

Towards an Australian clinical research network for methamphetamine and emerging drugs - outcomes of the NCCRED Methamphetamine and Emerging Drugs Clinical Research Network Working Group 2018-21

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Introduction: The National Centre for Clinical Research on Emerging Drugs (NCCRED) was funded to build clinical research capacity and work towards establishing evidence-based treatment approaches for methamphetamine(s) and emerging drugs of concern.

Approach: NCCRED undertook a clinical research priority setting study to determine areas of focus for the Centre. Under the guidance of the NCCRED Methamphetamine and Emerging Drugs Clinical Research Network Working Group, findings were applied to: NCCRED clinical research; NCCRED clinical research seed funding; fellowships; and scholarships.

Results: The NCCRED clinical research priority setting study, including input from people with lived experience, is published ('the priorities'). These priorities are incorporated into programmatic outputs across key themes: early detection/response; clinical interventions; new/emerging drugs. This process facilitated new collaborations and partnerships within the sector, such as the Emerging Drugs Network of Australia (EDNA). NCCRED's research program addresses priorities including clinical trials of pharmacotherapies for methamphetamine withdrawal and use reduction, and studies examining GHB overdose and withdrawal. NCCRED funded 24 clinical research projects addressing the priorities. These comprise innovative treatment approaches for methamphetamine use disorder (MUD) including clinical trials examining: pharmacotherapy (n=4); psychosocial therapy (n=6); and transcranial magnetic stimulation (n=1). Nine projects directly feed results into and/or collaborate with the Prompt Response Network. Three Clinical Research Fellows have concluded projects, and two NCCRED Clinical Research Scholars commenced in 2021. One seed grant led to successful NHMRC funding.

Discussions and Conclusions: NCCRED has facilitated a dynamic program of clinical research addressing priorities of the sector and people with lived experience.

Implications for Practice or Policy: NCCRED's programmatic outputs have increased clinical research capacity by providing unique funding opportunities to clinicians working in the alcohol and other drugs sector. Future directions include multicentre competitive funding proposals, and steps towards a national clinical research network; bringing research closer to the clinical and consumer experience.

Implications for Translational Research: The NCCRED approach demonstrates feasibility of undertaking national clinical research priority setting and engaging stakeholders at each step. Using these findings to inform the NCCRED programmatic output maximizes the

likelihood future research findings emerging from this process will be translated to clinical practice and align with consumer experience.

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