

Opioid use may affect treatment for alcohol dependence

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New research indicates that opioid misuse and the use of cannabis and other drugs may compromise the effectiveness of treatments for alcohol use disorder. In an *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* study,

individuals with alcohol dependence who misused opioids and those who used cannabis and other drugs were more likely to drink heavily and frequently during and following treatment.

On average, individuals with [opioid misuse](#) engaged in heavy drinking 48 days earlier in treatment, drank heavily on approximately 8% and 13% more days in the last month of treatment and one year following treatment, respectively, and consumed 4 more drinks per peak drinking occasion than individuals without opioid misuse and no other drug use.

"This study provides evidence that we cannot ignore alcohol and other drug use when discussing potential impacts of the [opioid epidemic](#)," said lead author Dr. Katie Witkiewitz, of the University of New Mexico. Individuals who misuse opioids have poorer outcomes in multiple domains, and the current study identified a much higher risk of alcohol relapse among those with opioid misuse in alcohol treatment."

More information: *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/ACER.13772](https://doi.org/10.1111/ACER.13772) , onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/15300277

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