



LIMITED ACCESS TO PRIVATE SPACE LINKED TO STREET DISORDER

BACKGROUND & METHOD

- Drug-related street disorder, including public drug dealing and drug use, is an issue in many urban cities, and law enforcement is often ineffective in reducing or managing the problem.
- This study looked at whether the type of housing that is available to people who use drugs influences the amount of time they spend on public streets.
- We also wanted to see if people who spend time in the open drug scene in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) would spend less time on the streets if they had more access to private indoor space.
- Between June 2008 and June 2009 we asked 1,114 people who inject drugs and spend time in the DTES about their housing situations and their access to private space.
- Among those who spend a lot of time on the street we asked: "Would you spend less time socializing on the street if you had a private indoor space for socializing with friends and acquaintances?"

FINDINGS

- 43% of the people reported that they spent an average of at least three hours socializing on the street each day.
- People who socialized for three or more hours each day were more likely to have limited access to private space than those who spent less time on the street.
- Among individuals who socialized three or more hours each day, 65% reported that they would spend less time on the street if they had more access to private space.

QUICK FACT

65% OF PARTICIPANTS WHO SPENT THREE OR MORE HOURS SOCIALIZING ON THE STREET EACH DAY REPORTED THAT THEY WOULD SPEND LESS TIME ON THE STREET IF THEY HAD MORE ACCESS TO PRIVATE SPACE.

IMPLICATIONS

- Providing street-involved people who use illegal drugs with areas where they can socialize in comfort and privacy may be one way to significantly reduce drug-related street disorder.
- Low-threshold supportive housing based on the 'housing-first' model appear to offer important opportunities to create the types of private spaces that could reduce street disorder.

DeBeck K, Wood E, Qi J, Fu E, McArthur D, Montaner J, Kerr T. **Socializing in an open drug scene: The relationship between access to private space and drug-related street disorder.** *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 2012; 120(1-3): 28-34.

