Co-occurring amphetamine use and associated medical and psychiatric comorbidity among opioid-dependent adults: results from the Clinical Trials Network

Background: In response to the rising rate of treatment admissions related to illicit use of amphetamines (eg, methamphetamine), we examined the prevalence of amphetamine use among treatment-seeking, opioid-dependent adults, explored whether amphetamine users were as likely as nonamphetamine users to enroll in opioid-dependence treatment trials, and determined whether amphetamine users manifested greater levels of medical and psychiatric comorbidity than nonusers.

Methods: The sample included 1257 opioid-dependent adults screened for participation in three-multisite studies of the National Drug Abuse Treatment Clinical Trials Network (CTN001-003), which studied the effectiveness of buprenorphine for opioid detoxification under varying treatment conditions. Patients were recruited from 23 addiction treatment programs across the US. Medical and psychiatric comorbidity were examined by past-month amphetamine use (current vs former) and route of administration. Five mutually exclusive groups were examined, ie, nonusers, current amphetamine injectors, current amphetamine noninjectors, former amphetamine injectors, and former amphetamine noninjectors.

Results: Of the sample (n = 1257), 22.3% had a history of regular amphetamine use. Of the 280 amphetamine users, 30.3% reported injection as their primary route. Amphetamine users were more likely than nonusers to be white and use more substances. Amphetamine users were as likely as nonusers to enroll in treatment trials. Bivariate analyses indicated elevated rates of psychiatric problems (depression, anxiety, hallucinations, cognitive impairment, violence, suicidal thoughts/attempts) and medical illnesses (dermatological, hepatic, cardiovascular, respiratory, neurological, seizure, allergy conditions) among amphetamine users. After adjusting for demographic variables and lifetime use of other substances: current amphetamine users and former injectors showed an increased likelihood of having medical illnesses and hospitalizations; current injectors had elevated odds of suicidal thoughts or attempts; current noninjectors exhibited elevated odds of anxiety, cognitive impairment, and violent behaviors; and former noninjectors had increased odds of depression.

Conclusion: Treatment-seeking, amphetamine-using, opioid-dependent adults manifest greater levels of medical and psychiatric morbidity than treatment-seeking, opioid-dependent adults who have not used amphetamines, indicating a greater need for intensive clinical management.

Keywords: amphetamine use, buprenorphine, clinical trials network, injection drug use, methamphetamine use, opioid dependence, rehabilitation

Introduction
Amphetamine-associated problems (eg, injecting use, addiction, unprotected sexual behaviors, human immunodeficiency virus [HIV] infection, psychiatric symptoms,
drug users who did not use illicit opioids.11 An increasingamphetamine use disorders) and mood/anxiety disorders than
greater lifetime prevalence of drug use disorders (including
treatment admissions during the 1990s and 2000s.6 Similarly,national surveys of the general US population reveal substan-
tial increases in the number of new methamphetamine users
during the 2000s; although the rate declined from 2007–2008, itincreased again in 2009.7

Increasing rates of illicit amphetamine use and treatmentadmissions raise concerns about the medical and psychiatricproblems associated with its use, particularly among illicitopioid users.8–10 Like most drugs of abuse, amphetamines arecoabused with other illicit drugs, and psychiatric problemsare particularly common among illicit opioid or injectiondrug users.8–11 One pattern of polysubstance use involvesusing opioids and other substances, such as amphetamines,tend to reduce negative affect.12 Recent findings from the2001–2002 National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcoholand Related Conditions reveal that illicit opioid users had ahigher lifetime prevalence of drug use disorders (includingamphetamine use disorders) and mood/anxiety disorders thandrug users who did not use illicit opioids.11 An increasing
number of studies have suggested that amphetamine useposes an additional health risk among illicit opioid users.13–15Findings from injection drug users in the US found that methamphetamine, either used alone or combined with opioids,substantially increased the odds of HIV seropositivity, andthat this association remained significant after adjusting forother substance use and HIV risk behaviors.8

In addition to posing a high risk for HIV infection, usingunsterile injection equipment or engaging in unprotected sex,amphetamine-related intoxication and toxicity is associatedwith acute and chronic medical problems affecting multipleorgan systems (eg, dermatological, cardiovascular, respira-
tory, gastrointestinal, genitourinary, neurological, dental),and includes death from accidents, cerebrovascular hemor-
rhage, or cardiac arrest.16–22 Amphetamine use also confersa heightened risk for a wide range of psychiatric problems thatinclude depression, suicidal ideation or attempts, anxiety,impulsivity, cognitive deficits, aggressive behaviors,9,24–29 anda clinical syndrome that resembles schizophrenia.12,21,22 Forexample, McKitin et al found that the prevalence of psycho-
sis among current methamphetamine users was eleven timeshigher than the rate in the general population.23

Taken together, data from many sources show thatamphetamine use is growing in the US and elsewhere, and thatit is a significant public health problem. To date, epi-
demiological research on amphetamine users has focusedprimarily on HIV-related risk, and there has been less focuson more comprehensive patterns of medical and psychiatricconditions that are likely to be found in treatment-seekingindividuals who have used amphetamines.15,16 Nonetheless,a better understanding of amphetamine use and its associ-
ated medical and psychiatric comorbidities could alert cli-
nicians to the special problems that are highly prevalentin these patients and often require clinical attention. Of note,amphetamine use among opioid-addicted patients and theavailability of office-based opioid dependence treatmentsare an opportunity to engage more of these patients in careand address their personal, medical, and social problems.30,31
In this regard, three multisite opioid dependence treatmenttrials from the National Drug Abuse Treatment Clinical Tri-
als Network (CTN) provide an opportunity to explore theextent of illicit amphetamine use and its associated harmsin a large sample of opioid-dependent adults recruited from23 addiction treatment programs across the US, and alertclinicians to problems they are likely to encounter when treatingthese patients.32,33

To this end, this study had three aims: to determine theprevalence and demographic profiles of illicit amphetamineuse among treatment seeking opioid-dependent patients andexplore whether they are as likely as nonamphetamine users
to enroll in opioid addiction treatment trials testing the effec-
tiveness of buprenorphine therapy;32,33 to examine whetheropioid-dependent individuals with amphetamine use have amore pervasive pattern of medical illnesses and hospitaliza-
tion than opioid-dependent individuals without amphetamineuse; and to determine whether opioid-dependent individualsusing amphetamine have more psychiatric problems thanopioid-dependent individuals not using amphetamine. TheCTN data from the three studies that were used for theseanalyses are well suited for this work, because they includeinformation about concurrent substance use, and medical andpsychopathological symptoms from a large number ofopioid-dependent individuals shortly after they enrolled ininpatient and outpatient treatment settings at various sitesacross the country.31–37
Methods

Data source

Data were from the CTN, initiated in 1999 with the stated purpose of facilitating the translation of science-based treatments for addictive disorders into community-based treatment settings. The CTN includes 13 nodes based in research centers allied with substance abuse treatment providers in 39 states across the US, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico (a map showing the location of clinical sites is available in Tai et al13). For this study, the intake data from all screened individuals who met Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Version IV (DSM-IV) criteria for opioid dependence in three CTN studies were included in the analysis. Two of these studies (CTN 001 and 002) compared buprenorphine/naloxone with clonidine for detoxification in inpatient and outpatient settings,35–36 the third study (CTN003) compared two buprenorphine/naloxone taper schedules.37 The sample for these studies included 1257 randomized and nonrandomized opioid-dependent adults, ie, 126 in CTN 001, 251 in CTN 002, and 880 in CTN 003. Opioid-dependent adults who did not meet the eligibility criteria and were not randomized were included in the analysis, which enabled us to ascertain whether amphetamine users are disproportionately excluded from addiction treatment trials and provides a larger sample for examining differences in medical and psychiatric conditions between current (past-month) and former (prior to past month) amphetamine users compared with nonusers. Nonrandomized individuals were assessed for all study variables, and all met DSM-IV criteria for opioid dependence. The Duke University institutional review board approved use of these data for this study.

Eligibility for CTN 001 and 002

Inpatients were recruited from six programs located in eastern, southeastern, midwestern, or western regions of the US (CTN 001), and outpatients were recruited from six programs located in eastern, midwestern, or western regions of the US (CTN 002). Patients were recruited by word of mouth, referrals from local narcotic treatment and outreach programs, outpatient and inpatient alcohol and drug abuse clinics, primary care physicians, local mental health centers and crisis clinics, public service announcements, newspaper advertisements, and hospital emergency rooms. Recruitment advertisements were approved by each site’s institutional review board. Eligible patients included treatment-seeking adults aged 18 years or older who met the DSM-IV criteria for opioid dependence and were in need of medical management for opioid withdrawal.35–36 Patients were excluded if they had a serious psychiatric or medical condition that would make participation medically hazardous, had a known allergy or sensitivity to buprenorphine, naloxone, or clonidine, were receiving medications contraindicated with clonidine, or had a systolic blood pressure < 100 mmHg or pulse < 56 beats per minute, had been enrolled in a methadone treatment program or had participated in another investigational drug study within 30 days of study enrollment, or could not remain in the area for the duration of active treatment. Dependence on other drugs did not exclude individuals from participation unless they required immediate medical attention to manage these disorders. Females were excluded if pregnant or lactating, and were required to have a negative pregnancy test prior to randomization.

Eligibility for CTN 003

Eligible participants were at least 15 years of age and seeking treatment for opioid dependence at one of eleven participating treatment programs in ten US cities (located in Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Connecticut, New York, Virginia, and North Carolina).37 Recruitment methods included word of mouth, radio announcements, newspaper advertisements, and referrals from local opioid treatment and outreach programs, alcohol and drug abuse clinics, primary care providers, local mental health centers, crisis clinics, and hospital emergency rooms. Participants were excluded if they provided a urine sample testing positive for methadone or benzodiazepine, were in poor general health, had a self-reported allergy to buprenorphine or naloxone, were pregnant or nursing, had a medical or psychiatric condition that could make participation unsafe, were dependent on alcohol or any drug other than opioids (per DSM-IV criteria), or had participated in any investigational drug study or methadone maintenance or detoxification in the previous 30 days. Pending legal action and inability to remain in the area also precluded participation. Females of childbearing potential could participate if they agreed to use an acceptable form of birth control.

Study variables

Demographic variables

Age, gender, race/ethnicity (non-Hispanic, white, non-Hispanic black, Hispanic, other), years of education, marital status, and current employment status.

Substance use

Substance use variables were assessed by the Addiction Severity Index,38 that included past 30 days use, route of administration (injecting vs noninjecting), and lifetime regular use...
of amphetamines (including methamphetamine). To explore if route of use influences health status, amphetamine users are dichotomized into injecting users vs noninjecting users.

The amphetamine data were used to categorize subjects into five mutually exclusive groups, ie, nonamphetamine users, current amphetamine injectors, current amphetamine noninjectors, former amphetamine injectors, and former amphetamine noninjectors. Former use referred to use prior to the past 30 days. A number representing other substances that were used regularly during the patient’s lifetime was created by summing the lifetime use of all other substance classes (alcohol, sedatives/tranquilizers, cocaine/crack, cannabis, hallucinogens, inhalants, nicotine/tobacco) and included in the adjusted model to control for its potentially confounding effect on the association between amphetamine use and health status. 

Medical status
We used the Addiction Severity Index medical status section to ascertain current medical problems (“Do you have any chronic medical problems that continue to interfere with your life?”) and the number of lifetime medical hospitalizations (“How many times in your life have you been hospitalized for medical problems?”). Additionally, data from the CTN medical history form, ie, a checklist of 14 categories of medical illness (dermatological, cardiovascular, eyes/ears/nose/throat, respiratory, tuberculosis, musculoskeletal, gastrointestinal, hepatitis, genitourinary, endocrine, psychiatric, neurological, seizure, allergies) that were assessed and evaluated by medical personnel, were used to identify the number of lifetime medical illnesses affecting specific organ systems.

Psychiatric symptoms
The Addiction Severity Index psychiatric status section was used to determine the presence of current (past 30 days) psychiatric symptoms, including depression, anxiety, hallucinations, cognitive impairment, violence, suicidal thoughts or attempts, and psychotropic medication use. For example, individuals were considered to have current symptoms of depression if they answered affirmatively to the following Addiction Severity Index question in reference to the preceding 30 days: “Have you had a significant period of time (that was not the direct result of drug or alcohol use) in which you experienced serious depression – sadness, hopelessness, loss of interest, difficulty with daily function?” Similarly phrased questions were used to ascertain the presence of other psychiatric conditions.

Data analysis
Bivariate associations of each study variable with amphetamine use status were determined using the χ² test for proportions and t-test for continuous variables. To reduce the chance of false positive associations, only variables associated with amphetamine use status (P ≤ 0.05) from bivariate analyses were examined in the adjusted analysis. We performed adjusted logistic regression procedures for categorical variables and linear regression procedures for continuous variables to estimate the strength of association between amphetamine use status and health status (medical and psychiatric variables, respectively). We report adjusted odds ratios (AOR) from the models controlling for potential confounding influences from age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, and employment status, as well as AOR controlling for the lifetime number of other substance classes used. The latter explored whether the association between amphetamine use and health status was influenced by other substance use. Data analyses were conducted by SAS (version 9.2; SAS Institute, Cary, NC).

Results
Prevalence of amphetamine use among opioid-dependent adults
Of all opioid-dependent adults aged 18 years or above (n = 1257), 22% had a history of regular amphetamine use: current amphetamine injectors, 2.8%; current amphetamine noninjectors, 6.2%; former injectors, 4.0%; and former noninjectors, 9.3%. Overall, 68% of those who were assessed were randomized, and amphetamine users were as likely as nonusers to be randomized.

Demographic and substance use characteristics
Compared with nonusers (Table 1), current amphetamine noninjectors were more likely to be female (30% vs 50%, P < 0.001), and a similar gender effect was seen in former noninjectors (30% vs 41%, P < 0.05). Compared with nonusers (57%), all four groups of amphetamine users were more likely to be white (74%–83%, P < 0.05) and to use more substances in their lifetime. A higher proportion of current amphetamine noninjectors were not employed compared with nonusers (62% vs 50%, P < 0.05).

Prevalence of medical problems
As shown in Table 2, former amphetamine users had a higher prevalence of current medical problems that they reported as...
### Table 1
Demographic and substance use characteristics of opioid-dependent adults according to amphetamine use status (n = 1257)

| Sample size       | Nonamphetamine users | Current amphetamine injectors | Current amphetamine noninjectors | Former amphetamine injectors | Former amphetamine noninjectors |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| n = 977           | n = 35                | n = 78                        | n = 50                           | n = 117                       |
| Age in years, mean (SD) | 36.4 (0.34)         | 34.4 (1.50)                   | 36.1 (1.17)                      | 38.2 (1.38)                   | 36.5 (0.89)                      |
| Gender            |                       |                               |                                  |                              |                                  |
| Male              | 69.9                  | 57.1                          | 50.0**                          | 70.0                         | 59.0*                           |
| Female            | 30.1                  | 42.9                          | 50.0                            | 30.0                         | 41.0                            |
| Race/ethnicity    |                       |                               |                                  |                              |                                  |
| Nonwhite          | 43.5                  | 25.7*                         | 18.0**                          | 20.0**                       | 17.1***                         |
| White             | 56.5                  | 74.3                          | 82.0                            | 80.0                         | 82.9                            |
| Education, years  |                       |                               |                                  |                              |                                  |
| 0–12              | 56.4                  | 54.3                          | 50.0                            | 64.0                         | 50.4                            |
| 13+               | 43.6                  | 45.7                          | 50.0                            | 36.0                         | 49.6                            |
| Marital status    |                       |                               |                                  |                              |                                  |
| Married           | 27.4                  | 34.3                          | 35.9                            | 24.0                         | 33.3                            |
| Separated/divorced/widowed | 25.6 | 14.3                       | 25.6                            | 32.0                         | 26.5                            |
| Never married     | 47.0                  | 51.4                          | 38.5                            | 44.0                         | 40.2                            |
| Employment, past month |               |                               |                                  |                              |                                  |
| Not employed      | 50.0                  | 60.0                          | 61.5*                           | 52.0                         | 51.3                            |
| Employed          | 50.1                  | 40.0                          | 38.5                            | 48.0                         | 48.7                            |
| Randomization     |                       |                               |                                  |                              |                                  |
| No                | 31.5                  | 34.3                          | 32.1                            | 34.0                         | 36.8                            |
| Yes               | 68.5                  | 65.7                          | 68.0                            | 66.0                         | 63.3                            |
| Number of other substances used regularly, lifetime, mean (SD) | 3.00 (1.42) | 3.91 (1.27)** | 3.41 (1.42)* | 4.34 (1.33)** | 4.10 (1.44)** |

Notes: *Each amphetamine use group was compared with nonamphetamine users; †-tests for age were not significant. *P ≤ 0.05; **P ≤ 0.01.

Abbreviation: SD, standard deviation.

### Table 2
Prevalence of specific medical conditions by amphetamine use status among opioid-dependent adults aged 18 years or older (n = 1257)

| Sample size       | Nonamphetamine users | Current amphetamine injectors | Current amphetamine noninjectors | Former amphetamine injectors | Former amphetamine noninjectors |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| n = 977           | n = 35                | n = 78                        | n = 50                           | n = 117                       |
| Current chronic medical problems that continue to interfere with life | 25.4 | 37.1 | 30.8 | 44.0** | 34.2* |
| Dermatological illness | 22.8 | 60.0** | 38.5** | 60.0** | 37.6** |
| Psychiatric illness | 27.9 | 51.4** | 42.3** | 42.0* | 41.9** |
| Hepatitis | 22.3 | 48.6** | 35.9** | 54.0** | 17.1 |
| Allergies | 21.9 | 31.4 | 34.6** | 34.0* | 29.1* |
| Respiratory illness | 17.0 | 31.4* | 29.5** | 28.0* | 19.7 |
| Seizure | 3.8 | 14.3** | 7.7* | 12.0** | 7.7* |
| Gastrointestinal illness | 19.2 | 22.9 | 29.5* | 24.0 | 25.6 |
| Cardiovascular illness | 17.7 | 14.3 | 23.1* | 26.0 | 20.5 |
| Genitourinary illness | 12.5 | 20.0 | 20.5* | 22.0* | 18.0* |
| Neurological illness | 11.0 | 14.3 | 14.1 | 32.0** | 8.5 |
| Musculoskeletal illness | 28.9 | 34.3 | 34.6 | 34.0 | 32.5 |
| Eye, ear, nose, or throat illness | 13.1 | 17.1 | 20.5 | 14.0 | 10.3 |
| Tuberculosis | 8.7 | 5.7 | 6.4 | 10.0 | 4.3 |
| Endocrine illness | 4.0 | 0 | 1.3 | 8.0 | 6.8 |

Notes: *Lifetime status; †each amphetamine use group was compared with nonamphetamine users. Chi-square test: 9P < 0.10; 8P ≤ 0.05; 7P ≤ 0.01.
Table 3 Adjusted odds ratios of specific medical conditions in relation to amphetamine use status among opioid-dependent adults aged 18 years or older (n = 1257)

| Medical Condition          | Model controlled for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, and employment status | Model controlled for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, employment status, and lifetime number of other substances used |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                            | AOR, 95% CI                                                                          | AOR, 95% CI                                                                                                       |
| Chronic medical problems   |                                                                                                                                              |
| Current amphetamine        | 1.9, 0.9–3.8                                                                         | 1.9, 0.9–3.9                                                                                                      |
| injectors*                 | 1.2, 0.7–2.1                                                                         | 1.2, 0.7–2.1                                                                                                      |
| Current amphetamine        | 2.3, 1.2–4.1*                                                                        | 4.7, 2.3–9.5*                                                                                                     |
| noninjectors*              | 1.5, 1.0–2.3                                                                         | 1.9, 1.3–2.9*                                                                                                     |
| Former amphetamine         | 5.3, 2.9–9.3*                                                                        | 1.9, 1.0–3.5                                                                                                      |
| injectors*                 | 1.9, 1.3–2.9*                                                                        | 1.6, 1.1–2.6                                                                                                      |
| Former amphetamine         | 43.2, 3.2–8.0*                                                                       | 3.8, 1.8–7.3*                                                                                                     |
| noninjectors*              | 0.7, 0.4–1.2                                                                         | 2.0, 1.2–3.4*                                                                                                     |
| Allergies                  | 1.5, 0.7–3.2                                                                         | 1.5, 0.7–3.3                                                                                                      |
| Current amphetamine        | 1.7, 1.1–2.9*                                                                        | 1.7, 1.1–2.9*                                                                                                     |
| injectors*                 | 2.0, 1.0–3.8                                                                         | 2.0, 1.0–3.8                                                                                                      |
| Current amphetamine        | 1.2, 0.7–2.0                                                                         | 2.0, 0.9–4.1                                                                                                      |
| noninjectors*              | 1.9, 1.1–3.5                                                                         | 1.9, 1.1–3.5                                                                                                      |
| Respiratory                | 3.1, 1.4–10.9*                                                                       | 3.3, 1.2–9.5*                                                                                                     |
| Current amphetamine        | 1.7, 0.7–4.3                                                                         | 1.6, 0.6–4.1                                                                                                      |
| injectors*                 | 3.2, 1.3–8.3                                                                         | 2.4, 0.9–6.7                                                                                                      |
| Current amphetamine        | 1.7, 1.0–2.9*                                                                        | 1.7, 1.0–2.83                                                                                                     |
| noninjectors*              | 1.3, 1.7–2.6                                                                         | 1.2, 0.5–2.7                                                                                                      |
| Gastrointestinal           | 1.2, 0.5–2.8                                                                         | 1.2, 0.5–2.7                                                                                                      |
| Current amphetamine        | 1.7, 1.0–2.9*                                                                        | 1.7, 1.0–2.83                                                                                                     |
| injectors*                 | 1.3, 1.7–2.6                                                                         | 1.2, 0.5–2.7                                                                                                      |
| Current amphetamine        | 1.0, 0.4–2.3                                                                         | 1.9, 0.7–4.9                                                                                                      |
| noninjectors*              | 0.8, 0.4–1.5                                                                         | 1.9, 1.0–3.5*                                                                                                     |
| Cardiovascular             | 1.6, 0.6–3.9                                                                         | 1.6, 0.6–3.8                                                                                                      |
| Current amphetamine        | 1.2, 0.6–2.4                                                                         | 1.2, 0.6–2.3                                                                                                      |
| injectors*                 | 4.1, 2.2–7.9*                                                                        | 3.6, 1.8–7.0*                                                                                                     |
| Current amphetamine        | 0.7, 0.4–1.4                                                                         | 0.6, 0.3–1.3                                                                                                      |
| noninjectors*              | 1.2, 0.6–2.4                                                                         | 1.2, 0.6–2.3                                                                                                      |

Notes: A lifetime status of illnesses; *results were based on separate logistic regression analyses of each medical condition; the reference group was nonamphetamine users. \( P < 0.05 \).

Abbreviations: AOR, adjusted odds ratio; CI, confidence interval.
number of illnesses than nonusers, and current and former amphetamine-injecting users had a greater number of hospitalizations in their lifetime than nonusers. These associations remained significant in the adjusted linear regression analysis controlling for the aforementioned potential confounders (data not shown).

Prevalence of current psychiatric problems

Anxiety and depression were comparatively prevalent in the overall sample (Table 5), and the two current amphetamine use groups were more likely than nonusers to be on prescribed psychotropic medication (18%–20% vs 10%). Compared with nonusers, current amphetamine noninjectors reported a higher rate of anxiety (58% vs 36%) and cognitive impairment (38% vs 24%); former noninjectors reported a higher rate of depression (39% vs 29%) and cognitive impairment (33% vs 24%). Additionally, current amphetamine injectors showed a higher rate of violent behaviors (17% vs 6%) and suicidal thoughts/attempts (11% vs 4%) than nonusers; current amphetamine noninjectors also showed a higher rate of violent behaviors (13% vs 6%) and hallucinations (6% vs 2%) than nonusers.

Adjusted analyses of current psychiatric problems

After controlling for the aforementioned potential confounders (Table 6), former noninjectors remained more likely than nonusers to have symptoms of depression in the past 30 days (AOR = 1.6, 95% CI: 1.1–2.4). Additionally, current noninjectors had greater odds than nonusers of having anxiety (AOR = 1.9, 95% CI: 1.2–3.1), cognitive impairment (AOR = 1.6, 95% CI: 1.0–2.7), and violent behaviors (AOR = 2.1, 95% CI: 1.0–4.5); current injectors had greater odds than nonusers of having suicidal thoughts/attempts (AOR = 3.1, 95% CI: 1.0–9.8).

Discussion

In this large and geographically diverse sample of treatment-seeking opioid-dependent adults, slightly more than one fifth (22%) had a history of regular amphetamine use; of all amphetamine users, 30% reported injection as their primary route. Amphetamine users were more likely than nonusers to be white and use more substances. After controlling for the lifetime number of other substances used and sociodemographic characteristics, amphetamine users still manifested a greater level of medical illnesses (current

Table 4 Lifetime number of medical conditions and hospitalizations in relation to amphetamine use status among opioid-dependent adults aged 18 years or older (n = 1257)

| Mean (SD) | Nonamphetamine users | Current amphetamine injectors | Current amphetamine noninjectors | Former amphetamine injectors | Former amphetamine noninjectors |
|-----------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sample size | n = 977 | n = 35 | n = 78 | n = 50 | n = 117 |
| Number of medical illnesses in the lifetime | 2.2 (2.0) | 3.3 (2.4)** | 3.2 (2.3)** | 3.4 (2.6)** | 2.5 (1.96) |
| Number of hospitalizations in the lifetime | 1.7 (2.60) | 3.3 (3.06)** | 2.2 (2.91) | 3.0 (3.21)** | 2.1 (2.42) |

Notes: *The number of medical conditions in the lifetime included the 14 categories of illness listed in Table 2 except for current chronic health problems; *each amphetamine use group was compared with nonamphetamine users. t-test: **P < 0.01.

Abbreviation: SD, standard deviation.

Table 5 Current psychiatric status* by amphetamine use status among opioid-dependent adults aged 18 years or older (n = 1257)

| Psychiatric status, % | Nonamphetamine users | Current amphetamine injectors | Current amphetamine noninjectors | Former amphetamine injectors | Former amphetamine noninjectors |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sample size | n = 977 | n = 35 | n = 78 | n = 50 | n = 117 |
| Anxiety | 36.3 | 48.6 | 55.7** | 47.1 | 44.4* |
| Depression | 28.9 | 40.0 | 38.0 | 31.4 | 38.5* |
| Cognitive impairment | 24.3 | 25.7 | 38.0** | 22.0 | 33.3* |
| Violent behaviors | 6.2 | 17.1** | 12.7* | 7.8 | 10.3* |
| Suicidal thoughts or attempts | 3.5 | 11.4* | 2.5 | 5.9 | 5.1 |
| Hallucinations | 2.0 | 5.7 | 6.3* | 3.9 | 0.9 |
| Psychotropic medication treatment | 9.6 | 20.0* | 17.7* | 5.9 | 12.8 |

Notes: *Past 30 days; *each amphetamine use group was compared with nonamphetamine users. Chi-square test (df = 1): †P < 0.10; ‡P ≤ 0.05; *P ≤ 0.01.
Table 6 Adjusted odds of current (past 30 days) psychiatric symptoms and of psychotropic medication treatment in relation to amphetamine use status among opioid-dependent adults aged 18 years or older (n = 1257)

| Logistic regression | Model controlled for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, and employment status | Model controlled for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, employment status, and lifetime number of other substances used |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                     | AOR, 95% CI Current amphetamine injectors | Current amphetamine noninjectors | Former amphetamine injectors | Former amphetamine noninjectors | Current amphetamine injectors | Current amphetamine noninjectors | Former amphetamine injectors | Former amphetamine noninjectors |
| Anxiety             | 1.5, 0.8–3.1 | 2.0, 1.3–3.3 | 1.6, 0.9–2.8 | 1.4, 0.9–2.0 | 1.4, 0.7–2.9 | 1.9, 1.2–3.1 | 1.4, 0.8–2.5 | 1.3, 0.9–1.9 |
| Depression          | 1.6, 0.8–3.2 | 1.5, 0.9–2.4 | 1.2, 0.7–2.3 | 1.6, 1.1–2.4 | 1.6, 0.8–3.2 | 1.5, 0.9–2.4 | 1.1, 0.6–2.1 | 1.6, 1.1–2.4 |
| Cognitive impairment| 1.0, 0.5–2.2 | 1.7, 1.1–2.8 | 0.9, 0.5–1.8 | 1.5, 1.0–2.4 | 0.9, 0.4–1.3 | 1.6, 1.0–2.7 | 0.7, 0.4–1.5 | 1.4, 0.9–2.1 |
| Violent behaviors or attempts | 2.9, 1.1–7.6 | 2.2, 1.4–7.4 | 1.1, 0.3–3.6 | 2.0, 1.4–4.0 | 1.1, 0.4–4.1 | 2.5, 0.4–4.5 | 0.9, 0.2–3.0 | 1.7, 0.8–3.4 |
| Suicidal thoughts or attempts | 3.2, 1.1–9.9 | 6.0, 1.0–2.1 | 1.9, 0.3–6.5 | 1.4, 0.9–1.5 | 3.1, 1.0–9.8 | 0.6, 0.1–2.6 | 1.7, 0.5–6.0 | 1.3, 0.5–3.3 |
| Hallucinations      | 2.2, 0.5–10.6 | 2.9, 1.1–8.2 | 2.0, 0.4–9.2 | 0.4, 0.1–3.2 | 2.3, 0.5–11.2 | 2.8, 1.0–7.9 | 1.9, 0.4–9.1 | 0.4, 0.1–3.2 |
| Psychotropic medication | 2.1, 0.9–5.0 | 1.5, 0.8–2.9 | 0.6, 0.2–2.0 | 1.1, 0.6–2.0 | 2.1, 0.9–5.1 | 1.5, 0.8–2.8 | 0.6, 0.2–1.9 | 1.1, 0.6–2.0 |

Notes: Results were based on separate logistic regression analyses of each psychiatric condition; the reference group comprised nonamphetamine users. *p < 0.05.

Abbreviation: AOR, adjusted odds ratio.
sexual activity, and there is a possibility of passing MRSA infections through heterosexual transmission.47

In addition, the results revealed an elevated rate of allergies among current amphetamine noninjectors and former injectors, which may be related to underlying immune dysregulation associated with drug abuse.16 The finding of a high rate of hepatitis among current and former amphetamine injectors can be a consequence of using contaminated needles or sharing injecting equipment (eg, sharing rinse water and cotton).48–50 However, the results also indicate an elevated rate of hepatitis among current amphetamine noninjectors (those using oral or smoked amphetamines) as compared with nonusers. The reason for this finding is not entirely clear; nonetheless, methamphetamine is not always injected and methamphetamine users have a high risk for hepatitis A through multiple routes of transmission (eg, fecal–oral, percutaneous routes, poor hygiene).51

Further, current amphetamine users and former injectors had more respiratory conditions than nonusers; after adjusting for potential confounders, only current amphetamine noninjectors showed elevated odds of these conditions. Injection drug use is infrequently associated with foreign body emboli that may affect respiratory function,52 although amphetamine users in general used more drugs in their lifetime and often used via multiple routes. For example, they might have inhaled or injected amphetamines and also smoked crack cocaine, a known cause of respiratory problems.53 Furthermore, cardiovascular conditions were slightly more prevalent among current amphetamine noninjectors, even after adjustment for potential confounders, a finding previously reported.53 Last, the prevalence of seizures and neurological conditions was elevated among current and former injectors, which could be related to neurotoxicity associated with repeated drug use (including methamphetamine).16,53

Psychiatric status
There were few differences in psychiatric variables between former amphetamine users and nonusers. Although current injectors had more symptoms of depression (40% vs 29%) and anxiety (49% vs 36%) than nonusers, the differences were not statistically significant. This finding might be related to the sample size of amphetamine users, as it had only 35 current injectors. Nonetheless, current injectors reported more suicidal thoughts/attempt (a strikingly high prevalence of over 10%) than nonusers, and this difference remained significant after adjusting for demographics and other substance use. Current amphetamine noninjectors also showed elevated odds of having anxiety symptoms in the adjusted analysis, a finding that may be explained by activation of the sympathetic nervous system as a result of alpha receptor stimulation.16,54,55 Overall, these results reveal a high prevalence of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts/attempt among current amphetamine users.9,24,54

While a higher prevalence of hallucinations among current amphetamine noninjectors than nonusers is consistent with other research,51,22 it did not remain significant after adjustment for multiple confounders, perhaps due to statistical adjustment for the number of other substances used.54 Further, violent behavior was evident among current amphetamine users. Zweben et al found that over 40% of amphetamine users in their sample exhibited aggressive behaviors,24 and another study suggested that assaults may be more frequent while amphetamine users are intoxicated.56 Last, results indicate elevated odds of cognitive impairment among current amphetamine noninjectors, as suggested by prior research.9

Limitations and strengths
The findings reported here are based on treatment-seeking, opioid-dependent adults who attended community-based treatment programs affiliated with the CTN and may not be applicable to those not seeking treatment. In addition, results of substance use and psychiatric status are based on participants’ self-reports, which may be influenced by memory errors and under-reporting (eg, social desirability bias). Last, limited statistical power to detect differences between various groups of amphetamine users and nonusers may constrain our ability to detect differences in health status (eg, further classifying amphetamine users by heroin injecting status).

The study also has important strengths. The data are from three national multisite studies with significant geographical diversity and rigorous methodology.33 The results are based on all participants irrespective of study enrollment status. This study also included one of the largest available samples of treatment-seeking, opioid-dependent individuals. The large number of participants enabled us to control for potential confounders, such as number of other substances used during the individual’s lifetime. For example, after controlling for demographic variables, hallucinations remained associated with current amphetamine noninjection use, but the finding was no longer significant after controlling for lifetime number of other substances used, thus suggesting the influences of other substance use on hallucinations.
Clinical and public health implications
Drug use is seldom limited to a single illicit drug. While there is extensive knowledge about the medical and psychiatric effects of most illicit drugs considered in isolation, less is known about the effects of common combinations of drugs. The coabuse of opioids and amphetamines raises the question of amphetamine effects above and beyond opioid effects. For example, this study showed an excess of dermatological conditions among opioid-dependent adults who also used amphetamines. Although there are a few reports of dermatological infections (eg, MRSA) among amphetamine noninjectors, a high prevalence of dermatological problems has not been well described. Furthermore, while an excess of hepatitis among injectors is not surprising, the high prevalence of hepatitis among amphetamine noninjectors, although known, also represents a significant public health problem that has received limited research attention and has important clinical implications. For example, amphetamine users may benefit from routine screening for hepatitis and hepatitis vaccination.51,57

Conclusion
Treatment-seeking, opioid-dependent adults who have used amphetamines have greater levels of medical and psychiatric morbidity than their counterparts who have not used amphetamines, indicating a greater need for intensive clinical management to optimize treatment outcomes, and preventive measures such as HIV risk reduction counseling and vaccination to prevent hepatitis A and B infection. Current amphetamine users may often need psychiatric treatment for depression/anxiety problems, in addition to addiction-focused therapies. The increased access to office-based opioid dependence treatment can serve as a window of opportunity for improving the care of opioid addicted patients with amphetamine problems through application of infectious disease preventive measures and effective referrals or linkage with coordinated services.

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Amphetamine use among opioid-dependent adults

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