

Prévalence et incidence des infections à VHI chez les utilisateurs de drogues pas injections fréquent des programmes de prévention au Québec et Ottawa/Hull (SurvIDU/*I-Track* Study)

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BACKGROUND

People who inject drugs (IDUs) are at risk of acquiring HIV and other blood-borne viruses through the sharing of contaminated injecting equipment. IDUs are additionally at risk of HIV and other blood-borne infections through unprotected sex. In November 1995, Dr. Lynne Leonard was invited to participate in an epidemiological surveillance project based on a collaborative network of nine HIV prevention programmes for injection drug users located in the province of Québec. On the basis of a previous successful evaluation project undertaken by Dr. Leonard on Ottawa's Needle Exchange Programme in 1992, Dr. Leonard and by extension the Ottawa community, was selected to collaborate with the Québec HIV-IDU Surveillance Group – subsequently renamed the **SurvIDU Network**.

In 2002, the Injecting Drug Use Unit of the Surveillance and Risk Assessment Division, Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control, Health Canada, established an enhanced surveillance system to track HIV- and Hepatitis C (HCV)-associated risk behaviours among IDU populations in urban and semi-urban centres across Canada (**The *I-Track* Study**). A pilot study was undertaken during 2002 and 2003. Selected sites in the SurvUDI Network, including Ottawa, participated in this feasibility study. A review of the pilot study was carried out in 2003 wherein feedback from each of the participating centres was discussed, and the pilot phase was evaluated with respect to the objectives. The meeting also laid the foundation for establishment of the national risk behaviour surveillance system among IDUs in Canada. SurvIDU continues to operate as a data collection site within the *I-Track* study.

Objectives

The objectives of national surveillance of HIV- and HCV-associated risk behaviours among IDUs are:

- To describe the changing patterns in drug injecting practices among IDUs at the national and regional level;
- To describe the changing patterns in HIV-testing behaviour among IDUs at the national and regional level;
- To describe changing patterns in sexual risk behaviours among IDUs at the national and regional level;
- To describe changing patterns in the prevalence and incidence of HIV infections among IDU at the national and regional level; and
- To describe changing patterns in the prevalence and incidence of hepatitis C (HCV) infections among IDUs at the national and regional level.

Methods

The *I-Track*/SurvIDU study is designed as an open-cohort study with bi-annual data collection, using a non-probability convenience sample of self-selected men and women in Ottawa who inject drugs. Participants are recruited by Needle Exchange Program (NEP) staff working at selected community partner agencies that provide safer injection resources as well as through the Ottawa Public Health Site van. Each participant is assigned a unique identifier that is subsequently encrypted to allow for tracking of individuals, their changes in behaviour and sero status for HIV and HCV throughout subsequent phases of the study, while simultaneously ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. Upon receipt of informed consent, participants take part in a structured interview and provide saliva samples to be tested for the presence of HIV and HCV antibodies. Participants are compensated \$25 for their time participating in a structured interview and providing a saliva sample.

Results

We have completed 33 waves of data collection.

More Info

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Dissemination

Milson, P.¹, Leonard, L.², Remis, R.¹, Strike, C.³, Challacombe, L.¹ [*Injection Drug Use, HIV and HCV Infection in Ontario: The Evidence 1992 to 2004.*](#)

SNAPSHOT is a bi-annual publication developed and distributed by the HIV and HCV Prevention Research Team at the University of Ottawa. Its purpose is to disseminate in a timely way relevant findings from the *I-Track/SurviDU Study* to community agencies and other interested individuals in order to help inform the development of policies and programs aimed at enhancing the health and well-being of people in our community who use drugs.

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