

Ice burns: the association and trends of pure methamphetamine production, use and distribution with methamphetamine-related burn-injury in South Australia over the past ten years

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The purest form of addictive stimulant drug methamphetamine, 'ice', has reached epidemic levels in parts of Australia, destroying communities like no illicit drug before it. In South Australia the production, use and distribution of pure methamphetamine has steadily increased for the past ten years to record levels. Methamphetamine-related burn injury has followed this trend, stemming from every facet of the methamphetamine life-cycle: from the laboratory explosions and chemical burns involved in production, to the accidental injury caused by intoxication, and the deliberate assaults associated with the crimes of distribution. Methamphetamine-related burn injury represents a huge cost to the Australian taxpayer.

Here we correlate analysis of the Australian Crime Commission's Illicit Drug Data Reports on methamphetamine production, use and distribution with methamphetamine-related burn injury over the past ten years. We present a brief history of the social factors leading to an ice epidemic in parts of Australia, the types of burns commonly seen relating to methamphetamine, the impact and cost of methamphetamine-related burn injury on our health system, and a vision for the future of our healthcare system if we cannot curb these trends.

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