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Children exposed to methamphetamine in settings where the drug is being used

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Abstract

While children's exposure to methamphetamine is well described in settings where methamphetamine is manufactured, little is known about children's exposure to methamphetamine in settings where methamphetamine is used. Methamphetamine-dependent individuals (N = 124) enrolled from substance use disorder treatment sites completed questionnaires, which included queries about children's exposure to methamphetamine. This descriptive study found that nearly one-third of participants reported methamphetamine was stored in rooms where children may be present, 30% reported children were present when methamphetamine was being used (26% when smoked), and approximately 25% reported children were present when methamphetamine was being sold and/or distributed. Findings from this study emphasize the need to evaluate children who are living in homes where methamphetamine is present such as through a family assessment at the point of initial contact with treatment, criminal justice, or family/child welfare system staff. Employing public health practices to educate adults about the risks that methamphetamine exposure poses to their children may be a useful motivator to promote substance abuse treatment.

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