SAPC Data Brief

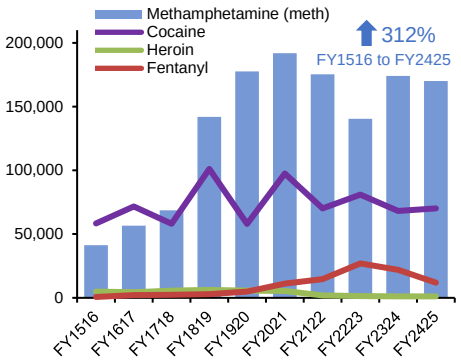
Methamphetamine Misuse/Abuse and Consequences

County of Los Angeles Public Health
Substance Abuse Prevention and Control

November 2025

Availability

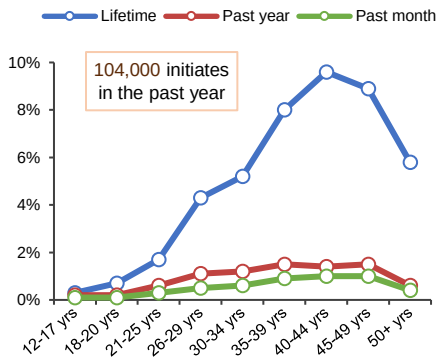
Nationwide drug seizures (in pounds), U.S., FY1516-FY2425[1]



Domestic meth seizures increased greatly in FY1819 in the US, and remains high

Prevalence

Lifetime, past year, and past month meth use by age, U.S., 2024[2]



Meth use was increased with age, peaking at 35-49, and then decreased

Health Conditions

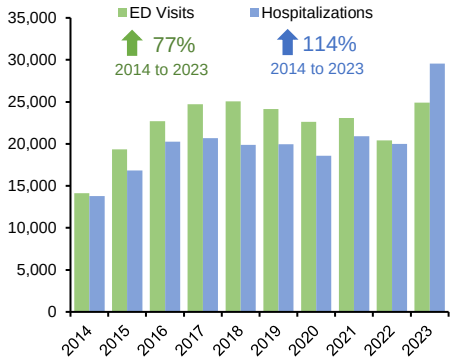
Increased risk of adverse outcomes associated with meth use (vs. non-use)

Depression[3]	1.3 times
HIV infection[4]	1.5 times
Heart attack[5]	1.6 times
Suicide attempt[3]	1.7 times
Heart failure[6]	1.8 times
Stroke[7]	1.9 times
Parkinson's disease[8]	2.8 times
Preterm birth[9]	3.1 times
Hepatitis C virus infection[10]	3.4 times
Low birth weight[11]	3.5 times
Psychosis[3]	5.3 times
Placental abruption[9]	5.6 times
Dental problems[12]	6.6 times
Schizophrenia[13]	9.4 times

Meth use is associated with many adverse health outcomes

Healthcare Utilization

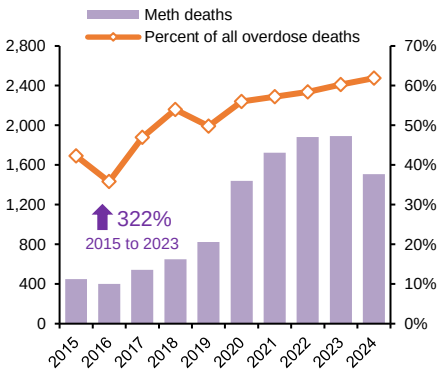
Meth-related[a] hospitalizations and ED visits, Los Angeles County (LAC), 2014-2023[14]



Meth-related ED visits and hospitalizations have increased significantly over the past decade

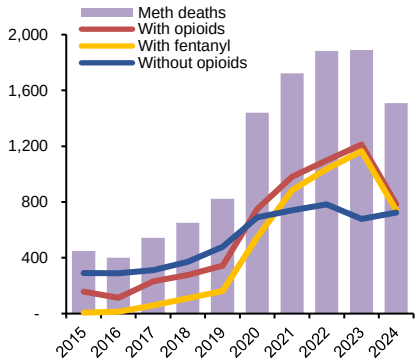
Deaths

Meth overdose-related deaths, LAC, 2015-2024[15]



Meth has been increasingly involved in overdose deaths in LAC, accounting for 62% in 2024

Meth overdose-related deaths by opioid involvement, LAC, 2015-2024[15]

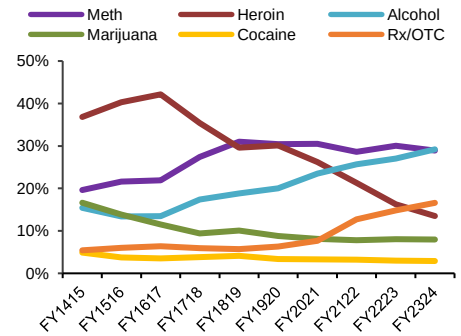


Nearly two thirds (64%) of meth-related deaths in 2023 involved opioids, particularly fentanyl (94%)

[a] *Meth-related includes records listing methamphetamine abuse, use, dependence, or poisoning (excluding in remission) as a diagnosis or an external cause of injury.*

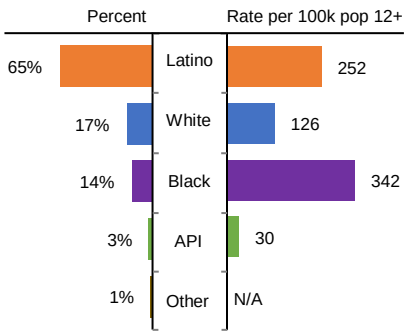
Treatment Admissions

Primary drug problem at treatment admission, LAC, FY1415-2324[16]



Meth has been one of the top drug problems among substance use disorder treatment clients

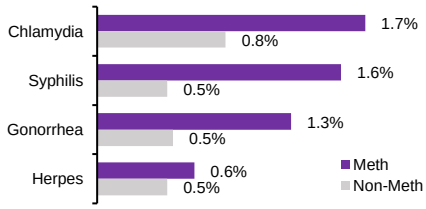
Race/ethnicity among clients with primary meth problem, LAC, FY2324[16]



Latino had the largest number, while Blacks had the highest rate of primary meth admissions

Meth use before/during sex among clients with primary meth problem, LAC, FY2324[16]

Diagnosed STDs among clients with primary meth and non-meth problem, LAC, FY2324[16]



Primary meth clients had higher rates of STDs than clients with other primary drug problems

For substance use disorder treatment in LAC, call the Substance Abuse Service Hotline (SASH) at 844-804-7500, or visit Service & Bed Availability Tool (SBAT)
For more information on substance use disorders in LAC, visit http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/sapc. For more data on methamphetamine in LAC, visit the data story.
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Availability

Most of the methamphetamine (meth) available in the United States is produced in Mexico and smuggled through the Southwest Border[17]. According to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection[1], meth accounts for the most drug seizures by weight. In FY2425 (fiscal year from October to September), 170,119 pounds of meth were seized in the US, up 312% from 41,310 pounds in FY1516. The average purity has remained at high levels near 97%[17].

In 2022, 63% of all drugs seized and analyzed by forensic laboratories were identified as meth in Los Angeles, which was higher than the national average of 29%[18].

Prevalence

According to the 2024 National Survey on Drug Use and Health[2], among people aged 12+ in the US, about 15,294,000 (5.3%) had ever used meth, 2,384,000 (0.8%) used meth in the past year, and 1,418,000 (0.5%) used meth in the past month. An estimated 104,000 people used meth for the first time in 2024.

Meth use increased with age, and was highest for those aged 35-49 years. According to the 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey[19], ever use of meth among high school students in LAC (2.4%) was higher than the national average (1.8%).

Health Conditions

Meth use is associated with increased risk of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular conditions (e.g., heart attack[5], heart failure[6], stroke[7]), brain conditions (e.g., psychosis[3], depression[3], suicide attempt[3] Parkinson's disease[8], schizophrenia[13]), blood-borne and sexually transmitted infections (e.g., HIV[4], hepatitis C virus[10]), adverse birth outcomes (e.g., preterm birth[9], placental abruption[9], low birth weight[11]), dental problems[12], and other adverse health conditions.

Healthcare Utilization

According to the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI)[14], hospital discharge records listing any meth-related diagnosis or external cause of injury (i.e., abuse, use, dependence, or poisoning) in LAC increased by 114% from 13,778 in 2014 to 29,544 in 2023. The number of meth-related ED visits in LAC increased by 77% from 14,112 in 2014 to 24,923 in 2023.

In 2023, meth-related ED visits occurred mostly among males (72%), Hispanic/Latinos (49%), and those aged 26-39 years (46%). Meth-related hospitalizations occurred mostly among males (72%), Hispanic/Latinos (44%), and those aged 40-64 (52%).

The mean charge for meth-related hospitalizations in LAC increased from $49,494 in 2014 to $72,576 in 2023 (adjusted for inflation to 2024 US dollars). Annual charges for meth-related hospitalizations increased from $682 million in 2014 to $2.1 billion in 2023, totaling $13.5 billion from 2014 to 2023.

Deaths

According to LAC Coroner/Medical Examiner data, the number of accidental methamphetamine overdose death increased by 322% from 448 in 2015 to 1,890 in 2023, then declined by 20% to 1,509 in 2024.

Methamphetamine was increasingly involved in drug overdose deaths, accounting for 42% in 2015 and 62% in 2024.

In 2024, Hispanic/Latinos had the largest number of meth overdose deaths (n=625), followed by Whites (n=519), and Blacks (n=285). However, the rates per 100,000 population were highest among Blacks (rate=38.8), followed by Whites (rate=21.6) and Hispanic/Latinos (rate=13.0).

In LAC, meth overdose deaths that jointly involved opioids as a cause of death increased over the past decade, with a growing presence of fentanyl in particular. Opioid co-involvement increased every year from 35% in 2015 to 64% in 2023. In 2024, after substantial County efforts to curb opioid deaths, meth deaths co-involving opioids decreased for the first time in eight years. However, over half (52%) of meth overdose deaths continued to involve opioids, most (94%) of which involved fentanyl.

Regardless of opioid involvement, the number of meth overdose deaths not involving opioids have remained relatively stable at high levels since 2020.

Treatment Admissions

According to the Los Angeles County Participant Reporting System and Sage data[16], in FY1819 (fiscal year July to June), meth surpassed heroin to become the most common reported drug problem at admission to publicly funded substance used disorder (SUD) treatment programs in LAC, and had since remained the top drug problem through FY2223.

In FY2324, primary meth admissions accounted for 28.9% of all treatment admissions to publicly funded SUD treatment programs, just under primary alcohol admissions (29.2%), which has been steadily increasing since FY1617.

In FY2324, Hispanic/Latino (65%) clients accounted for the largest proportion of SUD treatment admissions with meth as the primary drug problem, followed by White (17%), Black (14%) and Asian/Pacific Islander (3%) clients.

However, the rate of primary meth admissions per 100,000 population aged 12+ was highest among Black clients (rate=342), followed by Hispanic/Latino (rate=252), White (rate=126) and Asian/Pacific Islander (rate=30) clients in FY2324.

In FY2324, 64% of patients who reported meth as their primary drug problem had used meth before or during sex in the past year.

Compared to patients who reported other primary drug problems, primary meth patients had higher rates of diagnosed chlamydia (1.7% vs. 0.8%), syphilis (1.6% vs. 0.5%), gonorrhea (1.3% vs. 0.5%), and herpes (0.6% vs 0.5%).

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