

FACTORS RELATED TO 'NEVER OVERDOSING' IN A COHORT OF PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

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Introduction and Aims: Opioid overdose is a major public health problem globally, with overdose rates elevated in North America, and overdose rates rising in Australia. Opioid overdose among people who inject drugs (PWID) is common, but a significant group of PWID never report experiencing opioid overdose. We sought to explore factors associated with never experiencing opioid overdose in a cohort of PWID.

Design and Methods: Our data are drawn from the SuperMIX cohort study of 1278 PWID in Melbourne, recruited through Respondent Driven Sampling, snowball sampling, and street outreach. This analysis utilised self-reported opioid overdose outcomes reported by participants at baseline interviews conducted between 2008 and 2018. We conducted analyses to explore variations in participant socio-demographic characteristics, patterns of alcohol and other drug use and health service use by opioid overdose experience using Pearson's chi-squared test for categorical variables, and Wilcoxon rank-sum test for non-parametric continuous variables.

Results: Of 1230 (96.9%) participants who reported any heroin or other opioid use at baseline, 629 (51.1%) never reporting opioid overdose before their involvement in the study. Factors related to never overdosing included never having utilised drug treatment, never having experienced incarceration, younger age at interview, identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and no recent attendance at an emergency department, general practitioner or mental health services.

Discussions and Conclusions: We identified a range of factors related to never having experienced an opioid overdose among SuperMIX participants at baseline interviews. Further analyses will explore how these patterns vary over time in the cohort.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *PD has received investigator initiated funding from Gilead Sciences and an untied educational grant from Indivior for work unrelated to this study. MS has received investigator initiated funding from Gilead Sciences, Bristol-Myers Squibb and AbbVie.*

Support: PH is supported by a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Postgraduate Scholarship, PD & MS are supported by NHMRC Senior Research Fellowships. SuperMIX is funded by the NHMRC.