BRITISH COLUMBIA CENTRE ON SUBSTANCE USE

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COLLECTIVE EMPOWERMENT WHILE CREATING KNOWLEDGE: A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH WITH INJECTION DRUG USERS IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

BACKGROUND & METHOD

- Thai people who inject drugs face widespread human rights abuses, including inadequate access to health care. As a result, it can be difficult conducting research with this population.
- In August 2008, researchers, in collaboration with Mitsampan Harm Reduction Center (MSHRC) and Chulalongkorn University, undertook a community-based research project involving people who inject drugs in Bangkok, Thailand.
- The MSHRC is a drug user-led drop-in centre serving local drug users. The goals of the project were to connect people with the MSHRC and gather information about the experiences of people who inject drugs.

QUICK FACT

COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH PROJECTS CAN PROMOTE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND ACCESS TO SERVICES.

FINDINGS

- Twelve current/former drug users from the MSHRC were trained as peer-researchers.
- The peer research team assisted with outreach and recruitment of research participants, survey development, and data collection and analysis.
- The survey used captured information about drug use patterns, access to health care, and other issues affecting the health of participants.
- The peer researchers successfully recruited 252 participants, including 178 participants who were new to MSHRC.

IMPLICATIONS

- Following the project, there has been an increase in the number of people coming to the MSHRC.
- This experience shows that community-based research projects can promote community empowerment and access to services while obtaining valuable research data.

Hayashi K, Fairbairn N, Suwannawong P, Kaplan K, Wood E, Kerr T. **Collective empowerment while creating knowledge: A description of a community-based participatory research project with drug users in Bangkok, Thailand.** *Substance Use & Misuse,* 2012; 47(5): 502-510.