

## Cracks in the Ice: Are attitudes towards crystal methamphetamine changing?

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**Introduction / Issues:** A national Australian study in 2019 found that crystal methamphetamine was associated with high levels of stigma and discrimination [1]. Given the increased awareness of the impact of stigma, this study aimed to determine if there had been any changes in knowledge and attitudes towards crystal methamphetamine. This study also aimed to determine if interaction with Cracks in the Ice ([cracksintheice.org.au](http://cracksintheice.org.au), CITI), an evidence-based information and resource portal about crystal methamphetamine, had any impact on knowledge and/or attitudes.

**Method / Approach:** A national online cross-sectional survey was conducted from February-April 2022 among 736 Australian residents aged 18 years and over. Participants (67% female, mean age: 41.3years) completed validated scales to assess knowledge and attitudes regarding crystal methamphetamine. Those who had previously not used CITI (CITI-naïve, n=486), were asked to interact with the site and complete a follow-up survey a month later, which included repeated baseline measures. Data was analysed and compared to the previous data collection in 2019 (n=2,108) using t-tests [2].

**Key Findings OR Results:** Attitude scores were significantly lower ( $p=0.002$ ) indicating that participants held less negative or stigmatising beliefs. However, there was also a significant decrease in knowledge scores ( $p<0.001$ ). At baseline, knowledge scores were higher ( $p<0.001$ ), and attitude scores were lower ( $p<0.001$ ) among participants who reported previously visiting CITI, compared to CITI-naïve participants.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** Participants held less stigmatising or negative beliefs in this study compared to the previous, however, knowledge about crystal methamphetamine has also declined.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** Digital health dissemination resources, like Cracks in the Ice, can be used to effectively increase knowledge about and reduce stigma towards crystal methamphetamine.

1. Deen, H., et al., *Stigma, discrimination and crystal methamphetamine ('ice'): Current attitudes in Australia*. *Int J Drug Policy*, 2021. 87: p. 102982.
2. Kershaw, S., et al., *Evaluation of a Digital Health Initiative in Illicit Substance Use: Cross-sectional Survey Study*. *J Med Internet Res*, 2021. 23(8): p. e29026.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:** *Cracks in the Ice* is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. This study was also supported by the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council via Fellowships (LS APP1132853; KC, APP1120641; MT, APP1078407; and NN, APP1166377), an Australian Rotary Health Fellowship (LB), and via a Centre of Research Excellence in the Prevention and Early Intervention in Mental Illness and Substance Use (PREMISE; APP11349009).