

Media release

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Hunter researchers trialling treatment for methamphetamine 'ice' dependence using existing ADHD drug

A world-first clinical trial to treat people with problem methamphetamine, or 'ice' use, is recruiting participants.

The LiMA (lisdexamfetamine for the treatment of methamphetamine dependence) study is testing if a high dosage of lisdexamfetamine – an existing drug approved to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) – is effective in reducing methamphetamine use, cravings and withdrawal symptoms.

"Australia has one of the highest rates of methamphetamine use in the world," Professor Adrian Dunlop, Director of Drug and Alcohol Clinical Services, Hunter New England Health, said.

"We've consistently seen methamphetamine users presenting for treatment over the past decade in Newcastle and across the Hunter region.

"While counselling is effective for many people with less problematic methamphetamine use, we currently don't have a proven medication treatment for severe methamphetamine dependence.

"Dexamphetamine has been used as a treatment for methamphetamine dependence with some initial promising results.

"Lisdexamphetamine is a slow release form of dexamphetamine, with a slower onset of action and is metabolised by the body in a way that is very hard to be used non-medically.

"If you crush up the drug and inject it, you are not going to get a rush because it still has to be turned into dexamphetamine in your blood."

The LiMA study has recruited 142 people to date and is looking for 38 more.

Recruitment is via specialist Drug and Alcohol treatment centres in Newcastle and Sydney (St Vincent's Hospital, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Western Sydney Drug Health).

Participants will receive either lisdexamfetamine or a placebo (a medication with no active ingredients), in addition to counselling.

Results from the two groups will be compared and analysed, and the findings will help to inform the future use of lisdexamfetamine in the treatment of methamphetamine dependence.

For further information, contact Hunter New England Health Drug and Alcohol Clinical Services on 0417 656 352 or 0438 065 230. Alternatively, visit the LiMA study website www.limastudy.info

HMRI is a partnership between the University of Newcastle, Hunter New England Health and the community.

CONTACT: Luke Horton - HNE Health | (02) 4985 5522 | HNELHD-Media@health.nsw.gov.au