

Topic DAT18-08: Research on Justice-Involved Populations in the Context of the Opioid Crisis

Purpose

To encourage research aimed at enhancing our ability to address the current opioid crisis in the context of the criminal justice system.

Background

More than 9 million people pass through the justice system each year and approximately 2.5 million people are confined in U.S. jails or prisons each day. In addition to jails and prisons, millions of people come into contact with other aspects of the justice system every day, including drug courts and other problem-solving courts (e.g., Driving While Impaired (DWI), family courts, veterans' courts), policing and police diversion programs, probation and parole, child welfare, and juvenile justice.

Most people who encounter the justice system have used drugs. Justice involved populations are also likely to have used opioids. Nearly everyone who passes through the justice system will ultimately return to their community. Transitions between secure settings (e.g., jails and prisons) present critical opportunities for addressing opioid use. Effectively addressing substance use at these times requires a multi-level (or multi-system) approach. It is critical to engage not only justice system stakeholders, but the other organizations within a community that provide services to help address opioid use and other comorbid issues in this population. Collaboration between community-based health providers and justice systems is critical to simultaneously enhancing public safety and public health. Data sharing and data-driven approaches are critical tools for enhancing these collaborations. Frameworks such as the opioid treatment cascade¹ or a behavioral health services cascade² can facilitate this approach. Innovative methods such as system science and network science can also yield valuable insights into collaboration efforts.

Research Objectives

NIDA welcomes applications studying diverse aspects of addressing opioid use and opioid use related harms within justice populations and justice settings including, but not limited to:

- Clinical effectiveness trials piloting new or adapted medications, interventions, or technologies in justice settings;
- Implementation studies developing or testing strategies facilitating and enhancing effective implementation of existing medications, technologies, or interventions;
- Methodological approaches that can offer novel insights into challenges and opportunities in collaborations between justice organization and community based organizations to address the opioid epidemic.

Innovative methods and strategies such as hybrid effectiveness-implementation studies, systems science, network science, geospatial approaches, etc. are of strong interest.

¹ Williams, A., Nunes, E., & Olsson, M. (2017, March 13). To Battle The Opioid Overdose Epidemic, Deploy The 'Cascade Of Care' Model. *Health Affairs Blog*. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20170313.059163/full/>

² Belenko, S., Knight, D., Wasserman, G. A., Dennis, M. L., Wiley, T., Taxman, F. S., ... & Sales, J. (2017). The Juvenile Justice Behavioral Health Services Cascade: A new framework for measuring unmet substance use treatment services needs among adolescent offenders. *Journal of substance abuse treatment*, 74, 80-91.

Instructions for submitting applications:

- Insert "DAT-" (four characters) in the beginning of the Project Title of the application. [Note: NIH limits the Project Title to 200 characters (including spaces and punctuation)].
- Insert the DAT Code (e.g., DAT18-01) before the first sentence of the abstract. (This is for internal NIDA tracking purposes only).

Relevant Funding Opportunities

Parent funding opportunities that can be used to pursue these and other research activities include, but are not limited to:

R01 NIH Research Project Grant (Parent R01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed) [PA-18-484](#)

R01 NIH Research Project Grant (Parent R01 Clinical Trial Required) [PA-18-345](#)

R21 NIH Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Program (Parent R21 Clinical Trial Not Allowed) [PA-18-489](#)

R21 NIH Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Program (Parent R21 Clinical Trial Required) [PA-18-344](#)

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AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Criminal Justice and Juvenile Justice
- Addiction Health Services
- Implementation Science