The Center for Opioid Epidemiology and Policy (COEP) aims to advance promising policy, health services, and treatment approaches to reduce opioid misuse and opioid overdose. First launched in June 2019, COEP has grown into a multidisciplinary center, including 3 full-time and 14 affiliated faculty members, 7 predoctoral and postdoctoral fellows, and 6 staff in epidemiology, health services, biostatistics, medicine, computer science, public policy, criminology and sociology, among others. Our members have produced groundbreaking research on the role that the pharmaceutical industry played in increasing opioid prescribing and overdose risk, as well as the contribution that leading health care policy approaches, such as Medicaid expansion and prescription drug monitoring programs, have made to reducing opioid overdoses across the United States. They have also highlighted the sizable geographic disparities that exist in access to evidence-based treatment for opioid use disorder, and the key role that data linkage across multiple sectors can play in tracking the disease burden produced by opioid misuse. Cutting-edge studies have resulted in $10.3 million in funding and 94 publications in the last year. COEP is also deeply committed to using its resources for community education and outreach. In the past year, we have launched a newsletter with a circulation list of 400+ people, hosted 9 seminars with speakers of national and international renown, and launched a pilot grants program to stimulate research by postdoctoral fellows and junior faculty. This is just the beginning. In the next year, we will launch a new diversity and inclusion initiative, pursue novel research on the connections between the COVID-19 pandemic and the opioid overdose epidemic, expand our national and global collaborations, and prepare to submit a NIH center proposal in 2021. I am excited to work on these and many other important challenges with an unequalled team. Thank you to our faculty, fellows, staff, and collaborators near and far, for your dedication and hard work to improve the lives of people who use drugs.

Sincerely,
Magdalena Cerdá, DrPH, MPH
COEP Summary

The Center for Opioid Epidemiology and Policy at NYU Langone Health serves as a central source of research on the United States’ rapidly shifting opioid overdose epidemic. COEP’s projects aim to inform evidence-based policies to prevent opioid misuse, disorder, and overdose in populations nationally and globally. The multidisciplinary team at COEP focuses on tracking trends in opioid morbidity and mortality, evaluating the impact of state policies and laws to prevent opioid overdoses (e.g., regulating the drug supply, providing access to naloxone, and reducing barriers to treatment), and examining the impact of the opioid overdose epidemic on local communities. COEP’s work extends into other areas of substance use and abuse research related to stimulants and marijuana. COEP is also pursuing novel research on the connections between the COVID-19 pandemic and the opioid overdose epidemic.

COEP HIGHLIGHTS

$10.3M in grant funding
- including 18 awards and subcontracts

94 publications
- from 3 full-time faculty and 3 post-doctoral fellows

17 faculty & affiliate members
- 6 staff members and 7 pre-doctoral and post-doctoral fellows
Faculty & Staff Recruitment

The Center for Opioid Epidemiology and Policy works with a multidisciplinary group of faculty and staff who study the opioid epidemic as well as other areas of substance use and misuse.

COEP FACULTY

NOA KRAWCZYK, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of Population Health
Dr. Krawczyk, recruited from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, conducts research on barriers to evidence-based treatment for opioid use disorders and improving quality and effectiveness of care, especially among vulnerable groups.

SAMUEL FRIEDMAN, PhD
Research Professor, Department of Population Health
Dr. Friedman, joining COEP from NDRI, currently conducts research on opioid users in rural and urban settings, after a notable career studying harm reduction and prevention of HIV/AIDS and other infections among people who use drugs.

FACULTY RECRUITMENT

COEP hosted a post-doctoral candidate and an assistant scientist in December 2019 and March 2020 for an open assistant professor position.
**FACULTY AFFILIATES**

COEP works with faculty across the institution and maintains a robust national and international network of 14 faculty affiliates:

- Anthony J. Accurso, MD
- Samrachana Adhikari, PhD
- Arturo Alvarez-Roldan, PhD
- Ellen Caniglia, ScD
- Alvaro Castillo-Carniglia, PhD
- Charles Cleland, PhD
- Sunita Desai, PhD
- Kelly Doran, MD
- Julian Santaella, PhD
- Marc Gourevitch, MD
- Maria Khan, PhD
- Joshua Lee, MD
- Jennifer McNeely, MD
- Daniel Neill, PhD

**STAFFING**

The COEP team grew to include 6 staff members, including 3 data analysts, 1 senior program manager, 1 outreach intern, and 1 research intern. Each summer COEP engages several interns through the SARET program.

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**Education**

The Center for Opioid Epidemiology & Policy places a particular focus on educating the next generation of researchers through our pre-doctoral student and post-doctoral fellow engagement, as well as teaching activities.

**EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS**

- COEP has taken on four postdoctoral fellows as well as three predoctoral students.
- Dr. Cerdá taught an eight-session course in Spring 2019 that became part of the doctoral curriculum in epidemiology at Sackler Institute at NYU Langone Health, “Critical Thinking in Epidemiology.”
- Dr. Krawczyk and Dr. Friedman were invited to teach a class for “Population Health and Health Policy Seminar” in Spring 2020, “The impacts of COVID-19 on people who use drugs (PWUD).”
Publications

The Center for Opioid Epidemiology and Policy has published 94 papers since September 2018. Researchers in COEP publish on a wide range of topics related to the opioid crisis.

PUBLISHED JOURNALS

- Addiction
- Addictive Behaviors
- Aids & Behavior
- American Journal of Epidemiology
- American Journal of Preventive Medicine
- American Journal of Psychiatry
- American Journal of Public Health
- Annals of Emergency Medicine
- Annals of Epidemiology
- Annals of Internal Medicine
- British Medical Journal
- Clinical Infectious Diseases
- Criminal Justice & Behavior
- Drug & Alcohol Dependence
- Epidemiology
- General Hospital Psychiatry
- Global Public Health
- Harm Reduction Journal
- Health Services Research
- Injury Prevention
- International Journal of Drug Policy
- JAMA Internal Medicine
- JAMA Network Open
- JAMA Pediatrics
- JAMA Psychiatry
- Journal of Immune Deficiency Syndromes
- Journal of Addiction Medicine
- Journal of Adolescence
- Journal of Adolescent Health
- Journal of Attention Disorders
- Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research
- Journal of General Internal Medicine
- Journal of Infection in Developing Countries
- Journal of Pediatrics
- Journal of Rural Health
- Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment
- Journal of the International AIDS Society
- Journal of Urban Health
- Lancet Psychiatry
- Pediatrics
- Psychiatric Services
- Substance Abuse
- Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy
- Transitional Behavioral Medicine
- Viruses
Policymaker Outreach

The Center for Opioid Epidemiology and Policy seeks to inform evidence-based policies to prevent opioid misuse, disorder, and overdose in populations nationally and globally.

POLICYMAKER OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Cerdá testified at the New York State Joint Senate Task Force on Opioids, Addiction, and Overdose Prevention to advocate for policies that expand data linkage and sharing across health, social service, and criminal justice agencies.

COEP hosted an introductory meeting with Dr. Wilson Compton, NIDA Deputy Director, to discuss opportunities for alignment and agency priorities for addressing the opioid overdose epidemic funding in the long and short term.

Dr. Krawczyk met with NY State Senator Gustavo Rivera during his visit to NYU Langone Health to discuss what role COEP will have in addressing the opioid overdose epidemic in New York State.

The COEP launch event included policymakers playing a key role in the opioid overdose epidemic in New York City: Dr. Hillary Kunins, Acting Executive Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and Mr. Chauncey Parker, Executive Assistant District Attorney, Office of Manhattan District Attorney.

COEP advocated for policies to support NIH research on aspects of the opioid epidemic meriting further exploration to aid in our response.
Communications & Media

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Created and continually updated the COEP webpage, including a dynamic news page tracking media coverage of faculty and team members and a newsletter page that launched in January 2020.

Launched the Epidemiology and Policy Updates newsletter, which showcases significant findings in opioid research, recent developments in opioid policy and, most recently, updates relevant to COVID-19 to engage researchers, policymakers, and advocacy groups in the field of substance use and abuse research.

Expanded the social media presence of COEP on Twitter by promoting recent news and events, posting visual abstracts to showcase faculty research, and engaging with thought leaders in the field of substance use and abuse research.

Developed a listserv of over 400 people who receive newsletter releases, event announcements and other COEP updates.
MEDIA COVERAGE

Several research publications and events received significant coverage in media outlets nationally and internationally. Notable examples include:

► Association of Medicaid Expansion with Opioid Overdose Mortality in the United States (JAMA Network Open)
  ► Dr. Cerdá featured in multiple news outlets, including The Washington Post, Healthday, Vox, Bloomberg Law, Kaiser Health News, and more

► Opioid Agonist Treatment and Fatal Overdose Risk in a State Wide US Population Receiving Opioid Use Disorder Services (Addiction)
  ► Dr. Krawczyk featured in multiple news outlets, including Medscape, Healio Psychiatry, Business Insider, Healthday, and more

► Association of Pharmaceutical Industry Marketing of Opioid Products With Mortality From Opioid-Related Overdoses (JAMA Network Open)

► Association Between Recreational Marijuana Legalization in the United States and Changes in Marijuana Use and Cannabis Use Disorder From 2008 to 2016 (JAMA Psychiatry)
  ► Featured in Business Insider, Vox, Reuters Health, NPR, and other national and international news websites

► COEP Launch Event
  ► Featured in Crain’s Health Pulse, BioSpace (picked up by 80 news websites) and Orthopedics Today (picked up by 30 other news websites)

FACULTY INTERVIEWS

Several faculty members have been interviewed for news stories and podcasts, including:

► Dr. Friedman for BronxNet about How Isolation Can Affect Substance Users
► Dr. Cerdá for American Journal of Managed Care podcast
► Dr. Cerdá and Dr. Krawczyk for Epidemiology Counts podcast
Grants, Projects, & Other COEP Activities

COEP faculty have been awarded more than $10M in grant funding, including 18 active awards and subcontracts.

AWARDS AND SUBCONTRACTS

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OTHER COEP HIGHLIGHTS

- COEP faculty, staff, predoctoral students, and postdoctoral fellows have presented at 24 conferences and poster sessions.

- To accompany the launch, COEP released a video outlining its research goals and current work as well as an interview with Dr. Cerdá.
Pilot Project Grant Program

COEP established the first annual Pilot Project Grant Program in Fall 2019, soliciting applications from junior faculty at the assistant professor level, fellows, and postdoctoral fellows within the NYU system. The call for Letters of Intent resulted in ten applications, with five applicants selected to submit a full proposal.

2020 PILOT PROJECT AWARDEES

LEAH HAMILTON, PhD
Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Opioid Epidemiology and Policy, NYU Department of Population Health

SUBSTANCE USE BEHAVIOR AND HARM REDUCTION SERVICE UTILIZATION AMONG PROBATIONERS

Dr. Hamilton’s feasibility pilot study will test a respondent-driven sampling recruitment strategy to identify people under community supervision who use opioids from an initial sample of probationers. It will also evaluate the acceptability of a harm reduction kit (including naloxone training) and survey of substance use and related health and harm reduction behavior within the sample. Results of this pilot will inform a larger-scale harm reduction intervention with community-based, justice-involved people who use drugs.

DAVID FRANK, PhD
Postdoctoral Fellow, NYU Behavioral Sciences Training in Drug Abuse Research Program

ASSESSING PATIENT AND PROVIDER ATTITUDES TOWARDS MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT (MAT)

Dr. Frank’s exploratory pilot study uses semi-structured interviews with patients and treatment providers to examine how people in MAT conceptualize their needs and goals, and the corresponding willingness and ability of clinicians to provide them. Study findings will be used to help identify and describe key issues regarding barriers and access to inform a larger mixed methods study, and, ultimately, to improve patient use and retention.
In June 2019, COEP hosted a launch event and reception, attended by over 100 faculty, staff, and external partners. The event included comments by leadership, two panels focused on academic and practitioner/policymaker perspectives on the opioid overdose crisis, and a presentation by Dr. Wilson Compton, NIDA Deputy Director.

The Department of Population Health invited several faculty members to speak on different topics related to the opioid crisis.

- Dr. Krawcyzk, “Linking Criminal Justice and Healthcare Data to Address the Opioid Crisis.”
- Dr. Friedman, “Big Events: Understanding the Long-Term Effects of the COVID, Racism and Economic Crises on High-Risk Behaviors and Health Outcomes.”

Seventeen faculty affiliates, outside partners, and COEP staff were invited to a strategy session to provide commentary and suggestions about the COEP’s goals, objectives, and funding opportunities to pursue.
COEP SEMINAR SERIES

- COEP hosted 9 seminars featuring the work of local and international researchers focused on drug use and misuse. As an ongoing, monthly series COEP will host 5 additional speakers focused on issues of equity in research and access to treatment related to the overdose epidemic.

Health Disparities Among Rural People Who Use Drugs — Possible Negative Impacts of COVID-19

Dr. Wiley Jenkins, PhD, MPH, Chief of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the Department of Population Science and Policy at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, discussed how the current COVID-19 pandemic could exacerbate pre-existing health disparities and disease transmission among people who use drugs in rural settings.

Rural Communities in Crisis: Leveraging Research to Inform Drug Policy and Practice

Sean T. Allen, DrPH, MPH, a faculty member at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, presented on his work examining injection drug use-associated health disparities in rural Appalachia. Dr. Allen discussed the adaptation of population size estimation methodologies to rural contexts and the application of research evidence to address emerging infectious disease outbreaks among people who inject drugs.

Responding to Opioid Use Disorder: Evidence, Treatment, and Public Policy

Chelsea L. Shover, PhD, a postdoctoral research fellow at the Stanford University School of Medicine, presented on implementation and policy challenges when providing evidence-based opioid use disorder treatment, including slow uptake of long-acting medications for opioid use disorder and cannabis laws.
Magdalena Cerdá, DrPH, MPH

Associate Professor, Department of Population Health
Director, Center for Opioid Epidemiology and Policy

180 Madison Avenue, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10016

magdalena.cerda@nyulangone.org

Special thanks to the COEP team:

Bennett Allen, MPA
Caroline Barnes, MPH
Ellen C. Caniglia, ScD
Adetayo Fawole
Samuel Friedman, PhD
Leah Hamilton, PhD
Victoria Jent, MPH
Spruha Joshi, PhD
Maria R. Khan, PhD
Noa Krawczyk, PhD
Emmanuella Kobara
John Pamplin, PhD
Madeline Renny, MD
Ariadne Rivera-Aguirre, MPP
Valeria Samame
Tarlise Townsend, PhD
Katie Wheeler-Martin, MPH

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