

# Recruiting the immune system to prevent relapse

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Substance abuse, particularly opioid abuse, is an ongoing issue in the U.S. While treatments such as drug counseling and a handful of medications to combat withdrawal symptoms and cravings exist, the fear and risk of relapsing is real. An article in *Chemical & Engineering News* (*C&EN*), the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, describes how vaccines targeting drugs of abuse could prevent relapse.

As *C&EN* Deputy Executive Editor Michael Torrice reports, the idea of preventing relapse with vaccines has been around since the 1970s. But researchers have been unable to translate success in animal studies to those involving humans. About a decade ago, several vaccines entered clinical trials, but these vaccines were met with disappointing results.

Researchers learned from these failed studies that not all participants react to the vaccines similarly. While some people's immune systems created high levels of antibodies against the drugs, others did not. As a result, groups went back to the drawing board and started optimizing and reformulating their vaccines and are now awaiting [clinical trial data](#) to see if these new formulations worked.

**More information:** "Vaccines against addictive drugs push forward despite past failures," [cen.acs.org/articles/96/i8/Vac ... tive-drugs-push.html](http://cen.acs.org/articles/96/i8/Vac...tive-drugs-push.html)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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