

## Issue One: Keeping Up With the Evidence

### Background

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

### Peer-To-Peer Outreach and Research

This first issue of 'Keeping up with the Evidence' focuses on case studies as supporting evidence of the benefits of including peer outreach and/or peer workers within harm reduction, HIV and STBBI programming. While ACCH members are aware of this, these articles could be referred to in proposals or in communicating with third parties the importance of including people with lived experience in their operations.

### A Qualitative Look at Hep C Peer Educators (Batchelder et al., 2017)

**Summary:** Batchelder et al (2017), conducted and analyzed interviews with participants and peer educators involved in a HCV peer educator program in a poor urban setting in the USA. Their conclusions support the idea that peer educators can enhance HCV treatment initiation and engagement within opioid substitution program.

**Implications:** While representative of a specific context, this study provides further evidence supporting the benefits of peer educator programs in substance use counselling and could be extended to harm reduction.

**Link:** <https://harmreductionjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12954-017-0192-8>

**Reference:** Batchelder, A. W., Cockerham-Colas, L., Peyser, D., Reynoso, S. P., Soloway, I., & Litwin, A. H. (2017). Perceived benefits of the hepatitis C peer educators: a qualitative investigation. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 14(1), 67. doi:10.1186/s12954-017-0192-8

### Peer Advocates and Services for Hard-To-Reach Populations with Hep C (MacLellan, Surey, Abubakar, Stagg, & Mannell, 2017)

**Summary:** This study is the qualitative analysis of interviews with peer advocates, focusing on the perceived benefits of disclosing personal details about lived experience in order to create and maintain engagement with clients. This study concludes that maintaining a professional distance was less important than creating the connections through sharing of personal lived experience.

**Implications:** The conclusions of this study should bring no surprises to ACCH members engaged in community outreach and harm reduction. It does however provide additional evidence to support approaches involving peer-to-peer outreach of the involvement of people with lived experience in their operations:

**Link:** <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-017-0202-x>

**Reference:** MacLellan, J., Surey, J., Abubakar, I., Stagg, H. R., & Mannell, J. (2017). Using peer advocates to improve access to services among hard-to-reach populations with hepatitis C: a qualitative study of client and provider relationships. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 14(1), 76. doi:10.1186/s12954-017-0202-x

### **Peer Educator and Meth and Crack Smokers in the Vancouver Downtown Eastside (Jozaghi, Lampkin, & Andresen, 2016)**

**Summary:** This study also explored the impact of peer educators in harm reduction programs. In this case, the researchers interviewed drug smokers and peer educators in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The study suggests that peer-based outreach had many positive impacts in Vancouver, reducing risk factors and improving general health and social well-being. It also points out that peer-led organizations provide a voice to vulnerable members of society which contributes to reducing stigma.

**Implications:** As above, the study can be used to provide grounding for using peer-based approaches within programming. In addition to pointing at reduction in risk factors, it also highlights the importance of these processes in addressing stigma, even within harm reduction.

**Link:** <https://harmreductionjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12954-016-0108-z>

**Reference:** Jozaghi, E., Lampkin, H., & Andresen, M. A. (2016). Peer-engagement and its role in reducing the risky behavior among crack and methamphetamine smokers of the Downtown Eastside community of Vancouver, Canada. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 13(1), 19. doi:10.1186/s12954-016-0108-z

### **Involving Peers In A Community-Based Research Project (Jalloh et al., 2017)**

**Summary:** This article presents the "What Goes Around" research project which was a community-based, peer led study which took place in Manitoba, studying the exchange of harm reduction information among people living with HIV. It details the involvement of peers at all stages of the research, from initial design to its knowledge dissemination plan.

**Implications:** This case study provides a concrete example of an "nothing about us without us" philosophy, which is also endorsed by ACCH. This article can provide examples on ways in which to structure community-based research involving the participation of peers at all stages of the process.

**Link:** <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-017-0199-1>

**Reference:** Jalloh, C., Illsley, S., Wylie, J., Migliardi, P., West, E., Stewart, D., & Mignone, J. (2017). What Goes Around: the process of building a community-based harm reduction research project. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 14(1), 73. doi:10.1186/s12954-017-0199-1