

# FREQUENCY OF INJECTING AMONG PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND META-ANALYSIS

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**Introduction:** People who inject drugs (PWID) do so at varying frequencies and more frequent injecting is associated with injecting risk behaviours and harms. The aim of this review was to determine the frequency at which PWID were injecting, and characteristics and harms associated with daily or more injecting.

**Method:** We conducted a systematic review of the peer-reviewed and grey literature from 2008 to 2018. We created country-, region-, and global-level estimates of daily or more (i.e. frequent) injecting. We also ran meta-regression analyses to determine associations between frequent injecting and socio-demographic characteristics, risk behaviours, and negative health consequences.

**Results:** Our search resulted in 61,077 sources, from which 198 studies were eligible for inclusion in this review. Based on studies from 74 countries, we estimated that over two thirds of PWID inject daily or more frequently. Among samples with more male participants and higher reporting of opioids as their main drug injected, there was also a higher percentage of frequent injecting. Frequent injecting was also associated with samples reporting a higher prevalence of HIV and hepatitis C antibody, self-report overdose and receptive needle sharing in the previous month.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** This review holds important implications for informing needle-syringe distribution targets and highlights the variation in injecting patterns between and within regions. We also provide evidence for the association between daily or more injecting and negative health consequences such as overdose, HIV and hepatitis C.

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