

Macken S, Nathan S, Jersky M, Boydell K, Gibson A, 2019. Body Mapping: Piloting and approach to explore the experiences of young people in drug and alcohol residential treatment; *Drug and Alcohol Review*, <http://doi.org/10.1080/09687637.2019.1679089>

Media and political framing of crystal methamphetamine use in Australia in 2015

Amanda Cohn¹, Roslyn O'Connor¹, Kari Lancaster², Patrick Rawstorne¹, Sally Nathan¹

¹*School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia*

²*Centre for Social Research in Health, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia*

Abstract

Media and politicians both influence public opinion and policy responses to illicit drug issues. This study examines the contribution each may have made in Australia in 2015 to the problem and politics streams of the policy process, as outlined in Kingdon's 'multiple streams' heuristic, when a National Ice Taskforce responded to increased public, political and media concern about methamphetamine use. A retrospective content analysis compared the frequency and content of articles about methamphetamine in print media (N = 639) and federal parliament speeches (N = 158) in 2015. Peaks in the number of media articles and debates in parliament followed the establishment and interim findings of the Ice Taskforce. The findings showed that politicians more frequently framed methamphetamine use as a crisis or epidemic than the media. Both frequently portrayed cost to society as the consequence of methamphetamine use and often cited law enforcement sources. The media most frequently positioned methamphetamine users as criminal or deviant compared to politicians who did not position the user or positioned them as an addict or victim. This analysis highlights the convergence of the problem and politics streams and suggests they are not independent as first posited by Kingdon.

Keywords: methamphetamine, media, politics, Australia

Words (body text): 4,722

Media and political framing of crystal methamphetamine use in Australia

Abstract

Media and politicians both influence public opinion and policy responses to illicit drug issues. This study examines the contribution each may have made in Australia in 2015 to the problem and politics streams of the policy process, as outlined in Kingdon's 'multiple streams' heuristic, when a National Ice Taskforce responded to increased public, political and media concern about methamphetamine use. A retrospective content analysis compared the frequency and content of articles about methamphetamine in print media (N = 639) and federal parliament speeches (N = 158) in 2015. Peaks in the number of media articles and debates in parliament followed the establishment and interim findings of the Ice Taskforce. The findings showed that politicians more frequently framed methamphetamine use as a crisis or epidemic than the media. Both frequently portrayed cost to society as the consequence of methamphetamine use and often cited law enforcement sources. The media most frequently positioned methamphetamine users as criminal or deviant compared to politicians who did not position the user or positioned them as an addict or victim. This analysis highlights the convergence of the problem and politics streams and suggests they are not independent as first posited by Kingdon.

Introduction

In 2015, the Australian federal government announced a National Ice Taskforce to advise on the impacts of crystal methamphetamine ('ice') in Australia and drive the development of a National Ice Action Strategy (Australian Government, 2015). Then Prime Minister Tony Abbott described the 'ice menace' as a 'dreadful scourge' that was 'way beyond anything that we have seen before now' (Conifer & Greene, 2015, April 8). In keeping with this view, the most recent National Drug Strategy Household Survey found that Australians perceive methamphetamines to be the drug of most concern to the community, and most likely to be associated with a 'drug problem', despite a reported decline in use (any use in the last 12 months) from 2.1% to 1.4% between 2013 and 2016 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017). This survey data reported that cannabis and cocaine are currently the most

commonly used illicit drugs in Australia, and misuse of prescription pharmaceuticals such as oxycodone and tramadol is more than twice as prevalent as methamphetamine use at 4.8% (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017). However, it has been suggested that methamphetamine use could be under-reported in population surveys due to unwillingness to report current or past use in the context of stigma and negative media reporting (Chalmers, Lancaster, & Hughes, 2016; Lloyd, 2013).

As early as 2006, the Australian media appear to have labelled ice use as a broad and population-wide ‘epidemic’ (Usher, Clough, Woods, & Robertson, 2015) and internationally, the media has similarly characterised methamphetamine use as an ‘epidemic’, such as in the United Kingdom (Ayres & Jewkes, 2012) and United States (Gonzales, Mooney, & Rawson, 2010). People who inject drugs or use stimulants regularly appear to be increasingly using the more potent crystal form of methamphetamine (Karlsson & Burns, 2018; Nathan et al., 2016; Uporova, Karlsson, Sutherland & Burns, 2018) and using methamphetamine more frequently (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017). Amphetamine-related helpline calls, drug treatment, arrests and hospital admissions have also increased steeply since 2010 (Degenhardt et al., 2017). Key researchers, however, continue to argue that harms appear to be concentrated in high risk groups such as previously heavy or dependent drug users (Degenhardt et al., 2017).

In this paper, we sought to examine the way politicians framed the ‘problem’ of methamphetamine use compared to media representations during 2015 when it was the subject of significant public, political and media concern (Chalmers et al., 2016; Hughes, 2016). Kingdon’s ‘multiple streams’ heuristic of the policy process (Kingdon, 1993) is a useful framework for this inquiry as it allows examination of how the issue of

methamphetamine use is problematised, in what political contexts, and how particular responses may emerge as streams of actors and action come together (see also Ritter & Lancaster, 2018). Kingdon argues that it is through the three streams of problem, policy, and politics, respectively, that agendas are set, alternatives are generated, and policies are formulated. He describes these streams, each a differentiated cluster of actors and actions, as flowing constantly in parallel, each subject to its own dynamics.

Kingdon's model has been previously applied to the Australian 'ice epidemic' by Lancaster, Ritter, and Colebatch (2014). These authors examined a range of sources, primarily in the problem and policy streams, and questioned Kingdon's proposition that the three streams of problem, policy, and politics were independent. Similarly, Robinson and Eller (2010) suggest that participation in one stream may increase participation in another stream. Lancaster et al (2014) concluded that there was inter-dependence between the problem and policy streams, but that establishing links to the politics stream was more difficult. The significant role played by the media in framing illicit drug issues and influencing policy responses has already been thoroughly described (Hughes et al., 2011; Lawrence, Bammer, & Chapman, 2000; McArthur, 1999).

In addition to the media's role, the role of politicians (the politics stream) is argued as being always present and integral to policy change in Kingdon's conceptualisation of multiple streams (Kingdon, 1993). This has been illustrated in previous Australian drug policy studies. For example, it has been argued in the context of proposed Australian supervised injecting centres in the early 2000s that, despite the role played by public opinion, the media, and professional groups, politicians undoubtedly had the greatest influence in policy making because of their ability to block legislation and funding (Gunaratnam, 2005). It should be

noted that other contributors to the policy and problem streams such as professional groups, non-government organisations, researchers and other community groups (Gunaratnam, 2005) are important and have been examined in previous research (Fraser & Moore, 2011; Lancaster et al., 2014). However, the interaction between the problem and politics stream is under-researched.

The current study examines the problem and politics streams of the policy process through systematic analysis of Australian media and political debate when the National Ice Taskforce, a major policy response to the claimed 'ice epidemic' in Australia, was announced and delivered its findings in 2015. Several previous studies have analysed Australian drug policy discourse using parliamentary Hansard as a data source for political narrative (Hughes, Ritter, Lancaster, & Hoppe, 2017; Lancaster, Hughes, & Ritter, 2017; Lancaster, Ritter, Hughes, & Hoppe, 2016; Lancaster, Seear, & Ritter, 2017; Lancaster, Seear, & Treloar, 2015). However, all of these studies took a qualitative or narrative approach and do not present a quantitative analysis of parliamentary data nor how the framing in this source is related to framing of the issue in the media. The current study takes a different approach to previous research using qualitative analysis, instead using quantitative descriptive content analysis as described by Neuendorf (2017). The authors have not been able to identify any previous studies of a drug policy issue systematically comparing the amount and content of media and political coverage during the same time period. In addition, examination of the positioning of the user in the current study is a novel approach which has been the focus of a recent discursive analysis (Fredrickson, Gibson, Lancaster, & Nathan, 2019), but has not been investigated in a more systematic way using content analysis across a large sample. Within the politics stream, we also sought to examine whether framings differed between the incumbent government and other politicians.

Methods

A systematic retrospective content analysis was performed of articles mentioning methamphetamine in Australian print media from 2014 to 2016 as well as the federal Senate and House of Representatives Hansard in 2015. A more detailed quantitative analysis of the 3-year media sample has been described elsewhere (Rawstorne et al., 2019). The 2015 subset of this data were selected for comparison with Hansard due to the heightened political attention to methamphetamine use leading up to the announcement of the National Ice Taskforce and its consequent deliberations. Hughes et al. (2011) performed a retrospective systematic content analysis of Australian print media reporting of illicit drug use between 2003 and 2008, and their methodology was adapted for the present study as described further below.

This analysis examines whether National Ice Taskforce announcements and reports were associated with increased coverage of methamphetamine use in the media and debate in parliament, how commonly crisis or epidemic framing was used in the media and in parliament, what consequences of methamphetamine use are described, and whether they differ in the media and in parliament, how the methamphetamine user is positioned by media and in parliament, what types of sources are used to support arguments and debate regarding methamphetamine use in media and in parliament, what solutions are most commonly proposed to address methamphetamine use, and whether they differ between the media and in parliament, and finally in parliament whether there are differences in framing of methamphetamine use between government and opposition or crossbench politicians.

Newspapers were selected over other forms of media since they often set the agenda for other formats and are therefore a useful proxy for news reporting (Clegg Smith et al 2002;

Wakefield, Flay, Nichter & Giovino, 2003). They are also an accessible format for content analysis. Articles were obtained from the Factiva online database, which includes 20 newspapers representing all Australian states and territories and includes 8 out of 10 of the most read newspapers in Australia. A search was conducted using the following terms: methamphetamine* or amphetamine* or meth or meth/amphetamine* or drug* and ice and use which resulted in 3124 articles being identified between 2014-2016, 1272 of which were from 2015.

Within the 2015 sample of print media, 633 articles were excluded from analysis because they only mentioned methamphetamine in passing, did not refer to drug use (eg. ice and snow), were not news articles (eg. TV listings or book reviews), or had a focus outside of Australia. All Australian news articles with a primary or secondary focus on illicit methamphetamine were included: a total of 1366 over the 3-year period, with 639 from 2015. To form a comparable dataset of debate in parliament, the Australian Government online Hansard database was searched using the following terms over the period 1/1/15-31/12/15: methamphetamine or amphetamine or meth or ice and drug. This search resulted in 60 Senate and 178 House of Representatives items. After removal of 80 duplicate entries, a total of 158 unique Hansard items constituted the corpus for analysis. Using the same inclusion and exclusion criteria as described above for the analysis of print media, 88 Hansard items were included (63 from the House of Representatives and 25 from the Senate). The range of length of these items was 157-3453 words with a median of 798.

The coding schedule was adapted from Hughes et al. (2011) to focus on framing of methamphetamine use only. Coding categories are described in Appendix 1; those excluded from analysis have been reported elsewhere (Rawstorne et al., 2019). Within each dimension,

coders were only permitted to choose one code that they perceived as most strongly represented by the article with the exception of source type, where coding of up to 5 different sources per article was permitted.

The coding instrument was piloted on a sub-sample of 25 articles from all three years by three coders. In this initial pilot, there was strong agreement in most dimensions of the coding schedule, however there was significant disagreement in the following dimensions: crisis framing, overall tone, moral evaluation, consequence, positioning of use/user, and use of research. The coding schedule was discussed and refined to address discrepancies between interpretations of some descriptors. A final sub-sample of 45 articles was analysed by all three coders with final inter-rater reliability, calculated by Cohen's kappa, averaging $\kappa=0.6$ and above between all three coders for all dimensions, indicating substantial agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). Importantly, there was perfect agreement ($\kappa=1.0$) for inclusion and exclusion of articles for the study. Once the schedule was finalised, no further changes were made during the analysis period.

In addition, 10 articles were re-coded at the end of the analysis period to ensure that no divergence occurred over time by the same coder. For the 2015 media sample, intra-rater reliability assessed using Cohen's kappa was 1.0 (perfect agreement) for the dimensions of crisis framing, topic type, moral evaluation and mention of the National Ice Taskforce. Kappa scores for topic level, overall tone, proposed solutions and source type ranged from 0.74-0.86 (substantial to almost perfect agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977)) and the lowest kappa score was 0.545 for positioning of user, representing moderate agreement.

Hansard items were coded using the same final coding schedule as the analysis of print media articles, with the addition of dimensions for house of Parliament (upper or lower) and

political position (government, opposition or cross-bench). This was done immediately after coding of the media articles and using the same framework already assessed for inter- and intra-rater reliability as above.

Coding was done in Microsoft Excel, with data imported to SPSS for analysis. Frequency was calculated for each category, with percentage of the total 2015 sample used for comparison between media and Hansard. Statistical significance of frequency comparisons was calculated using chi-squared tests of independence and reporting Pearson's asymptotic 2-sided p-value for all dimensions except source type and moral evaluation, where each category was dummy-coded and then run in separate chi-squared analyses against the dichotomous categories.

Results

The following results first present frequencies of coverage of methamphetamine use in media and Hansard during 2015, by month. This is followed by comparison between media and Hansard of the frequency of crisis and epidemic framing, consequences of methamphetamine use, positioning of user, sources of information and proposed solutions. Finally, the Hansard items have been analysed separately to compare government politicians with those in the opposition and cross-bench.

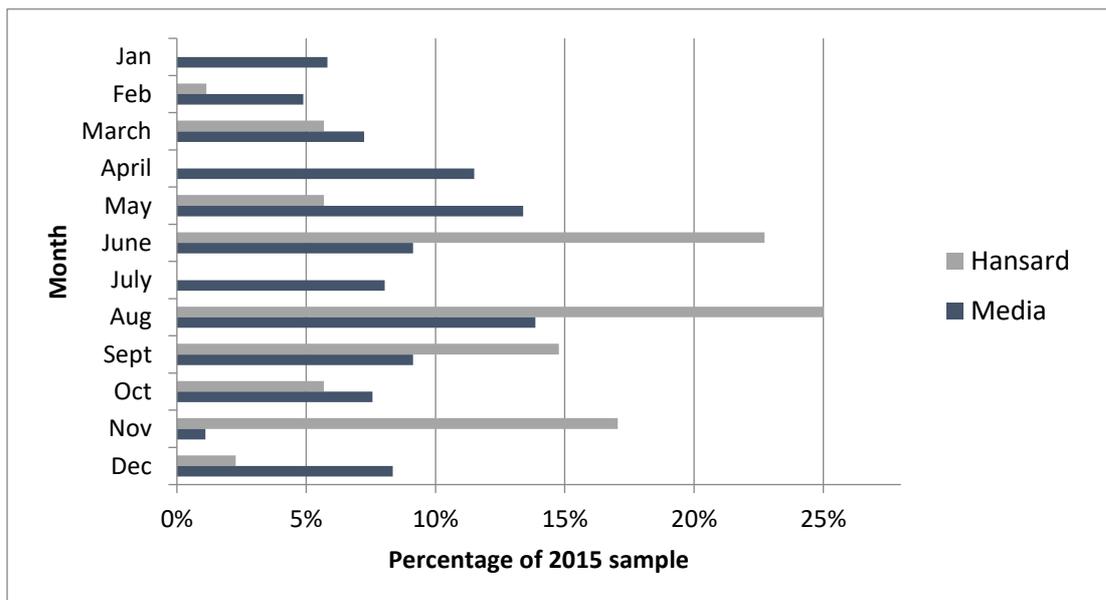
Coverage over time

Of the 1366 included media articles from 2014-2016 in the larger overall study sample, 639 (46.8%) were from 2015, followed by 31.6% in 2016 and 21.9% in 2014, which was a significant difference across the three years ($\chi^2(2) = 125.76, p < .001$). Only the articles published during 2015 were included for all analyses that follow.

The larger sample of media articles in 2015 coincided with the establishment of the National Ice Taskforce on 8 April 2015. The Taskforce presented its interim findings to the Council of Australian Governments on 23 July 2015, and delivered its final report on 9 October 2015 (Australian Government, 2015). Figure 1 illustrates the timing of 2015 media articles and Hansard items per month. Peaks in the number of media articles (April/May and August) appear to follow the establishment and interim findings of the National Ice Taskforce but not following the final report. Similarly, discussion in parliament peaked in May/June, August and November. There were no Hansard items in January, April or July during recesses in between parliamentary sittings.

[Figure 1 near here].

Figure 1. Media articles and Hansard items per month in 2015



The following sections will compare the nature of coverage between media and Hansard during 2015, addressing research questions 2 through 6.

Crisis and epidemic framing

Politicians were more likely than the media to frame methamphetamine use as a crisis or as an epidemic during 2015, with 76% of Hansard items using a crisis framing compared to

55.4% of media articles ($\chi^2(1) = 13.51, p < .001$). Similarly, epidemic framing was present in 39.8% of Hansard items compared to 18.4% of media articles ($\chi^2(1) = 21.30, p < .001$).

Consequences

Table 1 describes the consequences of methamphetamine use portrayed in both datasets. The most common consequence of methamphetamine use portrayed in both media and Hansard, for which there was no significant difference in the frequency of reporting, was cost to society (26.4% and 28.4% respectively, $\chi^2(1) = 0.152, p=0.697$), which was most often associated with drug-related crime, followed by government spending. Media articles then most commonly portrayed legal problems such as arrest, which were less common in Hansard (19.2% vs. 1.1%, $\chi^2(1) = 17.936, p < 0.001$). In contrast, in parliament speeches often described no particular consequence of methamphetamine use compared to the media (22.7% vs. 6.7%, $\chi^2(1) = 25.012, p < 0.001$), instead assuming ice use generically as a problem. Parliamentarians also referred to social problems such as family breakdown, which was less common in the media (19.3% vs. 9.7%, $\chi^2(1) = 7.383, p=0.007$). Both media and politicians also described health problems such as addiction or overdose (19.1% and 20.5% respectively, $\chi^2(1) = 0.092, p=0.761$).

[Table 1 near here].

Table 1. Consequence of methamphetamine use portrayed by media and Hansard, 2015

Consequence portrayed	Media N=639 n (%)	Hansard N=88 n (%)	Significance (p)
Legal problems ¹	123 (19.2)	1 (1.1)	0.000
Social problems ²	62 (9.7)	17 (19.3)	0.007
Health problems ³	122 (19.1)	18 (20.5)	0.761
Loss of control	104 (16.3)	7 (8.0)	0.042
Cost to society (total)	169 (26.4)	25 (28.4)	0.697
Cost to society – public amenity	14 (2.2)	1 (1.1)	1.000 ⁵
Cost to society – government spending	32 (5.0)	1 (1.1)	0.165 ⁵
Cost to society – drug-related crime	120 (18.8)	22 (25.0)	0.168
Cost to society - industry	3 (0.5)	1 (1.1)	0.404 ⁵
Benefits ⁴	11 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	0.377 ⁵
Neutral/no consequence stated ⁶	43 (6.7)	20 (22.7)	0.000

1. Legal problems refers to arrest or incarceration

2. Includes marginalisation, reduced employment/education prospects, tragedy/family breakdown, damage to reputation

3. Includes death/overdose, physical and mental health problems, addiction

4. Includes health and social benefits, use not being a barrier to success

5. Fisher's exact test reported instead of Pearson Chi-square due to expected frequency of less than 5

6. The category 'unknown risk or other' was removed from analysis due to frequency of less than ten in both media and Hansard.

Positioning of user

There were significant differences in positioning of the methamphetamine user between media and parliamentarians as shown in Table 2. The user was significantly more likely to be positioned as a criminal or deviant by the media than by politicians (39.1% vs. 9.1%, $\chi^2(1) = 30.473$, $p < 0.001$) as well as having agency (4.7% vs. 0.0%, $\chi^2(1) = 4.309$, $p = 0.040$ with Fisher's correction). Politicians were more likely than media to position methamphetamine users as naïve or victims (15.9% vs. 7.2%, $\chi^2(1) = 7.750$, $p = 0.005$) or not to position the user at all (35.2% vs. 12.2%, $\chi^2(1) = 32.162$, $p < 0.001$). Both media and Hansard to a similar extent sometimes framed the user as an addict (18.0% and 19.3% respectively, $\chi^2(1) = 0.091$,

p=0.763) or as dangerous and out of control (12.1% and 13.6% respectively, $\chi^2(1) = 0.181$, p=0.670).

[Table 2 near here].

Table 2. Positioning of user in media articles and Hansard, 2015

Positioning of user	Media n (%) N = 636¹	Hansard n (%) N = 88	Significance (p)
Criminal/deviant	250 (39.1)	8 (9.1)	0.000
Addict	115 (18.0)	17 (19.3)	0.763
Not positioned	78 (12.2)	31 (35.2)	0.000
Dangerous / out of control	77 (12.1)	12 (13.6)	0.670
Victim/naive	46 (7.2)	14 (15.9)	0.005
Having agency	30 (4.7)	0 (0.0)	0.040 ²
Disadvantaged	24 (3.8)	6 (6.8)	0.245 ²
Traumatised	16 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	0.241 ²

1. Missing data n=3

2. Fisher's exact test reported instead of Pearson Chi-square due to expected frequency of less than 5

Sources of information

As demonstrated by Table 3, Media articles most commonly cited law enforcement sources such as police or court reports (53.8%) and politicians (30.2%), followed by researchers or experts (15.3%) and health practitioners or spokespeople (14.7%). This is mirrored in the Hansard where politicians most frequently cited law enforcement sources (40.9%) followed by other politicians (23.9%), but were less likely than the media to cite health sources (5.7% vs. 14.7%, $\chi^2(1) = 5.360$, p=0.021). Politicians cited the media in 12.5% of Hansard items. Law enforcement sources were more often cited by media than by politicians (53.8% vs. 40.9%, $\chi^2(1) = 5.179$, p=0.023); this may be due to the high number of court reports in the media.

The average number of sources per article/item was 2.01 in media and 1.47 in Hansard, however this data was highly skewed toward fewer sources and was therefore dichotomised for statistical analysis. Articles citing more than one type of source have been included for

analysis in each relevant category. The categories welfare, youth, and elite person or spokesperson were removed from analysis due to frequency of less than ten in both media and Hansard. Twelve separate analyses were conducted with each category cross-tabulated against its dichotomous dummy variable.

[Table 3 near here].

Table 3. Source type cited by media articles and Hansard, 2015

Source type	Media n (%) N = 1023	Hansard n (%) N = 114	Significance (p)
Law enforcement/police/judiciary	344 (53.8)	36 (40.9)	0.023
Politician/Minister	193 (30.2)	21 (23.9)	0.221
Researcher/expert	98 (15.3)	12 (13.6)	0.676
Health	94 (14.7)	5 (5.7)	0.021
NGO/service delivery	80 (12.5)	8 (9.1)	0.355
Methamphetamine user	78 (12.2)	7 (8.0)	0.245
Family/friends	40 (6.3)	7 (8.0)	0.544
Industry	34 (5.3)	1 (1.1)	0.109 ¹
General public	18 (2.8)	4 (4.5)	0.327 ¹
Activist	19 (3.0)	1 (1.1)	0.495 ¹
Unions	14 (2.2)	1 (1.1)	1.000 ¹
Newspaper/media	11 (1.7)	11 (12.5)	0.000 ¹

1. Fisher's exact test reported instead of Pearson Chi-square due to expected frequency of less than 5

Solutions proposed

There appeared to be important differences in solutions proposed to the perceived problem between media and Hansard as shown in Table 4. Statistical comparison tests were not performed for this dimension due to methodological differences in the way the data were collated; that is, for media coding only one category per article was permitted, but for Hansard up to 3 categories were permitted per item because Hansard items were generally much longer than media articles and contained more than one proposed solution of equal priority.

A significant proportion of media articles (34.7%) proposed no solutions and this appears to be less common in Hansard (9.1%). Parliamentarians most often suggested law enforcement solutions such as increasing police powers or funding (44.3%), education such as public campaigns regarding the harms of methamphetamine use (31.8%), and treatment of addiction (29.5%).

[Table 4 near here].

Table 4. Solutions proposed by media and Hansard, 2015

How to address the problem	Media N=636 n (%)	Hansard N=161 n (%)
No solution proposed	222 (34.7)	8 (9.1)
Border control	12 (1.9)	13 (14.8)
Education	48 (7.5)	28 (31.8)
Support families/ carers	10 (1.6)	5 (5.7)
Law enforcement	95 (14.9)	39 (44.3)
Whole of community approach	53 (8.3)	14 (15.9)
Harm reduction	4 (0.6)	4 (4.5)
Treatment	101 (15.8)	26 (29.5)
Criminal justice	15 (2.3)	3 (3.4)
Mandatory treatment	17 (2.7)	6 (6.8)
Policy regulation	21 (3.3)	2 (2.3)
Health services	22 (3.4)	12 (13.6)
Testing	16 (2.5)	1 (1.1)

Political position

The following section relates to the analysis of Hansard items by political position. Of the 88 Hansard items, 62 were from members of the government, 17 from the opposition, and 9 from the cross-bench. Government politicians were more likely than those in the opposition or cross-bench to frame methamphetamine use as an epidemic (46.8% vs. 23.1%, $\chi^2(1) = 4.294$, $p=0.038$). Crisis framing was in the same direction (80% vs. 65.4%, $\chi^2(1) = 2.348$, $p=0.125$) but this was not statistically significant. In addition, government politicians were more likely than those in the opposition or cross-bench to frame methamphetamine use as morally bad (79.0% vs. 23.1%, $\chi^2(1) = 24.471$, $p<0.01$). There were no significant

differences between government and opposition or cross-bench in the dimensions of consequences, positioning of user, sources of information or solutions proposed.

Discussion

The present study adopted a broad and systematic methodology to quantitatively describe and compare both the frequency and content of media and political discussion of methamphetamine use and users in Australia in 2015. This analysis allowed investigation of the convergence and divergence in the problem and politics streams of the policy process using Kingdon's 'multiple streams' heuristic (Kingdon, 1993).

National Ice Taskforce announcements and reports appear to have generated discussion in both media and parliament. Peaks in the frequency of media articles in April/May and August appear to follow the establishment and interim findings of the National Ice Taskforce, but not following the final report. The reason for the lack of coverage of the final report in the print media is not able to be determined from the current study findings. Similarly, discussion of ice in parliament peaked in May/June, August, and November. The delay in the Hansard items may be explained by parliamentary agendas needing to be set in advance. Coverage in the media peaked in 2015 when the National Ice Taskforce was announced but there was less coverage of its final report and actions or progress since then, as demonstrated by the decrease in frequency of coverage during 2016.

Methamphetamine use was framed as a crisis issue in a majority of both media articles (55.4%) and Hansard items (76%) with a significant difference found showing politicians were more likely to use this framing than the media ($p < .001$). Previous studies have identified the media as having framed the problem early as a crisis (Hughes, Lancaster, &

Spicer, 2011) and epidemic (Usher et al., 2015). In the current study, politicians appear to have responded to and strengthened this framing, with politicians significantly more likely to use epidemic framing than the media (39.8% versus 18.4%).

Consistent with the findings of Hughes et al. (2011), the most frequently described consequence of methamphetamine use in both media and Hansard was cost to society. This furthers the narrative that the ice problem is broad-reaching, rather than harms concentrated in high-risk groups as the research data suggests (Degenhardt et al., 2017).

Positioning of the methamphetamine user was found to have varied significantly between media and politicians. In Hansard items, the user was most commonly not positioned at all (35.2%) or positioned as an addict (19.3%) or victim (15.9%). In contrast, media articles more frequently positioned the user as a criminal or deviant (39.1%). We posit that the lack of positioning or more sympathetic framing of ice users as victims or addicts by politicians allows a focus on ice itself as the problem, which is likely to have contributed to discussion of policy alternatives in supply, prevention and treatment. Fredrickson et al. (2019) similarly recently describe the portrayal of ice in Australian media as a ‘trickster’ or an evil character in itself. This focus on ice itself as the problem rather than the user by politicians could be used by politicians to ensure they are not seen to be blaming certain sections of the population for the perceived crisis. In line with this framing and possible intention to display sympathy to those impacted by ice use, parliamentarians were significantly more likely to refer to family breakdown as a consequence than the media.

The media’s predominant use of law enforcement sources (53.8%) and more frequent focus on legal (19.2%) consequences of methamphetamine use compared to politicians may have

facilitated the positioning of users as criminal or deviant. Positioning methamphetamine users in particular ways not only influences society's acceptability of various policy responses, but may affect users themselves as they take on these negative social constructs (Chalmers et al., 2016; Worth & Rawstorne, 2005). The authors note that low frequency of positioning users as "having agency" in both media and Hansard may be due to the methodology of only permitting one category per article, limiting the utility of this finding – for example, positioning the user as criminal or deviant does also imply that the user has agency.

The role of politicians as agenda-setters in the problem stream is supported by our finding that 30.2% of media articles cited politicians or ministers as a source. The role of media as a contributor to the politics stream is also possible, with 12.5% of Hansard items citing the media as a source. Lancaster et al. (2014) hypothesised that in responding to the perceived crisis, politicians were anxious to be projecting a clear moral stance and their proposed solutions rather than engage with the nuanced and sometimes complex findings of research or trends in use. This is consistent with our finding that only 13.6% of Hansard items cited a researcher or expert and only 5.7% a health practitioner.

Media most commonly did not propose any solution, and this may have contributed to public concern by leading the public to believe that the perceived problem will only worsen.

Politicians most frequently discussed a law enforcement response, and this is consistent with previous literature suggesting that precursor regulation and law enforcement responses are readily adopted because they are politically and technically feasible and fit with the national mood (Lancaster et al., 2014). This may also have been fed by the most commonly discussed consequence of ice use in both media and Hansard being cost to society in terms of drug-related crime as well as the reliance on law enforcement sources of information in both

datasets. Despite the focus of media and politicians on law enforcement, the National Ice Taskforce, which received over 1,300 submissions, in its final report acknowledged the limitations of a law enforcement response and recommended that governments focus on reducing the demand for and harm caused by methamphetamine use (Australian Government, 2015). A further analysis of the policy stream, including solutions proposed in the National Ice Taskforce report, and funding and implementation of its recommendations is needed in future research.

The period of focus of the current study coincided with the election of a conservative federal government in 2013. Our findings that government politicians were more likely than those in the opposition or cross-bench to frame ice use as an epidemic and as morally bad suggest that the administration change may have contributed to the generation of public concern through public debate and concurrent media coverage. However, it is not clear from our data whether this is a function of just being in government or whether the government being more conservative played a part, and this could be the subject of further research.

Taken together, the findings of this study suggest some significant convergence of the problem and politics streams of the policy process, which are unlikely to operate independently as first posited by Kingdon (1993). Nowlin (2011) argued that many participants are active in both the problem and policy streams; Lancaster et al. (2014) made a similar connection, however suggested that participants in the politics stream did not link as readily with either the problem or policy stream. The present study, having explicitly and systematically examined political debate and media in the same time period highlights the interdependence of the problem and politics streams of the policy process and suggests all three streams of the policy process are inter-related.

The construction of the problem as both a crisis and epidemic by both the media and politicians, and the possible synergistic effects of the two sources on each other and therefore public opinion, may have harmful repercussions in the policy stream. First, crisis framing may inadvertently result in increased awareness of the drug as a problem among the public, as is evident in household survey data in Australia between 2013-2016 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017). Careful consideration of appropriate regulatory models may be limited by the discursive landscape and public concern which may result in a reactive rather than an evidence-based policy response (Bright et al., 2013; Hill & Hupe, 2002). Secondly, the focus of decision-makers to address a perceived population-wide “epidemic” could result in scarce public health resources being reallocated away from targeted responses to high-risk groups such as those who have previously been heavy or dependent drug users to a broader population wide approach.

There are several limitations of the present study. It was outside the scope of this study to examine the policy stream during the same time period, however this would be useful in examining the broader narrative and impact in future studies. The external validity of the present study is limited by its Australian context. The authors also acknowledge the limitations of using only federal (national) parliament as representative of political narrative, given the role of state and territory governments in the development of policy to address illicit drug issues in Australia. Lastly, the limitations of using newspapers as representative of media is acknowledged given the increasing influence of digital and social media. Future research could include examination of social media.

This study has, however, found the comparison of media and political framings of a high-profile illicit drug issue to be a useful approach to consider the role of each in influencing framing and in possibly legitimising different policy responses. While both media and politicians have contributed to framing the problem of crystal methamphetamine use in Australia, the nature of the relationship and the inter-play between these two key agents in the debate is complex. Discursive analysis of a sub-sample of data may further our understanding of this relationship. Future research should also examine policy implementation and funding following the Ice Taskforce final report and recommendations.

Disclosure of interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

References

- Australian Government. (2015). The National Ice Taskforce. Retrieved 24 September 2018 from <https://www.pmc.gov.au/domestic-policy/taskforces-past-domestic-policy-initiatives/national-ice-taskforce>
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2017). National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS) 2016—key findings. Retrieved 24 September 2018 from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/illicit-use-of-drugs/ndshs-2016-key-findings/contents/summary>
- Ayres, T. C., & Jewkes, Y. (2012). The haunting spectacle of crystal meth: A media-created mythology? *Crime Media Culture*, 8(3), 315-332.
- Bright, S. J., Bishop, B., Kane, R., Marsh, A., & Barratt, M. J. (2013). Kronic hysteria: Exploring the intersection between Australian synthetic cannabis legislation, the media, and drug-related harm. *International Journal of Drug Policy*(24), 231-237.
- Chalmers, J., Lancaster, K., & Hughes, C. (2016). The stigmatisation of ‘ice’ and under-reporting of meth/amphetamine use in general population surveys: A case study from Australia. *International Journal of Drug Policy*(36), 15-24.
- Clegg Smith, K., Wakefield, M., Siebel, C., Szczyepka, G., Slater, S., Terry-McElrath, Y., et al. (2002). Coding the news: The development of a methodological framework for coding and analyzing newspaper coverage of tobacco issues (Research Paper Series No. 21). Chicago: Impact Teen.

- Conifer, D., & Greene, A. (2015, April 8). 'Ice 'epidemic': Prime Minister Tony Abbott announces task force to tackle crystal meth 'menace'. *ABC News*. Retrieved 24 September 2018 from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-04-08/tony-abbott-announces-war-on-drug-ice/6376492>
- Degenhardt, L., Roxburgh, A., Black, E., Bruno, R., Campbell, G., Kinner, S., & Fetherston, J. (2008). The epidemiology of methamphetamine use and harm in Australia. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 27(3), 243-252.
- Degenhardt, L., Sara, G., McKetin, R., Roxburgh, A., Dobbins, T., Farrell, M., . . . Hall, W. D. (2017). Crystalline methamphetamine use and methamphetamine-related harms in Australia. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 36(2), 160-170.
- Fraser, S., & Moore, D. (2011). Governing through problems: The formulation of policy on amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) in Australia. *International Journal of Drug Policy* (22), 498-506.
- Fredrickson, A., Gibson, A., Lancaster, K., and Nathan, S. (2019). “Devil’s lure took all I had”: Moral panic and the discursive construction of crystal methamphetamine in Australian news media. *Contemporary Drug Problems* 46(1), 105-121.
- Gonzales, R., Mooney, L., & Rawson, R. (2010). The methamphetamine problem in the United States. *Annual Review of Public Health* (31), 385-398
- Gunaratnam, P. (2005) Drug policy in Australia: The supervised injecting facilities debate *Discussion Papers: Policy and Governance*. Canberra: Australian National University: Asia Pacific School of Economics and Government.
- Hill, M., & Hupe, P. (2002). *Implementing Public Policy: Governance in theory and in practice*: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Hughes, C. E. (2016). The Australian (illicit) Drug Policy Timeline: 1985–2016. Drug Policy Modelling Program, National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Australia. Retrieved 24 September 2018 from <https://dpmp.unsw.edu.au/resource/drug-policy-timeline>
- Hughes, C. E., Lancaster, K., & Spicer, B. (2011). How do Australian news media depict illicit drug issues? An analysis of print media reporting across and between illicit drugs, 2003–2008. *International Journal of Drug Policy*(22), 285-291.
- Hughes, C. E., Ritter, A., Lancaster, K., & Hoppe, R. (2017). Understanding policy persistence—The case of police drug detection dog policy in NSW, Australia. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 44, 58-68.
- Karlsson, A., & Burns, L. (2018). Australian Drug Trends 2017. Findings from the Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS). (Australian Drug Trends Series No. 181). Retrieved 28 May 2019 from <https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/resource/illicit-drug-reporting-system-idrs-national-report-2017>

- Kingdon, J. W. (1993). How do issues get on public policy agendas? In W. J. Wilson (Ed.), *Sociology and the Public Agenda*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.
- Lancaster, K., Hughes, C., & Ritter, A. (2017). An historical and political account of drug detection dogs for street-level policing of illicit drugs in New South Wales, Australia. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 50(3).
- Lancaster, K., Ritter, A., & Colebatch, H. (2014). Problems, policy and politics: making sense of Australia's 'ice epidemic'. *Policy Studies*, 35(2), 147-171.
doi:10.1080/01442872.2013.875144
- Lancaster, K., Ritter, A., Hughes, C., & Hoppe, R. (2016). A critical examination of the introduction of drug detection dogs for policing of illicit drugs in New South Wales, Australia using Kingdon's 'multiple streams' heuristic. *Evidence & Policy*.
doi:10.1332/174426416X14683497019265
- Lancaster, K., Seear, K., & Ritter, A. (2017). Making medicine; producing pleasure: A critical examination of medicinal cannabis policy and law in Victoria, Australia. *International Journal of Drug Policy*.
- Lancaster, K., Seear, K., & Treloar, C. (2015). Laws prohibiting peer distribution of injecting equipment in Australia: A critical analysis of their effects. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 26(12), 1198-1206.
- Landis, J., & Koch, G. (1977). The measurement of observer agreement for categorical data. *Biometrics*, 33(1), 159-174.
- Lawrence, G., Bammer, G., & Chapman, S. (2000). 'Sending the wrong signal': Analysis of print media reportage of the ACT heroin prescription trial proposal, August 1997. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 24(3), 254-264.
- Lloyd, C. (2013). The stigmatization of problem drug users: A narrative literature review. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*, 20(2), 85-95.
- McArthur, M. (1999). Pushing the drug debate: the media's role in policy reform. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 34(2), 149-165.
- Nathan, S., Bethmont, A., Rawstorne, P.R., Ferry, M., & Hayen, A. (2016). Trends in drug use among adolescents admitted to residential treatment in Australia. *Medical Journal of Australia* 204(4), 149-150
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2017). *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (2nd ed.). Cleveland State University, USA.: SAGE Publications.
- Nowlin, M.C. (2011). Theories of the Policy Process: State of the research and emerging trends. *Policy Studies Journal* 39(1), 41-60
- Rawstorne, P., Nathan, S., O'Connor, R., Cohn, A., Fredrickson, A., Jayasinha, R., . . . Lancaster, K. (2019). Australian news media reporting of methamphetamine: An analysis

of print media from 2014-2016. [Manuscript under review by Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health].

Ritter, A., & Lancaster K. (2018). Multiple streams. In Colebatch, H. K. & Hoppe, R. (Eds) *Handbook on Policy, Process and Governing*. London: Edward Elgar.

Robinson, S.E. & Eller, W.S. (2010). Participation in Policy Streams: Testing the separation of problems and solutions in subnational policy systems. *Policy Studies Journal* 38(2), 199-216

Uporova, J., Karlsson, A., Sutherland, R., & Burns, L. (2018). Australian Trends in Ecstasy and related Drug Markets 2017. Findings from the Ecstasy and Related Drugs Reporting System (EDRS). (Australian Drug Trends Series No. 190). Retrieved 28 May 2019 from https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/ndarc/resources/National_EDRS_%202017_FINAL.pdf

Usher, K., Clough, A., Woods, C., & Robertson, J. (2015). Is there an ice epidemic in Australia. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 24(4), 283-285.

Wakefield, M., Flay, B., Nichter, M., & Giovino, G. (2003). Role of the media in influencing trajectories of youth smoking. *Addiction*, 98, 79–103.

Worth, H., & Rawstorne, P. (2005). Crystallizing the HIV Epidemic: Methamphetamine, Unsafe Sex, and Gay Diseases of the Will. *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*, 34(5), 483-486.

Appendix 1: Coding Schedule

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria (If 1 or 2 then article included. If article scores 3 or 4, article excluded and coded only for date, headline and newspaper)	1 Ice/Meth/amphetamine is main focus of article
	2 Ice/Meth/amphetamine is secondary focus of article
	3 Main focus of article is drug other than Ice/Meth/amphetamine and ice is briefly mentioned
	4 Other: Overseas story, Historical story, Not news story (eg. Promotion of TV show or book review), Main focus of article is not drug use or supply, article focus on prescription amphetamines

Date dd/mm/yyyy		
Headline		
Newspaper	1. The Australian - Online	2. The Advertiser (Adelaide)
	3. The Age (Melbourne)	4. Canberra Times (Australia)
	5. Courier Mail (Brisbane)	6. Daily Telegraph (Sydney)
	7. dailytelegraph.com.au	8. Herald-Sun (Melbourne)
	9. heraldsun.com.au	10. Hobart Mercury (Australia)
	11. Illawarra Mercury (Wollongong)	12. The Mercury (Tasmania)
	13. The Newcastle Herald (NSW)	14. Northern Territorian News/Sunday Territorian (Australia)
	15. Northern Territory News (Australia)	16. Sunday Age (Melbourne)
	17. The Sunday Times (Perth)	18. The Sydney Morning Herald
	19. The West Australian (Perth)	20. Sun Herald (Sydney)

Slant/Value-Dimensions		
Framed as Crisis or emergency issue (Y/N)	1. Yes	0. No
Framed as an epidemic (Y/N)	1. Yes	0. No
Overall tone	1. Positive	2. Negative
	3. Mixed	4. Neutral

Topic Level	1. Individual level	2. Specific group/ community level
	3. Broader society level	
Topic Type	1. Criminal justice/ prison - user	2. Criminal justice/ prison - dealer
	3. Law enforcement - user	4. Law enforcement - dealer

5. Violence/ drug related crime	6. Organised crime
7. Trafficking	8. Harms - Death/ overdose
9. Harms - Mental health	10. Harms - Physical
11. Harms - Addiction	12. Harms - to group/ community
13. Policy commentary - treatment	14. Policy commentary - law enforcement
15. Policy commentary - prevention	16. Policy commentary - harm reduction
17. Policy commentary - other	18. Politics
19. New initiative	20. Research
21. Trends/ patterns of use	22. Drug market changes
23. Cost to society - social	24. Cost to society - monetary
25. Cost to society - environmental	26. Elite - politician
27. Elite - music	28. Elite - sport
29. Elite - icon	30. Elite - model
31. Event - calendar	32. Event - music or festival
33. Event - youth	34. Event - other
35. Other (specify)	36. Testing

Moral Evaluation	1. Good	2. No risk/ minimal risk
	3. Normal/ rite of passage/ free agent	4. Risky behaviour
	5. Bad	6. Mixed
	7. Neutral	
Consequence portrayed	1. Unknown risk/ "Russian roulette"	2. Cost to society – public amenity
	3. Cost to society - government spending	4. Cost to society - drug related crime
	5. Cost to society - industry	6. Leads to loss of control
	7. Leads to marginalisation	8. Reduces employment/ education prospects
	9. Contributes to tragedy/ family breakdown	10. Arrest/ incarceration
	11. Death/ overdose	12. Physical health problems
	13. Mental health problems	14. Addiction
	15. Damage to reputation	16. Not a barrier to success
	17. Health benefits	18. Social benefits
	19. Fun	20. Neutral/no consequence stated
	21. Other (specify)	

Positioning of user/use	1. Addict	2. Having agency
	3. Criminal/Deviant	4. Disadvantaged
	5. Traumatized	6. Dangerous or out of control
	7. Victim	0. Not positioned

Addressing the Problem		
How to address the problem	1. Border control	2. Education
	3. Support families/carers	4. Law enforcement
	5. Whole of community approach	6. Harm reduction
	7. Treatment	8. Criminal justice
	9. Mandatory Treatment	10. Policy regulation
	11. Health services	12. Ice Room
	0. No solution proposed	13. Testing

Actors/ Sources/ Primary definers		
Number of sources	1. 1 source	2. 2 sources
	3. 3 or more sources	0. None
Type of source (identify all)	1. Politicians/ Ministers	2. Law enforcement/ police/ judiciary/
	3. Health/ Doctor	4. Welfare
	5. Youth	6. User/ accused person
	7. Elite/ celebrity (or their spokesperson)	8. Activist
	9. Unions	10. Industry
	11. Researcher/ Expert	12. NGO/ service delivery
	13. Family/ friends	14. General public/ community/ resident
15. Newspaper / media		

Ice Taskforce		
Does the article mention the federal ice taskforce?	1. Yes	0. No

Regional focus		
Does the article focus on a regional community?	1. Yes	0. No