

## **CRIMINALISATION OF INJECTING DRUG USE IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS IN FRANCE: VOICES FROM BELOW**

### **Authors:**

Jauffret-Roustide M<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Wdowiak L<sup>1</sup>, Klingelschmidt J<sup>1</sup>, Hodgetts S<sup>4</sup>, Debrus M<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Centre d'Etude des Mouvements Sociaux (CEMS) (Inserm U1276/CNRS UMR8044/EHESS), Paris, France <sup>2</sup> Baldy center for Law and Social Policy, Buffalo University, NY, USA <sup>3</sup> British Columbia Center on Substance Use (BCCSU), Vancouver, Canada <sup>4</sup> Médecins du Monde, Paris, France

### **Background:**

France is often presented as a model of harm reduction, thanks to his high accessibility to opioid substitutive treatments (OST). Nevertheless, France has one of the more repressive legislation towards drug use in Europe. This prohibitive policy has an impact on stigmatization of drug use, access to health for PWIDs and social inclusion. The advocacy for recognizing social, health and political rights to PWIDs is difficult to be heard by politicians, when it is only based on numbers from public health research or sociological framings.

### **Methods:**

A collaboration between a research team and Médecins du Monde has been developed to implement a community-based research to describe the effects of drug use criminalization on PWID's daily lives and their access to health services. A mixed method research project has been implemented in French cities (Paris, Marseille and Lille), using semi-directive interviews with PWIDs (N=25), and stakeholders (N=25) including caregivers, harm reduction professionals, activists, and politicians. A photo-voice methodology involving PWIDs as active partners in the research project has also been developed. The research team has invited 10 PWIDs to take pictures of their daily lives to document the places where they live and where they usually inject. Focus-groups have been organized to discuss about the pictures, to choose them, and to illustrate them with narratives.

### **Results:**

Our research illustrates how PWIDs have to face "toxicophobia" and how this process is embedded with gender, social class and migration. The narratives of PWIDs revealed how some professionals and politician discourses may reinforce the stigmatization of injecting drug use by lack of information about difficulties PWIDs have to face in their daily lives and access to health.

### **Conclusion:**

Reintroducing the voices of people with lived experience is an innovative way to improve the efficiency of advocacy for strengthening harm reduction policies.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

*The conference collaborators recognise the considerable contribution that industry partners make to professional and research activities. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.*

*All the presenters have no conflict of interest to disclose.*