



HIGH RATES OF SYRINGE SHARING AMONG A COMMUNITY-BASED SAMPLE OF INJECTION DRUG USERS IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

BACKGROUND & METHOD

- Thailand has experienced a longstanding HIV epidemic among people who inject drugs.
- In order to better understand the relationship between access to sterile syringes and HIV risk behaviour, researchers working with the Mitsampan Community Research Project talked to people who inject drugs about syringe sharing.

QUICK FACT

*30% OF THE PARTICIPANTS
REPORTED BORROWING A USED
SYRINGE IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS.*

FINDINGS

- Among 238 participants, 30% reported borrowing a used syringe in the past six months.
- People who reported syringe sharing were more likely to say that they have difficulty accessing syringes and that they often inject with other people.
- The main reasons people gave for having difficulty accessing syringes included being too far from syringe outlets, pharmacies being closed, and being refused syringes at pharmacies.

IMPLICATIONS

- The study revealed high rates of syringe sharing among Thai people who inject drugs. The study also suggests that this type of HIV risk behaviour is linked to the difficulties people have getting sterile syringes.
- Immediate action should be taken to ensure widespread access to sterile syringes throughout Thailand.
- Syringe exchange is known to be effective in reducing the spread of HIV infection and is considered to be a 'best practice' in HIV prevention by various authorities, including the World Health Organization.

Kerr T, Fairbairn N, Hayashi K, Suwannawong P, Kaplan K, Zhang R, Wood E. **Difficulty accessing syringes and syringe borrowing among injection drug users in Bangkok, Thailand.** *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 2010; 29(2): 157-161.

