

How can we better support Australians who need help for crystal methamphetamine use?

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Introduction and Aims: Crystal methamphetamine use causes significant societal harm in Australia. Although effective treatments exist, it is estimated that only a third of people dependent on amphetamine-type stimulants receive treatment each year. This study aimed to look at the perceived and actual barriers to care for Australians, as well as help-seeking behaviours among people who use crystal methamphetamine.

Method / Approach: An online survey was conducted among 2,110 Australians including people with lived experience, health workers, affected family members/friends and general community members in metropolitan, regional and remote areas. All participants were asked about perceived barriers to care. People with lived experience were asked additional questions about help seeking.

Results: 2,110 Australians completed the online survey including people with lived experience (n=564), health workers (n=288), affected family/friends (n=434) and general community members (n=822). Attitudinal barriers to care were most commonly endorsed, followed by knowledge. People with lived experience were more likely to endorse attitudinal or need barriers, whereas health workers were more likely to endorse knowledge related barriers. Among people with lived experience who had sought help, 75% had visited a counsellor or psychologist and 61% had sought help from a family member or friend.

Discussions and Conclusions: Understanding and reducing perceived and actual barriers to care for people who use crystal methamphetamine is essential to reduce the harms associated with use. Reducing stigma and supporting families and friends, particularly in remote areas is important.

Implications for Translational Research: This study highlights the importance of understanding and reducing the barriers to care for people experiencing problems with crystal methamphetamine. This presentation will discuss how this evidence can be translated into practice through digital health initiatives such as the *Cracks in the Ice* toolkit (CITI: cracksintheice.org.au).

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