analysis was conducted based on individual patient data (IPD). Data were obtained from double-blind, randomized controlled trials with quantitative drinking measures in patients with alcohol dependence receiving oral acamprosate or placebo. Sources included PubMed, PsychInfo, and Cochrane electronic databases; reference lists from retrieved articles and presentations at professional meetings; and direct access to authors and companies who provided IPD.

**Results:** Individual records were obtained from 1,317 women and 4,794 men who participated in 22 eligible studies conducted in 18 countries. IPD meta-analyses found a significant beneficial effect of acamprosate relative to placebo across all 4 efficacy end points: an incremental gain of 10.4% (95% CI 7.1 to 13.7, \( p < 0.001 \)) in percentage of abstinent days, an incremental gain of 11.0% (7.4 to 14.6, \( p < 0.001 \)) in percentage of no heavy drinking days, an odds ratio of 1.9 (1.6 to 2.2, \( p < 0.001 \)) for rate of complete abstinence, and an odds ratio of 1.9 (1.6 to 2.3, \( p < 0.001 \)) for rate of no heavy drinking, over the study duration. Acamprosate was also associated with significantly higher rates of treatment completion \( (p = 0.004) \) and medication compliance \( (p < 0.001) \) than placebo. Men and women did not differ on any measure of acamprosate efficacy, safety, or tolerability.

**Conclusions:** This sex-specific IPD meta-analysis provides evidence that acamprosate has a significant effect compared with placebo in improving rates of abstinence and no heavy drinking in both women and men with alcohol dependence. Further, acamprosate was associated with significantly higher rates of treatment completion and medication compliance than placebo among both women and men and had a comparable safety and tolerability profile.

**ALCOHOL OUTLET DENSITY AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE-RELATED EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS.**

**Background:** Previous research has identified risk factors for intimate partner violence (IPV) severity, injury, and emergency department (ED) visits. These risk factors have been shown at both the individual level (heavy drinking and other substance use on the part of 1 or both partners) and the neighborhood level (residence in an area characterized by poverty and social disadvantage). Alcohol outlet density has been linked with assaultive violence in community settings, but has not been analyzed in relation to IPV-related ED visits. This study examined the effects of outlet densities on IPV-related ED visits throughout California between July 2005 and December 2008.

**Methods:** Half-yearly counts of ED visits related to IPV (E-code 967.3) were computed for each zip code from patient-level public data sets. Alcohol outlet density measures, calculated separately for bars, off-premise outlets, and restaurants, were derived from California Alcohol Beverage Control records. Census-based neighborhood demographic characteristics previously shown to be related to health disparities and IPV (percent black, percent Hispanic, percentage below 150% of poverty line, percent unemployed) were included in models. This study used Bayesian space–time models that allow longitudinal analysis at the zip code level despite frequent boundary redefinitions. These spatial misalignment models control for spatial variation in geographic unit definitions over time and account for spatial autocorrelation using conditional autoregressive (CAR) priors. The model incorporated data from between 1,686 (2005) and 1,693 (2008) zip codes across California for 7 half-year time periods from 2005 through 2008 (n = 11,836).

**Results:** Density of bars was positively associated with IPV-related ED visits. Density of off-premise outlets was negatively associated with IPV-related ED visits; this association was weaker and smaller than the bar association. There was no association between density of restaurants and IPV-related ED visits.

**Conclusions:** Further research is needed to understand the mechanisms by which environmental factors, such as alcohol outlet density, affect IPV behaviors resulting in ED visits.

**ASSESSMENT OF THE AVERAGE PRICE AND ETHANOL CONTENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES BY BRAND—UNITED STATES, 2011.**

**Background** There are no existing data on alcoholic beverage prices and ethanol (EtOH) content at the level of alcohol brand. A comprehensive understanding of alcohol prices and EtOH content at the brand level is essential for the development of effective public policy to reduce alcohol use among underage youth. The purpose of this study was to comprehensively assess alcoholic beverage prices and EtOH content at the brand level.

**Methods** Using online alcohol price data from 15 control states and 164 online alcohol stores, we estimated the average alcohol price and percent alcohol by volume for 900 brands of alcohol, across 17 different alcoholic beverage types, in the United States in 2011.

**Results** There is considerable variation in both brand-specific alcohol prices and EtOH content within most alcoholic beverage types. For many types of alcohol, the within-category variation between brands exceeds the variation in average price and EtOH content among the several alcoholic beverage types. Despite differences in average prices between alcoholic beverage types, in 12 of the 16 alcoholic beverage types, customers can purchase at least 1 brand of alcohol that is under $1 per ounce of EtOH.

**Conclusions** Relying on data or assumptions about alcohol prices and EtOH content at the level of alcoholic beverage type is insufficient for understanding and influencing youth drinking behavior. Surveillance of alcohol prices and EtOH content at the brand level should become a standard part of alcohol research.

**DECOMPOSING ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN ACCULTURATION AND DRINKING IN MEXICAN AMERICANS.**


**Background** Acculturation to life in the United States is a known predictor of Hispanic drinking behavior. We compare the ability of 2 theoretical models of this effect—sociocultural theory and general stress theory—to account for associations between acculturation and drinking in a sample of Mexican Americans. Limitations of previous evaluations of these theoretical models are addressed using a broader range of hypothesized cognitive mediators and a more direct measure of acculturative stress. In addition, we explore nonlinearities as possible underpinnings of attenuated acculturation effects among men.

**Methods** Respondents (N = 2,595, current drinker N = 1,351) were interviewed as part of 2 recent multistage probability samples in a study of drinking behavior among Mexican Americans in the United States. The ability of norms, drinking motives, alcohol expectancies, and acculturation stress to account for relations between acculturation and drinking outcomes (volume and heavy drinking days) were assessed with a hierarchical linear regression strategy. Nonlinear trends were assessed by modeling
quadratic effects of acculturation and acculturation stress on cognitive mediators and drinking outcomes.

Results  Consistent with previous findings, acculturation effects on drinking outcomes were stronger for women than men. Among women, only drinking motives explained acculturation associations with volume or heavy drinking days. Among men, acculturation was linked to increases in norms, and norms were positive predictors of drinking outcomes. However, adjusted effects of acculturation were nonexistent or trending in a negative direction, which counteracted this indirect normative influence. Acculturation stress did not explain the positive associations between acculturation and drinking.

Conclusions  Stress and alcohol outcome expectancies play little role in the positive linear association between acculturation and drinking outcomes, but drinking motives appear to at least partially account for this effect. Consistent with recent reports, these results challenge stress models of linear acculturation effects on drinking outcomes and provide (partial) support for sociocultural models. Inconsistent mediation patterns—rather than nonlinearities—represented a more plausible statistical description of why acculturation-drinking associations are weakened among men.

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND BINGE DRINKING AMONG U.S.–MEXICO BORDER AND NON-BORDER MEXICAN AMERICANS.


Background:  This paper examines differences in drinking and binge drinking between Mexican Americans living along the U.S.–Mexico border and those living in 2 metropolitan areas away from the border (Houston, Texas and Los Angeles, California).

Methods:  Respondents in the non-border area (Houston and Los Angeles) constitute a multistage probability sample (N = 1,288), who were interviewed as part of the 2006 Hispanic Americans Baseline Alcohol Survey (HABLAS). Respondents in the border area (N = 1,307) constitute a household probability sample of Mexican Americans living on the U.S.–Mexico border. In both surveys, data were collected during computer-assisted interviews conducted in respondents’ homes. The HABLAS and the border sample response rates were 76 and 67%, respectively.

Results:  There were no differences between border and non-border Mexican American men in the proportion of drinkers, the proportion who binge drink at least once a year, and volume of alcohol consumption. However, within each location, there were significant differences in drinking by age, indicating that younger men drank more than men who were older. Border women showed significant differences across age-groups in the proportion of drinkers, in binge drinking, and volume of alcohol consumption, which were not seen among non-border women.
**Conclusions:** Women’s drinking seems to be more affected than men’s by their residence on or off the U.S.–Mexico border. This is seen most clearly among young women 18 to 29 years old, and it is associated with an increased proportion of drinkers, a higher volume of drinking, and an increased proportion of women who report binge drinking. Increased drinking in this group of younger women seems to be associated with drinking in Mexico.

**THE EFFECTS OF AGE AT DRINKING ONSET AND STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS ON ALCOHOL USE IN ADULTHOOD: A REPLICATION AND EXTENSION USING A POPULATION-BASED TWIN SAMPLE.**


**Background:** A study by Dawson and colleagues (Alcohol Clin Exp Res 2007; 31:69) using data from National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Condition found earlier drinking onset age, and higher levels of past-year stressful life events (SLE) were associated with higher past-year alcohol consumption. The aims of our study were as follows: (i) to attempt to replicate this interaction; (ii) to extend it by examining sex and event dependence as potential moderators of the effect; and (iii) to estimate the roles of genetic and environmental factors in mediating the overlap of early drinking onset and SLE in their relations with alcohol consumption.

**Methods:** Data were from 1,382 female and 2,218 male drinkers interviewed as part of the Virginia Adult Twin Study of Psychiatric and Substance Use Disorders. Regression models were used to evaluate the main and interactive effects of early drinking onset and moderate or severe past-year SLE on past-year drinking density (PYDD), a weighted quantity-frequency measure of alcohol consumption. Analyses adjusted for demographic covariates and were stratified by sex and whether SLE were independent or dependent on the person’s actions, as rated by interviewers. Structural twin models were used to estimate the degree to which early drinking onset, SLE, and their interaction accounted for additive genetic, common environmental and individual-specific variance in PYDD.

**Results:** We replicated the prior finding of a main effect of higher alcohol consumption among individuals reporting earlier drinking onset. Age at drinking onset accounted for about 5% of the variation in PYDD, and this association was mostly attributable to overlapping genetic influences. Evidence for an interaction between onset age and SLE was generally weak, possibly because of lower power and other methodological differences from Dawson and colleagues’ study. However, there was some evidence consistent with an interaction of higher PYDD among early drinking men who experienced independent SLE and early drinking women with dependent SLE.
**Conclusions:** We confirmed prior findings of an association between early age at drinking onset with higher past-year drinking among young- and middle-aged adults and found limited evidence supporting a replication for higher stress-related drinking among early-onset drinkers. The association is consistent with early onset and stress-related drinking being attributable to overlapping genetic liability. Among early drinkers, our results suggest sex differences in consumption with regard to event dependence.

**OPANA: NEWEST PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLER BEING ABUSED IN RURAL AREAS**
By Join Together Staff | March 27, 2012

Opana, a powerful opioid, is increasingly being abused in rural America, Reuters reports. At least nine people have died so far in 2012 from prescription drug overdoses in Scott County, Indiana, and most of the deaths involved Opana.

Low-income people and those living in rural areas are at particular risk of prescription drug overdoses, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Law enforcement officials report that Opana abuse began after OxyContin was reformulated in 2010, to make it more difficult to snort or inject. Opana is more potent, per milligram, than OxyContin, making it potentially more deadly, the article notes. Many people who abuse Opana do not realize how strong it is.

People using Opana to get high crush the drug and either snort or inject it. It is an extended-release pill, so crushing it releases the drug all at once. “This Opana pill has really kicked us in the rear,” Indiana State Police Sergeant Jerry Goodin told Reuters. “We’ve never seen an addiction like this.”

While some people who abuse Opana buy them from “pill mills,” others get them from their doctors, or buy them from elderly people who have a prescription for the pills. Endo Pharmaceuticals, which makes Opana, has announced it is reformulating the drug. The pill will be more difficult to crush, and will turn gooey if liquid is added to it.

There has been an increase in pharmacy robberies by people seeking the current formulation of Opana pills since the reformulation was announced. Opana is prescribed for chronic back pain, as well as pain related to cancer and osteoarthritis.

**MANY SONGS POPULAR WITH TEENS PROMOTE ALCOHOL**
By Join Together Staff

One in five songs that are popular with teens have explicit references to alcohol, and one-quarter of these songs mention a specific brand, a new study finds. Alcohol references are most common in rap, R&B and hip hop, HealthDay reports. The songs’ lyrics often portray a luxury lifestyle that includes risky behavior and partying. Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh analyzed 793 songs that were popular among youths between 2005 and 2007. They conclude that frequent exposure to
alcohol brand names in songs may act as a type of advertising, and could encourage substance abuse among teens.

In a news release, the researchers note the distilled spirits brands found in music, such as Patron Tequila, Grey Goose Vodka, and Hennessey Cognac, are the same ones that are increasingly named as favorites by underage drinkers, especially young women. They say most instances of brand-name references in song lyrics appear to be unsolicited and unpaid for by advertising companies. Their findings appear in the journal Addiction.

**FOUR LOKO MAKER AGREES TO SHOW ALCOHOL CONTENT ON CAN LABEL**

By Join Together Staff

The manufacturer of the sweet-flavored “alcopop” Four Loko has agreed to change the labels of the cans so that they state the drinks contain as much alcohol as four to five cans of beer. The change comes in response to pressure from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), according to The Washington Post.

The FTC says the manufacturer, Phusion Projects, falsely claimed that a 23.5-ounce can of Four Loko contains the same amount of alcohol as one or two regular 12-ounce beers. Drinking a single can of Four Loko in one sitting constitutes binge drinking, according to the FTC.

The company has not admitted to any wrongdoing, but says it will relabel the drinks to better inform its customers, according to the article. “Deception about alcohol content is dangerous to consumers, and it's a serious concern for the FTC,” David Vladeck, Director of the FTC’s Bureau of Consumer Protection, said in a news release. “Four Loko contains as much alcohol as four or five beers, but it is marketed as a single-serving beverage.”

According to the FTC, Phusion encouraged customers to enter a photo contest on its website in which they posted photos of people drinking from the 23.5 ounce Four Loko cans. The company also urged stores to stock the cans alongside other refrigerated, single-serve alcohol drinks. In November 2010, the FTC and the Food and Drug Administration notified four companies, including Phusion, that their products were unsafe, unapproved and misleadingly marketed.

**SUPPORT FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS MAY REDUCE EARLY USE OF ALCOHOL, STUDY SUGGESTS**

By Join Together Staff

Emotional support from middle school teachers may reduce the risk their students will engage in early use of alcohol and other illicit substances, a new study suggests. The study included 521 middle school students in Seattle. Students who felt more emotional support from teachers reported a delay in starting to use alcohol and other
illicit substances, PsychCentral reports. The students defined teacher support as feeling close to a teacher, or being able to talk about their problems with a teacher. Middle school students who had higher levels of separation anxiety from their parents were also less likely to start using alcohol early, the study found.

“Our results were surprising,” lead researcher Dr. Carolyn McCarty, of Seattle Children’s Research Institute, said in a news release. “We have known that middle school teachers are important in the lives of young people, but this is the first data-driven study which shows that teacher support is associated with lower levels of early alcohol use.” Dr. McCarty said students who have separation anxiety may be less susceptible to negative influences from their peers, including experimenting with drugs and alcohol.

The study also found students who started drinking or using drugs before sixth grade had significantly higher levels of depressive symptoms. Students who had experienced recent stressful life events in sixth grade were significantly more likely to start using an illicit substance by eighth grade, the researchers found.

“We need to be aware of and monitor early adolescent stress levels, and parents, teachers and adults need to tune into kids’ mental health,” Dr. McCarty said. “We know that youth who initiate substance abuse before age 14 are at a high risk of long-term substance abuse problems and myriad health complications.” The study appears in Psychology of Addictive Behaviors.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA POSES CHALLENGES TO DUI LAWS

By Join Together Staff

Drivers who use medical marijuana are posing a challenge to law enforcement officers trying to enforce driving under the influence (DUI) laws, according to the Associated Press. Unlike alcohol, the active ingredient in marijuana, THC, can stay in the system for weeks, and there is no easy test to determine a person’s level of impairment due to the drug, the AP notes.

A recent analysis of studies found driving under the influence of marijuana is associated with an increased risk of a motor vehicle crash, especially for fatal collisions. The analysis found driving under the influence of marijuana was associated with almost twice the risk of a motor vehicle crash compared with unimpaired driving. The studies in the analysis included nearly 50,000 people.

A 2009 report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, based on blood, breath and saliva tests collected on weekends from drivers in 300 locations nationally, found that 16.3 percent of drivers at night were impaired from legal or illegal drugs, including 9 percent of drivers who had detectable traces of marijuana in their system. Several states have set limits on the amount of THC that drivers can legally have in their blood. But there is no widespread agreement about what that limit should be. While two states have set a limit of 2 nanograms per milliliter of blood, other states do not
allow any THC. Colorado and Washington state are debating a threshold of 5 nanograms, according to the article. Several factors can influence THC blood tests, including weight, age, gender, and frequency of marijuana use.

**LAWYERS INCREASINGLY QUESTION BLOOD ALCOHOL TEST RESULTS**

By Join Together Staff

A growing number of criminal defense lawyers are successfully questioning the results of blood alcohol tests in Florida, according to the Orlando Sentinel. Lab quality experts and chemists brought in by defense attorneys have been raising questions about the state’s instruments, techniques and rules about drawing blood, the article notes.

Bob Dekle, of the University of Florida School of Law, said defense attorneys may use their successes to challenge a greater number of driving under the influence (DUI) cases. He noted that DUI prosecutors are among the least experienced in the State Attorney’s Office.

Last fall, the Herald-Tribune reported that drivers in Florida have been arrested and convicted of DUI based on defective alcohol breath test machines. The machine, called the Intoxilyzer 8000, inaccurately measured the amount of breath blown into them. The article notes state officials did not test a key component of the machine, or perform required reviews of each breath test.

**ALCOHOL IN MOVIES MAY INFLUENCE TEENS’ DRINKING HABITS, STUDY SUGGESTS**

By Join Together Staff

The amount of drinking children and teens see in movies may influence their own drinking habits, suggests a new study conducted in six European nations. Researchers gave surveys to more than 16,000 students, ages 10 to 19, in Germany, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Scotland. They were asked to check off which of 50 movies that were popular in their country they had seen. For each movie, the researchers counted how many times characters were shown drinking alcohol, according to Reuters. At least 86 percent of the movies had at least one drinking scene.

The researchers compared the students’ exposure to alcohol in the movies with how many of them reported ever engaging in binge drinking (having five or more drinks on a single occasion). Twenty-seven percent of the students reported binge drinking at least once, they reported in Pediatrics.

The study found an association between viewing on-screen drinking and students’ own drinking behavior. Between 10 to 20 percent of students who viewed the least on-screen drinking had binged themselves, compared with 40 percent who had seen the most on-screen drinking.
It is not known whether the students started binge drinking before or after they saw the movies, the researchers point out. They did take into account other factors, such as the students’ risk-taking behavior, their academic record, and how much their friends and family drank.

Study author Reiner Hanewinkel, PhD, told Reuters that teenagers “have seen at least thousands of impressions of smoking and drinking, so it shapes their attitude that these kinds of behavior are adult-like behavior. It makes the alcohol drinking look cool and sexy and so-on.”

**SHARP DECLINE IN NEW HIV INFECTIONS AMONG INJECTION DRUG USERS**

By Join Together Staff

A government report shows that new HIV infections among injection drug users have been cut in half in the past decade, but they continue to engage in risky behaviors such as needle sharing.

The high rate of risky behaviors and a decrease in HIV testing among injection drug users worries health experts, raising concern that the drop in HIV infections may not last, according to Reuters.

A study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found 9 percent of intravenous drug users were infected with HIV in 2009, compared with 18 percent in the 1990s. The study found 45 percent of those testing positive in 2009 were unaware of their infection.

The study was based on a survey of 10,000 people from 20 urban areas. More than one-third of participants said they had shared syringes. The study found 69 percent had unprotected vaginal sex, and 46 percent had multiple opposite-sex partners.

According to the CDC, 49 percent of participants said they had been tested for HIV in the past 12 months in 2009, compared with 66 percent in 2006.

“Despite the fact that we’ve seen declines in new HIV infections, a substantial number of IDUs (injection drug users) in major US cities are HIV-infected and their risk behavior remains fairly high,” Dr. Cyprian Wejnert, an epidemiologist at the CDC, told Reuters. The study authors said public health strategies such as testing and access to new sterile syringes are needed to reduce risk for HIV infection among injection drug users.

**LYSERGIC ACID DIETHYLAMIDE (LSD) FOR ALCOHOLISM: META ANALYSIS OF RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIALS**

Teri S Krebs and Pål-ørjan Johansen

Assessments of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) in the treatment of alcoholism have not been based on quantitative meta-analysis. Hence, we performed a meta-analysis of
randomized controlled trials in order to evaluate the clinical efficacy of LSD in the treatment of alcoholism. Two reviewers independently extracted the data, pooling the effects using odds ratios (ORs) by a generic inverse variance, random effects model. We identified six eligible trials, including 536 participants. There was evidence for a beneficial effect of LSD on alcohol misuse (OR, 1.96; 95% CI, 1.36–2.84; p = 0.0003). Between-trial heterogeneity for the treatment effects was negligible (I² = 0%). Secondary outcomes, risk of bias and limitations are discussed. A single dose of LSD, in the context of various alcoholism treatment programs, is associated with a decrease in alcohol misuse.