



Homelessness & HIV in the Downtown Eastside

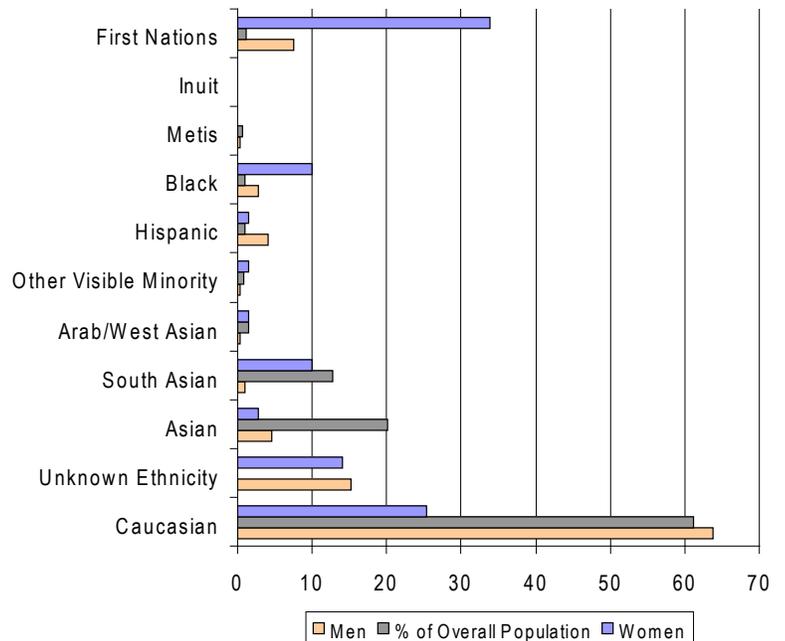
What are the Facts?

- In 2005, a City of Vancouver survey found over 2000 individuals homeless in Vancouver, predominantly in the DTES. Many more are At-Risk of becoming Homeless. In the survey, 30% of homeless identified as Aboriginal.
- The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre estimates that 40% of the homeless are women.
- There is an estimated 1400 – 1900 HIV+ persons in the DTES, one of the highest HIV infection rates of any community in North America.
- A 2006 study suggests that residence in Vancouver's DTES is an independent risk factor for HIV infection among a cohort of injection drug users, and drug use rates among homeless in the DTES are higher than the general population.
- Vancouver Native Health Society statistics show that the number of HIV+ clients visiting the clinic who were homeless has increased every year since 1999. In 2007, 8.4% or 25 of 297 HIV+ clients who have visited the clinic were homeless. Compare this to 1999 when only 1.4% or 5 of 352 HIV+ visitors to the clinic were homeless. This dramatic increase is a definite sign that HIV and homelessness is an issue on the rise.
- 50 percent of At-Risk for Homeless in the City of Vancouver are Visible Minorities.
- The deteriorating conditions in Vancouver's 3,000 Single Room Occupancy hotels contribute to the homelessness issue. Many homeless prefer the street to Vancouver's bedbug, cockroach and rodent infested rooms.
- North American research indicates that those who use public shelters have a 9 times greater risk of becoming HIV+ when compared to the general population.
- North American studies have shown the homeless population has a HIV prevalence rate at least 3 times higher than the general population.



- Being homeless increases the risk of becoming HIV positive, whether living on the street or staying in shelters.
- AIDS Vancouver Society states that among people with HIV, the homeless are 7 times more likely to die of AIDS than those who have housing.
- Homeless women, disabled people, youth, Aboriginal peoples, and drug users are at even greater risk of HIV infection.

BC Newly Tested HIV + (2006): Percent for Men/Women Compared to Overall Vancouver Population by Ethnicity



Call for Action

- Increase in medical services directly available in the Downtown Eastside. Specifically, community available physicians and nurses who conduct HIV education and are trained to interact with homeless and marginalized populations.
- To address HIV positive individuals at risk of becoming homeless, it should become mandatory that all organizations who receive government funding to provide HIV support also provide social housing support information and public shelter information.
- To address homeless individuals at risk of becoming HIV positive, it should become mandatory that all organizations who receive government funding to provide shelter also provide HIV information and education.
- Increase the availability of clean, safe and well maintained low-income and social supportive housing throughout the DTES. Step up enforcement of housing bylaws against slum lords.
- Currently, those who become homeless must wait 3 weeks to receive lack of housing assistance payments. Change the current administrative system to dramatically decrease these wait times.
- Change the current limit on 2 security deposit assistance payments per year to allow easier access to housing. Create accessible and free process for disputing security deposit withholding by landlords and punish landlords who unfairly withhold security deposits.

The Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users.

VANDU, is dedicated to improving the lives of drug users, their families and our communities.



For more information, please phone us at 604-683-6061 or visit our website located at www.vandu.org

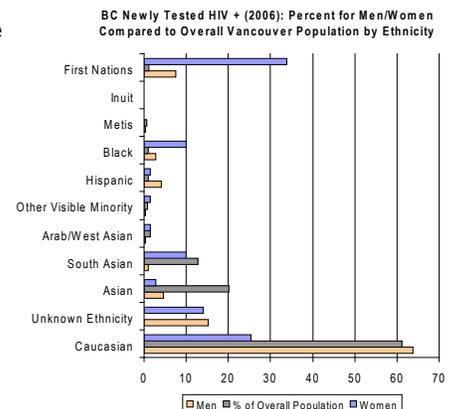


Homelessness & HIV in the Downtown Eastside: REFERENCE KEY



What are the Facts?

- In 2005, a City of Vancouver survey found over 2000 individuals homeless in Vancouver, predominantly in the DTES. Many more are At-Risk of becoming Homeless. In the survey, 30% of homeless identified as Aboriginal.
 - From the report, "On our streets and in our shelters...Results of the 2005 Greater Vancouver Homeless Count," sponsored by the Social Planning and Research Council of BC.
- The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre estimates that 40% of the homeless are women.
 - Fact from previous VANDU Fact Sheet – Presumably originally from DTES Women's Centre.
- There is an estimated 1400 – 1900 HIV+ persons in the DTES, one of the highest HIV infection rates of any community in North America.
 - Adilman, Steve and Kliewer, Gordon. "Pain and wasting on Main and Hastings: A perspective from the Vancouver Native Health Society Medical Clinic." BC Medical Journal, Volume 42, Number 9, November 2000: 422-425. - And - Sandborn, Tom. "Fraction of HIV Residents Getting Treatment in Downtown Eastside," May 8, 2006 plus several other online news articles.
- A 2006 study suggests that residence in Vancouver's DTES is an independent risk factor for HIV infection among a cohort of injection drug users, and drug use rates among homeless in the DTES are higher than the general population.
 - From Maas, Benjamin, Fairbairn, Nadia, Kerr, Thomas, Li, Kathy, Montaner, Julio S.G, and Wood Evan. "Neighborhood and HIV infection among IDU: Place of residence independently predicts HIV infection among a cohort of injection drug users." Health & Place, Volume 13: Issue 2, June 2007: 432-439.
- Vancouver Native Health Society statistics show that the number of HIV+ clients visiting the clinic who were homeless has increased every year since 1999. In 2007, 8.4% or 25 of 297 HIV+ clients who have visited the clinic were homeless. Compare this to 1999 when only 1.4% or 5 of 352 HIV+ visitors to the clinic were homeless. This dramatic increase is a definite sign that HIV and homelessness is an issue on the rise.
 - Stats are from reports obtained directly from Vancouver Native Health Society.
- 50 percent of At-Risk for Homeless in the City of Vancouver are Visible Minorities.
 - From the report, "2001 Census Bulletin – Households and Persons At-risk of Homelessness," from 3 Ways to Home: Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness.
- The deteriorating conditions in Vancouver's 3,000 Single Room Occupancy hotels contribute to the homelessness issue. Many homeless prefer the street to Vancouver's bedbug, cockroach and rodent infested rooms.
 - Known facts from local population. Stated in various reports.
- North American research indicates that those who use public shelters have a 9 times greater risk of becoming HIV+ when compared to the general population.
 - From Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, Issue Brief, Volume 6, Number 9, June 2001. – Several other locations.
- North American studies have shown the homeless population has a HIV prevalence rate at least 3 times higher than the general population.
 - Multiple Sources, including The National AIDS Housing Coalition, "Housing is the Foundation of HIV Prevention and Treatment: Results of the National Housing and HIV/AIDS Research Summit," 2005.
- Being homeless increases the risk of becoming HIV positive, whether living on the street or staying in shelters.
 - Statement/Conclusions pulled from multiple sources.
- AIDS Vancouver Society states that among people with HIV, the homeless are 7 times more likely to die of AIDS than those who have housing.
 - Fact from previous VANDU Fact Sheet – Presumably originally from AIDS Vancouver Society.
- Homeless women, disabled people, youth, Aboriginal peoples, and drug users are at even greater risk of HIV infection.
 - Statement/Conclusions pulled from multiples sources and statistics.



Population Stats are from the 2001 Canadian Census. HIV + Test Stats are from the annual 2006 BC CDC Infectious Disease Reports.