

ONTARIO SUPERVISED INJECTION SERVICES FEASIBILITY STUDY: RESULTS FROM LONDON, ONTARIO

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Study Finds Most People who Inject Drugs in London, Ontario are Willing to Use Supervised Injection Services

In February 2016, the Ontario HIV Treatment Network and the Regional HIV/AIDS Connection began assessing the feasibility of supervised injection services in London, Ontario. Supervised injection services are health programs where people inject drugs under safe conditions and can gain access to sterile injecting equipment.

The study surveyed 199 people who injected drugs in the past six months. Survey participants were asked about their drug use and injecting behaviours and willingness to use supervised injection services. Sixty-five percent of participants reported injecting drugs daily and 72% percent reported public injecting in the previous six months. In total, 86% of participants were willing to use supervised injection services if they were available.

Twenty community members representing major stakeholder groups were also interviewed (including police and emergency services, healthcare, and the business and community sector). Community stakeholders unanimously saw the potential benefits of supervised injection services. However, some made suggestions on the accessibility of the services, the concentration of services in a single area, and the inclusion of other health and social services.

Dr. Thomas Kerr, Co-Director of the Urban Health Research Initiative at the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, and the study's Principal Investigator knows the sites are sometimes controversial, but notes they are a part of a broader strategy that address drug-related harm. "It's encouraging to see people who inject drugs and a diverse range of stakeholders in London supporting the need for supervised injection services."

Findings from this study suggest that supervised injection services should be implemented in London, and that the services should be integrated within existing centres that can provide "wrap-around" support to people who use drugs (e.g., addictions treatment, primary health care, and housing supports).

Additional details about the study and the full report can be found at www.ohtn.on.ca/oisis.

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