



INCREASED USE OF INSITE HAS NO EFFECT ON EMPLOYMENT

BACKGROUND & METHOD

- The scientific evidence has shown that in many ways Insite, Vancouver's medically supervised injection facility, has benefited the people who use the facility, as well as the Downtown Eastside community as a whole.
- However, some critics of the facility have suggested that Insite might interfere with a drug user's efforts to get off drugs and reintegrate into mainstream society.
- One essential component of social integration is regular employment, which reduces social isolation and provides stability and a legal source of income.
- To test the claim that Insite hinders social re-integration, researchers looked at whether regular use of Insite had a negative impact on employment.

QUICK FACT

PEOPLE WHO USED INSITE ON A REGULAR BASIS WERE NEITHER MORE LIKELY NOR LESS LIKELY TO HOLD A REGULAR JOB THAN THOSE WHO USED INSITE LESS OFTEN.

FINDINGS

- Among the 1,090 injection drug users who participated in the study, employment rates from 2003 to 2005 were quite low, with just over a third reporting legal employment at some point during the two-year period.
- However, the researchers also found that there was no statistical association between regular use of Insite and employment.
- In other words, people who used Insite on a regular basis were neither more likely nor less likely to hold a regular job than those who used Insite less often.
- This study also found that, among users of Insite, barriers to employment are greater for women, Aboriginal people, people with less than a high school education, and those without adequate housing.

IMPLICATIONS

- This study found that use of Insite has no effect on employment and therefore highlights the need for more low-threshold employment opportunities for people who inject drugs.

Richardson L, Wood E, Zhang R, Montaner J, Tyndall M, Kerr T. **Employment among users of a medically supervised safer injection facility.** *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 2008; 34(5): 519-525.

