SELF-MANAGEMENT OF PAIN AMONG PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS IN VANCOUVER

BACKGROUND & METHOD

- This study looked at how people who inject drugs (IDU) manage pain on their own (apart from any official prescriptions or directions from a doctor for their pain).
- We looked at how, how many, and what types of IDU in the Vancouver Injection Drug Users Study (VIDUS) managed pain on their own.

QUICK FACT

MANY IDU MANAGE PAIN BY INJECTING HEROIN AND BUYING PAIN MEDS OFF THE STREET.

FINDINGS

- 483 participants said they had moderate or extreme pain.
- 98% said they managed their pain on their own.
- Those who were homeless or refused a prescription for pain medication were more likely to self-manage pain.

IMPLICATIONS

- IDU may self-manage pain in high-risk ways that can lead to infections, illnesses, or death.
- Health care providers can play an important role in providing safer pain management for IDU.