



SAFER INJECTING EDUCATION AT INSITE

BACKGROUND & METHOD

- People who inject illicit drugs are often unaware of steps they can take when injecting to reduce the risk of bacterial and viral infections and other injection-related harms.
- Researchers interviewed 50 drug users about safer injecting education at Insite, Vancouver's medically supervised injection facility.

QUICK FACT

INSITE CLIENTS APPRECIATED BEING ABLE TO ASK NURSES FOR HELP.

FINDINGS

- Before they started using Insite, many participants did not know about the benefits of cleaning the skin with an alcohol swab prior to injecting, inserting the syringe bevel-side up, or other measures they could be taking to minimize health risks.
- Regular Insite clients learned about these practices from nurses in a safe and supportive environment, where they could be shown what to do in an unhurried manner. They appreciated being able to ask the nurses for help when they had a question or were having trouble injecting.
- Importantly, study participants told researchers that the overall environment at the facility encouraged them to adopt the safer practices and to make a habit of using them both within and outside of the facility.
- A small number of research participants did report that they had not received safer injecting education at the facility. This tells us that Insite may not be meeting the educational needs of everyone who injects drugs there.
- Those people who use the facility often are more likely to interact regularly with nurses and receive educational messages that help protect health.

IMPLICATIONS

- This research illustrates one of the ways Insite is helping to reduce some of the risks associated with injection drug use—by providing a safe environment in which people who inject drugs are able to learn about and adopt practices that will help them to avoid serious injection-related harms.

Fast D, Small W, Wood E, Kerr T. **The perspectives of injection drug users regarding safer injecting education delivered through a supervised injecting facility.** *Harm Reduction Journal*, 2008; 5(1): 32.

