

Keeping Up with the Evidence: Issue 8

Background

Highlights and references of recent publications related to HIV and other STBBIs, harm reduction, and other related work.

Interventions

This issue of Keeping Up with the Evidence looks at recent articles discussing various models of intervention in activities of relevance to ACCH members. One is a literature review on HIV preventions with people who use drugs, the second one is the result of an evaluation on mobile supervised consumption units, and the last one is a study on the acceptability and usefulness of rapid fentanyl test strips.

HIV prevention interventions for substance users and non-substance users (Elkbuli, Polcz, Dowd, McKenney, & Prado, 2019)

Summary: This article published the results of a literature review aiming at identifying interventions that are effective at reducing HIV transmission, with an eye to the differences between intravenous drug users and non-intravenous drug users. The authors pulled articles from various databases and compared HIV prevention interventions focused on universal prevention and targeted adult HIV-negative substance users. This literature review identified 19 distinct interventions which the authors then compared along a number of factors. Overall, they point out that interventions do have some effectiveness in reducing some behaviours associated with risks of HIV transmission.

Implications: Members interested in exploring options for interventions aiming at reducing HIV transmission with people who use drugs should have a closer look at this article and at the types of interventions discussed. One element of interest is that the authors found that while group interventions seem to work with non intravenous drug users, interventions with intravenous drug users seemed to favor one-on-one interactions.

Link: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13011-018-0189-7>

Reference: Elkbuli, A., Polcz, V., Dowd, B., McKenney, M., & Prado, G. (2019). HIV prevention intervention for substance users: a review of the literature. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, 14(1), 1. doi:10.1186/s13011-018-0189-7

Mobile SCS for mid-sized communities (Mema et al., 2019)

Summary: This article shares the results of an evaluation on the mobile SCS pilot projects which took place in Kelowna and Kamloops in British-Columbia. Kelowna and Kamloops are two communities which were heavily impacted by the opioid crisis, but their demographics and geography led to trying an

alternate model to the fixed-location SCS. The mobile units used in this project were retrofitted RVs which were equipped for the supervision of injection use. The units visited 2 locations in each city where they stayed for four-hour shifts. The evaluation was conducted by an independent team which looked at both quantitative and qualitative data. The results are provided on a number of topics such as: implementation and program delivery, client experience, Connections to services and health outcomes, provider experience, public experience and perceptions. The evaluation found that mobile SCS were a feasible option to reach people who inject drugs in smaller communities.

Implications: ACCH members who are interested in the mobile SCS model should find this article interesting. It points out many of the obstacles encountered as well as presents the successes of the model. One of the conclusions is that in these types of communities, mobile SCS could be a temporary solution towards a permanent, fixed, location. It also points out that mobile SCS could be made more effective by local targeted needs assessment to identify appropriate locations and hours of operations.

Link: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-018-0273-3>

Reference: Mema, S. C., Frosst, G., Bridgeman, J., Drake, H., Dolman, C., Lappalainen, L., & Corneil, T. (2019). Mobile supervised consumption services in Rural British Columbia: lessons learned. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 16(1), 4. doi:10.1186/s12954-018-0273-3

Rapid Fentanyl test strip and young adults who use drugs (Goldman et al., 2019)

Summary: This article presents the result of a study conducted in Rhode Island, U.S.A., which aimed at determining the acceptability of rapid fentanyl test strips (FTS) with young adults. The study recruited people using drugs aged 18-35 who received training on how to use the FTS themselves and then received ten FTS for personal use. There was a follow-up with the participants to assess if they had used the strips, if they had found them useful, and if it had influenced their behavior. The study found that a majority of participants had used the FTS and that it led to some individuals modifying their behaviours, such as in discarding drugs, using someone else's, or keeping naloxone nearby. The authors conclude that FTS could be a useful tool for harm reduction.

Implications: While this study was conducted in the United States, the conclusions remain relevant in the Albertan context. It is likely that the acceptability of the FTS would translate for the population who access the services of the ACCH network, and that access to take-home rapid fentanyl test strips could be a useful tool in harm reduction. Members interested in these types of interventions should consider citing this article.

Link: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-018-0276-0>

Reference: Goldman, J. E., Wayne, K. M., Periera, K. A., Krieger, M. S., Yedinak, J. L., & Marshall, B. D. L. (2019). Perspectives on rapid fentanyl test strips as a harm reduction practice among young adults who use drugs: a qualitative study. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 16(1), 3. doi:10.1186/s12954-018-0276-0

References:

- Elkbuli, A., Polcz, V., Dowd, B., McKenney, M., & Prado, G. (2019). HIV prevention intervention for substance users: a review of the literature. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, 14(1), 1. doi:10.1186/s13011-018-0189-7
- Goldman, J. E., Waye, K. M., Periera, K. A., Krieger, M. S., Yedinak, J. L., & Marshall, B. D. L. (2019). Perspectives on rapid fentanyl test strips as a harm reduction practice among young adults who use drugs: a qualitative study. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 16(1), 3. doi:10.1186/s12954-018-0276-0
- Mema, S. C., Frosst, G., Bridgeman, J., Drake, H., Dolman, C., Lappalainen, L., & Corneil, T. (2019). Mobile supervised consumption services in Rural British Columbia: lessons learned. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 16(1), 4. doi:10.1186/s12954-018-0273-3