

## ILLCIT DRUG USE IN AUSTRALIAN PRISONS AMONGST PEOPLE WHO REGULARLY INJECT DRUGS

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**Introduction and Aims:** While injecting drug use in prisons occurs at a reduced frequency compared to in the community, half of all people who inject drugs (PWID) in prison are hepatitis C antibody positive. Due to limited supply of injecting equipment, as well as known or preferred substances, it is known that people who may otherwise engage in harm reduction measures when injecting drugs in the community may engage in injecting-related risk-taking behaviour while in prison. This presentation will examine (1) injecting drug use while in prison; (2) risk behaviour patterns amongst PWID while in prison; and (3) harm reduction measures PWID in prison report as being available.

**Design and Methods:** A national sample (n=900) of PWID at least monthly in the last six months recruited from capital cities in 2019 were interviewed about their law enforcement and prison experiences, as well as drug use and related behaviour, both in the community and in custody.

**Results:** Approximately half of the sample reported a lifetime history of incarceration. The majority had used drugs when last in prison, with a smaller proportion of these reporting injecting drugs in prison, mostly methamphetamine and opioid substitution therapies. Sharing injecting equipment was common, and there were reports of engaging in harm reduction behaviours (e.g., washing needles, using equipment after same person consistently).

**Discussions and Conclusions:** This study provides further evidence for the continued use of illicit and non-prescribed drugs via injecting in prisons without access to any harm reduction measures, highlighting the need to expand prevention interventions into Australian prisons.

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