

Drug control efforts in Mexico reduce methamphetamine treatment admissions in Mexico and US

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A study published today in the scientific journal *Addiction* shows that the Mexican government's recent efforts to control the manufacture of methamphetamine have caused a drop in methamphetamine treatment admissions in Mexico and in neighbouring Texas.

In 2005 Mexico began controlling its imports of pseudoephedrine (a precursor chemical used in the manufacture of methamphetamine), and in 2008 it became the first country in North America to ban all imports of pseudoephedrine as well as ephedrine, another important precursor chemical. Researchers estimate that the 2005 import controls caused a 12% drop in voluntary methamphetamine treatment admissions in Mexico, with similar reductions in Texas.

An even larger drop in voluntary admissions occurred following the 2007 closure of a commercial chemical company suspected of illicitly importing more than 60 tons of [pseudoephedrine](#) into Mexico. The head of the company fled Mexico but was eventually arrested in the United States. Methamphetamine treatment admissions in Mexico decreased by 56% following the closure of the company, with Texas showing similar results.

All decreases in admissions appeared to be specific to [methamphetamine](#), as researchers found no concurrent changes in cocaine, [heroin](#), and alcohol treatment admissions during the same period. The study would

up shortly after the 2008 bans on precursor chemicals came into effect, so researchers weren't able to examine fully the impact of those bans; however, the researchers noted that treatment admissions in Mexico showed signs of declining in the first few months following the bans.

Says lead researcher James Cunningham, a Fulbright Scholar at The University of Arizona: "These findings constitute the first evidence outside the United States that a country's precursor chemical controls can have positive public health results both domestically and internationally."

Provided by Wiley

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