



INSITE PROMOTES ACCESS TO HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

BACKGROUND & METHOD

- Injection drug users often have difficulty obtaining the health and social services they need.
- The barriers that drug users face when attempting to access conventional health-care services may result in over-reliance on hospital services, including emergency departments, as well as many unmet social service needs.
- Researchers talked with 50 injection drug users who use Insite, Vancouver's supervised injection facility.
- These in-depth interviews examined how using Insite influences injection drug users' ability to access health and social services.

QUICK FACT

ACCORDING TO THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS, INSITE FACILITATES TIMELY ACCESS TO HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BY PROVIDING ON-SITE CARE AND REFERRALS.

FINDINGS

- Interviewees reported that Insite facilitates timely access to health and social services by providing much-needed care on-site and by connecting drug users to external services through referrals.
- Insite users also appreciate the non-judgmental treatment by staff and the integration of various services in one location.
- Insite is seen as a place to find critical social support, access to counselling services, and entry into addiction treatment.
- Based on the accounts of interviewees, obtaining services at Insite is sometimes easier than seeking assistance at conventional care settings (such as clinics), suggesting that the facility has served to increase access to health and social services among injection drug users.

IMPLICATIONS

- These findings indicate that Insite may help to reduce barriers that normally make it difficult for injection drug users to access the services and assistance they need.
- Although challenges related to access to care remain in many settings, medically supervised injection facilities have the potential to promote health by facilitating access to health-care and social services through a model of care that is accessible to high-risk populations.

Small W, Van Borek N, Fairbairn N, Wood E, Kerr T. **Access to health and social services for IDU: The impact of a medically supervised injection facility.** *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 2009; 28(4): 341-346.

