



## OVERDOSE AMONG PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS IN THAILAND – THE NEED FOR A PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

### BACKGROUND & METHOD

- People who inject drugs suffer from high levels of preventable disease and death, including deaths caused by drug-related overdose.
- During August 2008, researchers working with the Mitsampan Community Research Project examined overdose patterns and responses to overdose among people who inject drugs in Bangkok, Thailand.

### QUICK FACT

*30% OF PARTICIPANTS HAD EXPERIENCED AN OVERDOSE.*

### FINDINGS

- The study found that 30% of participants had experienced an overdose.
- People with a history of overdose were almost four times more likely to have spent time in prison.
- A majority of participants (68%) had at some time responded to an overdose.
- While many reported correct responses, such as taking the sufferer to a hospital, almost half reported an incorrect response, such as injecting the individual with salt water.
- Only half of the participants said they had enough information to manage an overdose.

### IMPLICATIONS

- This study suggests that Thai people who inject drugs suffer from high rates of overdose.
- The study also highlights the need to expand harm reduction strategies in Thailand, such as educational and peer-based overdose management programs, and further emphasizes the need to balance the current emphasis on enforcement-based responses to drug use with health-focused policies and programs.

Milloy M-J, Fairbairn N, Hayashi K, Suwannawong P, Kaplan K, Wood E, Kerr T. **Overdose experiences among injection drug users in Bangkok, Thailand.** *Harm Reduction Journal*, 2010; 13: 7-9.

