

## The measurement of receptive needle and syringe sharing among people who inject drugs: discussion and evaluation

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**Introduction / Issues:** Internationally, various measures are used to monitor prevalence of receptive needle/syringe sharing (RSS) among people who inject drugs (PWID). However, most have not been evaluated thoroughly, and may not adequately capture RSS in all settings.

**Method / Approach:** Most commonly utilized measures of RSS generally specify 'past month' or 'last injection' reporting periods. Using data from the Melbourne SuperMIX cohort, where participants responded to two different RSS measures in the same interview, we evaluated a past month RSS measure (the BBV-TRAQ-SV scale) by comparing it to an alternate measure that asked participants about the last occurrence of RSS (over the past 12 months).

**Key Findings:** Within the 12 months prior to interview, 367 reports of RSS were recorded. Half of these (n=184, 50%) were reported as occurring in the past month. The alternate measure's performance was comparable (sensitivity 90% and specificity 87%) to that of the past month measure. However, the alternate measure captured twice as many RSS events (n=183, 50%) that occurred previous to the month before interview.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** Prevalence of RSS is a key indicator for harm reduction program monitoring, surveillance and research, however in the absence of widely standardized measures, it is challenging to make comparisons between contexts. We discuss the broader implications of differing RSS measures, for example, their utility in different locations with different levels on ongoing injecting risk behaviour. Further interrogation of existing RSS measures is needed, including evaluation, validation and standardisation efforts.

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