EPIDEMIOLOGY ARTICLES

Recovery/Remission from Substance Use Disorders Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services, March 2012
An Analysis of Reported Outcomes in 415 Scientific Reports, 1868-2011
The emergence of recovery as an organizing paradigm for addiction treatment and the larger arena of behavioral health care underscores the need to measure both early recovery initiation and stabilization and the prevalence of long-term recovery maintenance. Such measurement is critical in evaluating addiction treatment as a system of care and monitoring broader dimensions of community health.

Efforts to measure recovery are challenged by the lack of professional and cultural consensus on the definition and measurement of key constructs (recovery, remission, abstinence, and subclinical/asymptomatic/controlled/mode use) and by conflicting rates of recovery—rates reported across clinically and culturally diverse populations in studies marked by widely varying methodologies, follow-up periods, and follow-up rates.

More Older Adults Are Struggling With Substance Abuse The New York Times, October 4, 2014
An estimated 2.8 million older adults in the United States meet the criteria for alcohol abuse, and this number is expected to reach 5.7 million by 2020, according to a study in the journal “Addiction.” In 2008, 231,200 people over 50 sought treatment for substance abuse, up from 102,700 in 1992, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, a federal agency.

While alcohol is typically the substance of choice, a 2013 report found that the rate of illicit drug use among adults 50 to 64 increased from 2.7 percent in 2002 to 6.0 percent in 2013.

The use of prescription opioid medications has increased greatly in the United States during the past two decades; in 2010, there were 16,651 opioid-related deaths. In response, hundreds of federal, state, and local interventions have been implemented. We describe trends in the diversion and abuse of prescription opioid analgesics using data through 2013.

Since 1999, the United States has experienced increases in morbidity and mortality associated with nonmedical use of prescription opioids. To fully understand the current status of the epidemic and to examine who is currently most affected, an examination of nationally representative US surveillance data is needed. To further develop a detailed picture of the public health implications, we used 2 national data sets to examine trends in the prevalence of nonmedical use of prescription opioids, prescription opioid use disorders, frequency of use, and drug overdose deaths involving prescription opioids. Because nonelderly adults are the main population at risk of chronic nonmedical use of prescription opioids and related morbidity and mortality, this study focused on adults aged 18 through 64 years.

During the 2003-2013 years, among adults aged 18 through 64 years, the percentage of nonmedical use of prescription opioids decreased. In contrast, the prevalence of prescription opioid use disorders, frequency of use, and related mortality increased.
They concluded that rising annual death rates among this group are being driven not by the big killers like heart disease and diabetes but by an epidemic of suicides and afflictions stemming from substance abuse: alcoholic liver disease and overdoses of heroin and prescription opioids.

Overdose Death Rates National Institute on Drug Abuse, December 2015
Data for many different types of drugs

Deaths from drug overdoses have jumped in nearly every county across the United States, driven largely by an explosion in addiction to prescription painkillers and heroin. Some of the largest concentrations of overdose deaths were in Appalachia and the Southwest, according to new county-level estimates released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Relationship between Nonmedical Prescription-Opioid Use and Heroin Use New England Journal of Medicine, January 14, 2016
The nonmedical use of prescription opioids is a major public health issue in the United States, both because of the overall high prevalence and because of marked increases in associated morbidity and mortality. In 2014, a total of 10.3 million persons reported using prescription opioids nonmedically (i.e., using medications that were not prescribed for them or were taken only for the experience or feeling that they caused). Emergency department visits involving misuse or abuse of prescription opioids increased 153% between 2004 and 2011, and admissions to substance-abuse treatment programs linked to prescription opioids more than quadrupled between 2002 and 2012. Most troubling, between 2000 and 2014 the rates of death from prescription-opioid overdose nearly quadrupled (from 1.5 to 5.9 deaths per 100,000 persons).

Drug overdoses are driving up the death rate of young white adults in the United States to levels not seen since the end of the AIDS epidemic more than two decades ago — a turn of fortune that stands in sharp contrast to falling death rates for young blacks, a New York Times analysis of death certificates has found.

The rising death rates for those young white adults, ages 25 to 34, make them the first generation since the Vietnam War years of the mid-1960s to experience higher death rates in early adulthood than the generation that preceded it.

Congress has historically treated drug abuse as a malady afflicting mostly poor, minority communities, best dealt with by locking people up for long periods of time. The epidemic of drug overdose deaths currently ravaging white populations in cities and towns across the country has altered this line of thinking, and forced lawmakers to acknowledge that addiction is a problem that knows no racial barriers and can be best addressed with treatment.

This realization is driving bipartisan support in Washington for saner, less punitive drug policies, some of which Congress had steadfastly resisted for decades.

Why Connecticut's drug overdose crisis isn't slowing down TrendCT, March 7, 2016
In a series of stories all this week, Trend CT uses data to better understand the state’s intractable drug-overdose problem.
Life expectancy for the poor is lowest in a large swath that cuts through the middle of the country, and it appears in pockets in the rest of the country, in places like Nevada. David M. Cutler, a Harvard economist and an author of the paper, calls it the “drug overdose belt,” because the area matches in part a map of where the nation’s opioid epidemic is concentrated.

**Where people drink the most booze and do the most drugs** *The Washington Post*, May 23, 2016
The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration annually surveys Americans age 12 and older about whether they use opioid painkillers for non-medical reasons or consume any marijuana, alcohol or cocaine. States are ranked into quintiles based on what proportion of their population uses each substance, thereby creating a “top 10 list” for all four.

**US babies born addicted to opioids has tripled in 15 years, CDC says** *STAT*, August 11, 2016
The number of babies being born in the United States addicted to opioids has tripled in a 15-year stretch, according to a government report published Thursday. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in its most recent Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report that the findings, based on hospital data, are likely underestimates of the true problem and point to an urgent need for public health efforts to help pregnant women deal with addiction. The CDC found that the incidence of neonatal abstinence syndrome jumped to 6 per 1,000 hospital births in 2013, up from 1.5 per 1,000 in 1999. The data came from 28 states with publicly available data on opioid addiction.

**Widespread Use Of Prescription Drugs Provides Ample Supply For Abuse** *NPR*, September 8, 2016
Almost half of all Americans take prescription painkillers, tranquilizers, stimulants or sedatives, according to results of a federal survey released Thursday. The prevalent use of these drugs could help explain why millions of Americans end up misusing or abusing them. Last year, for the first time, the government’s National Survey on Drug Use decided to ask the people it interviewed about all uses of prescription medicines, not just inappropriate use. The survey found that 119 million Americans over the age of 12 took prescription psychotherapeutic drugs. That’s 45 percent of the population.