**An investigation of monoamine precursors for the treatment of psychostimulant dependence**

**Chief Investigators:** Dr Adam Winstock, Professor Robert Batey  
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**Other Investigators:** Toby Lea, Susan Kath  
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**Admin Institution:** SSWAHS  
**Priority area:** Psychostimulants  
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**Lay description**
Recent estimates suggest there are more than 100,000 regular methamphetamine users in Australia. There are currently no evidence-based pharmacotherapies for psychostimulant dependence and withdrawal. However, there is some evidence to suggest that monoamine precursor provision may correct monoamine neurotransmitter depletion and reduce the severity of psychostimulant withdrawal. Monoamine precursors have been more successful in the treatment of depression when compared to placebo. This study is a double-blind, randomised, placebo controlled trial of monoamine precursors (5-HTP, L-tyrosine, dl-phenylalanine) for the treatment of psychostimulant withdrawal. Participants are randomised to receive monoamine precursors and vitamin and mineral cofactors, or placebo, daily for four weeks. Both groups receive four sessions of manualised cognitive behavioural therapy conducted over a four-week period. The primary outcome measures include: retention and engagement in treatment; psychostimulant withdrawal assessed with the Amphetamine Cessation Symptom Assessment Scale (ACSA); and, abstinence days using the Timeline Followback Method.

**Research achievements**
- Recruitment of participants is now complete (n=25).
- Data analysis is currently being conducted.

**Expected future outcomes**
Data analysis will be completed by the end of October 2009. Results will be presented at the 2009 APSAD Conference in Darwin. A manuscript is currently being prepared for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

**Key Presentations**

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