

City of Ottawa Public Health Safer Crack Use Initiative Evaluation

Funding: Public Health Agency of Canada & Ottawa Public Health

BACKGROUND

Among women and men in Ottawa who inject drugs (IDUs), prevalence rates of HIV and HCV are among the highest in Canada. Recent research evidence suggests the potential for HCV and HIV transmission through the multi-person use of crack-smoking implements. On the basis of this evidence, in April 2005, Ottawa Public Health commenced, through its own needles exchange program and through 11 partner agencies, the distribution of glass stems, rubber mouthpieces, brass screens, chopsticks, lip balm and chewing gum to reduce the harms associated with smoking crack.

Objective

- To evaluate the impact of this initiative on a variety of HCV- and HIV-related risk practices one month, six months and 12 months following implementation of Ottawa Public Health's Safer Crack Use Initiative.

Methods

Active, street-recruited IDUs who also smoke crack consented to personal interviews and provided saliva samples for HCV and HIV testing at four time points: six-months pre-implementation, one-month, six-months and twelve-months post implementation. Descriptive and univariate analyses were completed.

Results

Results of this evaluation study are presented in a report entitled: *City of Ottawa Public Health Safer Crack Use Initiative Evaluation Report October 2006*. This report is available in [French](#) and [English](#).

More info

For more information contact:

- Dr. Lynne Leonard, Principal Investigator, at 613-562-5800 ext. 8286 or lleonard@uottawa.ca

Dissemination

Lynne Leonard¹, Emily DeRubeis¹, Linda Pelude¹, Emily Medd¹, Nick Burkett², Joyce Seto¹. [*"I inject less as I have easier access to pipes" Injecting, and sharing of crack-smoking materials, decline as safer crack-smoking resources are distributed.*](#) The International Journal of Drug Policy (2007), doi:10.1016/j.drugpo.2007.02.008

¹ HIV and Hepatitis C Prevention Research Team, Department of Epidemiology, University of Ottawa; ² Department of Epidemiology, University of Ottawa.