

A SCOPING REVIEW OF REIMBURSEMENT PRACTICES FOR SUBSTANCE USE RESEARCH PARTICIPATION IN THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

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Introduction/Issues: Financial reimbursement for substance use research participation provides a mechanism to compensate participants for time, inconvenience and expenses, while also acknowledging their input. Reimbursements can also contribute to scientific rigour, but there is currently little guidance on appropriate practice in Australia.

Method/Approach: Participant reimbursement practices were examined via review of empirical papers published in *Drug and Alcohol Review* (2017-18), where research data was directly collected from individuals. Data on participants, substance type, payment value and type, length of participation, research assessments undertaken, and country of research were collected. Duplicate studies were removed.

Key Findings: Overall, 130 papers met the inclusion criteria, including 60 (46% of all eligible papers) Australian-based studies, with 26 in a treatment setting. Of the Australian studies, 40 (67%) provided information on reimbursement. Of these, monetary reimbursements (38%) and shopping vouchers (20%) were most common. The value varied little between cash (\$10-\$70) and vouchers (\$20-\$80). Other forms of reimbursement included draws/raffles for vouchers for higher magnitude sums (>\$50, 13%) or points redeemable for vouchers (5%). Twenty-three of studies provided no reimbursement. Whether participants received reimbursement (money or voucher) varied across substance type. Monetary or voucher reimbursements were provided for participants in studies of pharmaceuticals (83%), illicit substances (60%), tobacco (50%), alcohol (16%) and multiple substances (25%).

Discussions and Conclusions: There appears to be wide variation in participant reimbursement practice in Australian substance use research, especially across substances.

Implications for Practice or Policy:

Greater clarity is needed regarding participation reimbursement. Input from consumers and services providers is essential to improve and standardise practice and expand research participation.

Implications for Translational Research:

More standardised participant reimbursement practices would improve equity and scientific rigour and may have implications for research translation.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The authors declare no competing interests.