

# INCREASING PREFERENCE FOR FENTANYL AMONG PEOPLE WHO USE OPIOIDS IN VANCOUVER, CANADA, 2017-2018

## What was our study about?

The study examined potential changes in preferences for unregulated opioids over time among people who use opioids (PWUO).

## What did we do?

Between 2017 and 2018, we followed 732 PWUO in Vancouver, Canada, with semi-annual interviews.

Preference for fentanyl has been increasing among people who used opioids during the escalating drug toxicity crisis

## What we found?

A preference for fentanyl (to uncontaminated street heroin, pharmaceutical-grade heroin or other prescription opioids) significantly increased from **4.4%** in 2017 to **6.6%** in 2018.

Individuals who were younger or injected crystal methamphetamine daily were more likely to report a preference for fentanyl.

Most commonly reported reasons for preferring fentanyl included more euphoria, longer effects, and development of high opioid tolerance.

## What's next?

There is an urgent need for optimizing evidence-based overdose prevention interventions, including expanded access to supervised consumption facilities and a range of opioid agonist therapies, while accounting for increasing preference for fentanyl.

Ickowicz, S., Kerr, T., Grant, C., Milloy, M. J., Wood, E., & Hayashi, K. (2021). Increasing preference for fentanyl among a cohort of people who use opioids in Vancouver, Canada, 2017-2018. Substance abuse, 1-7. Advance online publication. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34283705/>