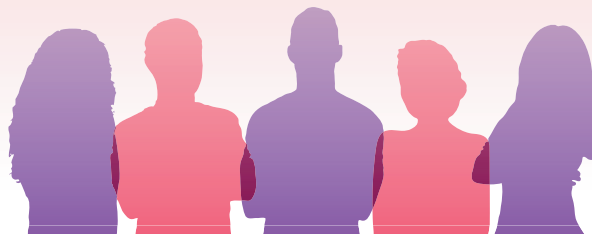


## RESEARCH ROUND-UP

# Exploring Co-Morbidity & Methamphetamine use

Methamphetamine is a strong addictive stimulant which has received a large amount of media attention in recent months. In response to the government and societal interest in this drug, South Pacific Private have researched the complexity of this stimulant and sought to share insights into its nature and pharmacology.

**This Research Round-Up will examine co-morbidity of methamphetamine abuse and depression. At SPP, we understand the common occurrence of these and treat clients with co-occurring diagnosis.**



### Meth abusers tend to have suffered depression prior to abuse:

In their research (Days without Pain and Substance Use Disorders: Is There an Association? Clin J Pain. 2013 Aug. 29(8) 689-695), Edlund et al. set out to examine the correlation between the number of days of pain and drug or alcohol abuse. Results indicate that more days of pain is associated with alcohol and opiate abuse than other drugs of choice. They also discovered that days of depression were associated with methamphetamine abuse/dependence.

More research is warranted, but it perhaps can be assumed from this research, and as our experience at SPP supports, that Meth users are self-medicating their depression creating a co-occurrence of diagnosis.

### Treatment difficult in co-morbidity of Meth abuse and depression:

Hellem TL et al examine treatment options for co-occurring methamphetamine use disorders and depression (J Addict Nurs. 2015 Jan-Mar; 26(1):14-23;) Their findings give a bleak outlook for co-occurring Meth abuse and depression. *"Psychological and combination of psychological with pharmacological approaches have not been shown to be effective in treating these co-occurring conditions. Antidepressants have been determined to be ineffective and/or to introduce side effects."*

The pharmacology of methamphetamine highlights the difficult nature of recovery from Ice abuse. In his study, DE Rusyniak (Neurologic Manifestations of Chronic Methamphetamine Abuse. Psychiatr Clin North Am 2013. June; 36(2) 261-278.) describes the physiological damage done by Meth. Repeated Ice use replaces the brain's store of dopamine and at the same time damaging the dopamine receptor. This implies that the addict finds no pleasure in life without the consistent and increase use of methamphetamines.

At SPP we provide treatment options for Ice abuse/dependence despite the difficult road to recovery.

### Exercise may give hope to co-occurring methamphetamine abuse and depression:

Perhaps a more positive answer to the treatment question can be found in Haglund M et al (Predictors of depression outcomes among abstinent methamphetamine-dependent individuals exposed to an exercise intervention. Am J Addict. 2014 Dec 11). In their research they have discovered that exercise, a vigorous exercise programme of 8 weeks during early recovery, goes a long way to ease the symptom of the methamphetamine user in early recovery.

### Summary:

Meth abuse and depression co-morbidity is gaining attention. In doing so, more treatment options will be researched and offered in the recovery process. At South Pacific Private, we look for best practice, research-based methods to give our clients the best path for hope and recovery.

### Bibliography:

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