



## JUGULAR INJECTION COMMON AMONG VANCOUVER INJECTION DRUG USERS

### BACKGROUND & METHOD

- The numerous health risks of illicit injection drug use are well known. Many of the more severe harms are caused by specific injecting habits and practices. For example, it is well known that people who rely on help for others with their injections are more likely to become HIV positive.
- Additional serious, sometimes life-threatening, consequences face drug users who inject into the jugular vein.
- Researchers wanted to learn more about how common this practice is among Vancouver injection drug users, and what factors might characterize people who engage in this very risky behaviour.
- Between December 2004 and November 2005, 780 injection drug users were interviewed.

### QUICK FACT

*PARTICIPANTS WHO REPORTED JUGULAR INJECTION IN THE PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS WERE MORE LIKELY TO BE WOMEN, TO USE HEROIN OR COCAINE DAILY, TO NEED HELP INJECTING, AND TO BE INVOLVED IN THE SEX TRADE.*

### FINDINGS

- 198 participants (25%) reported jugular injection in the previous six months.
- These people were more likely to be women, to use heroin or cocaine daily, to need help injecting, and to be involved in the sex trade.
- People who inject drugs every day may use jugular injection because they've overused their other veins, or to get a more intense high.
- Jugular injecting may be a sign of longer or more frequent drug use.

### IMPLICATIONS

- This study found an alarmingly high rate of jugular injection among the injection drug users surveyed.
- The high rate of this behaviour and the significant health complications that it may lead to, along with the subsequent need for costly medical intervention, should prompt public health policymakers to address the health and social needs of the people most likely to engage in this high-risk behaviour.

Hoda Z, Kerr T, Li K, Montaner J, Wood E. **Prevalence and correlates of jugular injections among injection drug users.** *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 2008; 27(4): 442-446.

