



HIGH LEVELS OF SYRINGE SHARING AMONG YOUTH INJECTION DRUG USERS IN VANCOUVER

BACKGROUND & METHOD

- Among people who inject illicit drugs, sharing syringes is a common way that infectious diseases, such as HIV and hepatitis C, are spread from person to person.
- Researchers examined syringe sharing among young people who inject drugs in Vancouver.

QUICK FACT

29% OF PARTICIPANTS REPORTED THAT THEY HAD SHARED SYRINGES WITH OTHER DRUG USERS.

FINDINGS

- 29% (more than one in four) reported that they had shared syringes with other drug users.
- Compared to young injection drug users who did not share syringes, youth who shared syringes were more likely to be female, to need help injecting, to go on drug “binges”, and to inject cocaine.

IMPLICATIONS

- This study demonstrates that syringe sharing among young people who inject drugs is alarmingly common. As a result, young injection drug users are at high risk of becoming infected with HIV, hepatitis C, and other diseases, creating the potential for an explosion of blood-borne disease among this population.
- To reduce this risk, evidence-based interventions are urgently needed to address the problem of syringe sharing among young people who inject drugs.

Lloyd-Smith E, Kerr T, Zhang R, Montaner JSG, Wood E. **High prevalence of syringe sharing among street involved youth.** *Addiction Research & Theory*, 2008; 16(4): 353-358.

