



INJECTING COCAINE: HIGH RISK FOR HIV

BACKGROUND & METHOD

- Cocaine injection is known to create a significant risk for HIV and hepatitis C infection.
- Researchers studied a large group of injection drug users over a ten-year period to see which factors were associated with the initiation of cocaine injection.
- They also looked at the factors associated with the daily injection of cocaine.

QUICK FACT

PARTICIPANTS WHO REPORTED HAVING STARTED INJECTING COCAINE WERE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN INCARCERATED COMPARED TO THOSE WHO DIDN'T INJECT COCAINE.

FINDINGS

- The researchers found that, compared to injection drugs users who didn't inject cocaine, those people who reported having started injecting cocaine (in addition to or in place of other drugs) were more likely to live in the Downtown Eastside, to have been incarcerated, to need help when injecting, and to go on drug binges.
- The researchers also found that people who inject cocaine every day were more likely than those who do not to have been incarcerated, to live in the Downtown Eastside or to be without secure housing, to be involved in the sex trade, to need help when injecting, and to borrow syringes.

IMPLICATIONS

- The factors found to be associated with starting to inject cocaine and injecting cocaine frequently are themselves well-known risk factors for HIV infection and other adverse health outcomes.
- Given the inadequacy of current treatment options for cocaine addiction, a possible harm reduction approach might be to focus on non-injection methods of cocaine use.

Lloyd-Smith E, Wood E, Li K, Montaner JS, Kerr T. **Incidence and determinants of initiation into cocaine injection and correlates of frequent cocaine injectors.** *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 2009; 99(1-3): 176-182.

