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Injection Drug Use and HIV/AIDS

Essential Resources

There is a vast amount of literature on injection drug use and HIV/AIDS. This info sheet provides information about a number of selected, essential resources – articles, books, reports, and newsletters that provide crucial information and/or recommendations on injection drug use and HIV/AIDS, particularly the legal and ethical issues raised.

This is one of a series of 11 info sheets on injection drug use and HIV/AIDS: legal and ethical issues.

1. Injection Drug Use and HIV/AIDS: The Facts
2. The Current Legal Status of Drugs
3. Drug Use & Provision of Health & Social Services
4. Treatment
5. Prescription of Opiates & Controlled Substances
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7. Information about the Use & Effects of Drugs
8. Needle Exchange Programs
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Beyerstein B, B Alexander. Why treat doctors like pushers? *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 1985; 132: 337-340.

Criticizes the prohibitionist approach to drug policy in Canada in which doctors are vulnerable to prosecution as traffickers for prescribing narcotics. Advocates that Canadian doctors should have the legal authority to prescribe drugs according to their judgment of patient needs.

Bruckner T. *The Practical Guide to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*. Toronto: Thomson Canada Limited, 1997.

Discusses the provisions of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* and provides commentary on the difficulties that some of the provisions raise for the treatment of patients who are drug users.

Bruneau J et al. High rates of HIV infection among injection drug users participating in needle exchange programs in Montreal: results of a cohort study. *American Journal of Epidemiology* 1997; 146(12): 994-1006.

Discusses the purpose of needle exchange programs and the history of needle exchange programs in Montréal.

Bureau of HIV/AIDS STD and TB Update Series, Laboratory Centre for Disease Control. *HIV/AIDS Among Injection Drug Users in Canada (and Risk Behaviours Among Injection Drug Users in Canada)*. Ottawa: Health Canada HIV/AIDS Epi Update, May 1999.

These two articles contains details about the HIV/AIDS epidemic among injection drug users in Canada, with numerous references. Regularly updated. For more info: tel: 613 954-5169; fax: 613 954-5414.

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse & Canadian Public Health Association. *HIV, AIDS and Injection Drug Use: A National Action Plan*. Ottawa: The Centre & The Association, 1997.

Emphasizes that "Canada is in the midst of a public health crisis concerning HIV and AIDS, and injection drug use," and that "[i]mmediate action is required at all levels of governmental and community leadership." Contains numerous recommendations. A must! Available at <www.ccsa.ca> or through the Canadian HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse (tel: 613-725-3769; email: aids/sida@cpha.ca).

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. *Syringe Exchange: One Approach To Preventing Drug-Related HIV Infection. A Discussion Paper*. Ottawa: The Centre, 1994.

Discusses the philosophy underlying syringe exchange programs and recommends ways to maximize their effectiveness.

Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. *Injection Drug Use and HIV/AIDS: Legal and Ethical Issues.* Montréal, The Network, 1999.

The report on which this series of info sheets is based. A must!

Clark PA. The Ethics of Needle-Exchange Programs. *AIDS & Public Policy Journal* 1998; 13(4): 131-139.

Concludes that needle exchange programs are "both a necessary and a vital part of a broader comprehensive strategy for preventing HIV transmission among intravenous-drug users" and that "it is ethically justified ... for the [US] federal government to allow and to financially support needle-exchange programs in the United States."

Drucker E. Drug Prohibition and Public Health: 25 Years of Evidence. *Public Health Reports* 1999; 114(1): 14-29 (reprinted in *The Drug Policy Letter* 1999; 40: 4-18).

A comprehensive review of 25 years of data about drug use and drug enforcement in the US, to assess the effectiveness of US drug policy. Finds that the damage done—both direct and collateral—by the drug war overwhelms the claim that US zero tolerance is protecting the public health. "The cure is worse than the disease."

Erickson PG, DM Riley, YW Cheung, PA O'Hare. *Harm Reduction: A New Direction for Drug Policies and Programs.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

A collection of papers originally presented at the Fifth International Conference on the Reduction of Drug-Related Harm, Toronto, Canada, March 1994.

Fischer B. Prescriptions, power, and politics: the turbulent history of methadone maintenance in Canada. 1999 (forthcoming in the *Journal of Public Health Policy*).

Traces the turbulent history in Canada of methadone treatment, regulations, and policy. Concludes that the regulations and policy have hindered the treatment of drug-dependent persons.

Fischer B. The case for a heroin substitution treatment trial in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 1997; 88: 367.

Puts forth the view that in light of the public health problems associated with injection drug users, professionals should be permitted to treat drug users with illegal drugs such as heroin.

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, Centre de coordination sur le sida. *Drug Use and The HIV Epidemic: A Frame of Reference for Prevention.* Montréal: The Centre, 1994.

Discusses prevention programs in Québec and recommends new strategies.

Greig A. Harm Reduction in the US: A Movement for Change. *Canadian HIV/AIDS Policy & Law Newsletter* 1997/98; 3(4)/4(1): 22-26.

A must-read. Argues that by simplifying the problems of drug use, polarizing debate, and stigmatizing behaviour, the "War on Drugs" has made it difficult to recognize, let alone organize around, a broader social and political agenda to address the harms of drug use; and that harm-reduction activists and drug-user groups need to establish common ground for action with other progressive movements to overcome the divisions maintained by the "War on Drugs." Available at <www.aidslaw.ca/Newsletter/bulletinE.html>.

Hadaway P, BL Beyerstein, JVM Youdale. Canadian drug policies: irrational, futile and unjust. *Journal of Drug Issues* 1991; 21(2): 183-197.

Argues that, while protection of individual freedom and civil liberties is highly valued in Canada, Canadians allow the erosion of these rights in the service of the "War on Drugs."

Hankins C. Syringe exchange in Canada: good but not enough to stem the HIV tide. *Substance Use and Misuse* 1998; 33: 1129.

Discusses the history and current deficiencies of needle exchange programs in Canada.

Hankins C, N Lapointe, S Walmsley. Participation in clinical trials among women living with HIV in Canada. *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 1998; 159: 1359.

This study found that women drug users are underrepresented in clinical trials in Canada.

HIV/AIDS in Prisons: Info Sheets 1-13. Montréal: Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, 1999.

13 info sheets with essential information on HIV/AIDS and drug use in prisons. Available at <www.aidslaw.ca/elements/factpris-e/e-pfacttofc.htm> and through the Canadian HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse.

Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS. *Drug Use and HIV/AIDS. UNAIDS Statement Presented at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs.* Geneva: UNAIDS Best Practice Collection Key Material, March 1999 (UNAIDS 99.1E).

The UNAIDS statement on drug use and HIV/AIDS. Significantly, it endorses a harm-reduction approach to drug use. Available through UNAIDS on their website at <www.unaids.org>.

Kirby M. Sex, drugs and the family. [Australian] *National AIDS Bulletin* 1994; 7(12): 20-22.

Points out that the subject of human rights of persons using drugs has been ignored until now by most lawyers and virtually all judges: "Putting it quite bluntly, it is an uncivilised act to punish people, with long periods of imprisonment, who are addicted to particular drugs. The

problem is, and should be treated as, one of public health concern, not one of law and order."

Lindesmith Center, The. *Heroin Maintenance Treatment. Research Summary.* New York/San Francisco: The Center, 1998.

A summary of developments in Switzerland, Australia, and the Netherlands, with a comprehensive bibliography. A must! Also available on the Center's website at <www.lindesmith.org>.

Loue S, P Lurie, L Lloyd. Ethical issues raised by needle exchange programs. *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics* 1995; 23: 382-388.

Discusses ethical principles underlying the establishment of needle exchange programs.

MacFarlane B. *Drug Offences In Canada.* Toronto: Canada Law Book Inc, 3rd edition, 1997.

Provides a comprehensive discussion of drug laws in Canada.

McAmmond D. *Care, Treatment and Support for Injection Drug Users Living with HIV/AIDS: A Consultation Report.* Ottawa: Health Canada, March 1997.

Identifies issues that need to be addressed in order to provide effective HIV/AIDS care, treatment, and support to injection drug users (particularly those who are street-involved or marginalized), and proposes initiatives that might begin to address these issues.

Millar J. *HIV, Hepatitis, and Injection Drug Use in British Columbia – Pay Now or Pay Later?* Office of the Provincial Health Officer, BC Ministry of Health, 1998.

The report of the provincial health officer in British Columbia, stating that "the continuation of this epidemic [of HIV among injection drug users] represents a failure of societal values and attitudes." With many recommendations.

Mitchell CN. A justice-based argument for the uniform regulation of psychoactive drugs. *McGill Law Journal* 1986; 31: 212-263.

Argues that modern drug-control legislation is founded upon myth and prejudice rather than on principles of justice and scientific validity. Makes justice-based reform proposals.

Mitchell CN. Introduction: a Canadian perspective on drug issues. *Journal of Drug Issues* 1991; 21(1): 9-16.

Calls for major changes in the law, in order to reduce drug-related social costs and to promote a more civil, drug-tolerant society in Canada.

Nadelmann E. Progressive legalizers, progressive prohibitionists, and the reduction of drug related harms. In: N Heather et al (eds). *Psychoactive Drugs*

and Harm Reduction: From Faith to Science. London: Whurr Publishers, 1993.

Argues that more emphasis should be placed on public health approaches to drug use.

Nadelmann E, J McNeely, E Drucker. International Perspectives. In: J Lourinon, P Ruiz, R Millman, J Langrod (eds). *Substance Abuse: A Comprehensive Textbook.* Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 3rd edition, 1997.

Emphasizes the importance of taking a harm-reduction approach to the public health problem of injection drug use and HIV/AIDS. Endorses the orientations of countries such as Britain, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

O'Brien M. Needle exchange programs: ethical and policy issues. *AIDS & Public Policy Journal* 1989; 4(2): 75-82.

Analyzes arguments in favour of and against needle exchange programs. Concludes: "The implementation of needle exchange programs does not necessarily carry a message about the moral acceptability of intravenous drug use. Rather, such programs represent an explicit recognition of the social reality of drug use, of the impracticality and futility of efforts designed to eradicate the problem, and of the public health necessity of adopting interim measures to contain the rapidly increasing rate of HIV infection among IVDUs."

O'Connor P, P Selwyn, R Schottenfeld. Medical care for injection-drug users with human immunodeficiency virus infection. *New England Journal of Medicine* 1994; 331(7): 450-459.

States that drug users are less likely to receive therapy for HIV than other HIV-positive persons. Suggests ways for doctors to improve the care of HIV-positive patients who are drug users.

Poulin C et al. The epidemiology of cocaine and opiate abuse in urban Canada. *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 1998; 89 (4):234-238.

Data pertaining to prevalence of use, law enforcement, treatment, morbidity and mortality, from Vancouver, Calgary, Montréal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Halifax.

Remis R, M Millson, C Major. *The HIV Epidemic among Injection Drug Users in Ontario: The Situation in 1997.* A report prepared for the AIDS Bureau, Ontario Ministry of Health, 1997.

Reports on the HIV epidemic among injection drug users in Ontario.

Riley D. *The Harm Reduction Model. Pragmatic Approaches to Drug Use from the Area between Intolerance and Neglect.* Ottawa: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, 1993.

Explains the concept of harm reduction and contains a list of suggested readings and videos on the subject. Available at <www.ccsa.ca/harmred.htm>.

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

Sherer R. Adherence and antiretroviral therapy in injection drug users. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 1998; 280(6): 567-56.

Presents reasons for which doctors are reluctant to prescribe antiretroviral therapy (ART) to injection drug users. Suggests ways in which injection drug users can adhere to the medical regimen of ART.

Solomon RM, SJ Usprich. Canada's Drug Laws. *Journal of Drug Issues* 1991; 21(1): 17-40.

Traces the history of Canadian drug legislation until 1991, legislation that, they argue, originated and developed in response to racial and political factors rather than reasoned analysis.

Strathdee S et al. Barriers to use of free antiretroviral therapy in injection drug users. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 1998; 280: 547.

A Canadian study that found that many HIV-positive injection drug users are not receiving ART.

Strathdee S et al. Needle exchange is not enough: lessons from the Vancouver injecting drug use study. *AIDS* 1997; 11(8): F59-65.

Concludes that while needle exchange programs are crucial, they are only one component of a comprehensive program that should include counseling, support, and education.

Ward J, RP Mattick, W Hall (eds). *Methadone Maintenance Treatment and Other Opioid Replacement Therapies*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998.

An excellent book with 18 articles on all aspects of methadone maintenance treatment and other opiate-replacement therapies.

Selected Newsletters and Journals

Canadian HIV/Policy & Law Newsletter

Required reading for all those working on, or interested in, HIV/AIDS and drug policy in Canada and internationally. For info, contact the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network (tel: 514-397-6828 ext 227; email: info@aidslaw.ca). Also available at <www.aidslaw.ca/Newsletter/bulletinE.html>.

The Drug Policy Letter

Published every two months by the [US] Drug Policy Foundation. Promotes "reasoned and compassionate" drug policies. For info, contact The Drug Policy Foundation (tel: 202 537-5005; email: dpletter@dpf.org).

Selected Websites

www.aidslaw.ca

The website of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. Contains a section on drug laws and drug policies, and numerous articles on the subject published in the *Canadian HIV/AIDS Policy & Law Newsletter*.

www.ccsa.ca

The website of the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. Features articles and news on subjects such as hepatitis and injection drug use, harm-reduction concepts and practice, syringe exchange, etc.

www.cfdp.ca

The Canadian Foundation for Drug Policy's site. Canada's most comprehensive resource about drug law and policy reform.

www.lindesmith.org

The Lindesmith Center's excellent website. A must! Features a searchable database of thousands of library documents from both academic and popular literature focusing on drug policy from economic, criminal justice, and public health perspectives, a subject index of full-text materials online, and a great list of links to other sites.

For More Resources ...

consult *Legal and Ethical Issues Raised by HIV/AIDS: Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography*. Montréal: Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, 2nd edition, 1998. Contains a section on drug use with many additional resources. The web version, available at <www.aidslaw.ca/biblio/c-10.htm>, is bilingual (English and French) and is updated regularly.

Copies of this info sheet are available on the Network website at www.aidslaw.ca and through the Canadian HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse (tel: 613 725-3434, email: aids/sida@cpha.ca). Reproduction of the info sheet is encouraged, but copies may not be sold, and the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network must be cited as the source of this information. For further information, contact the Network (tel: 514 397-6828; fax: 514 397-8570; email: info@aidslaw.ca). Ce feuillet d'information est également disponible en français.

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