

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE OPIOID CRISIS: A REVIEW OF SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS

Savard I^{1,2,3,4}, Benoit M^{1,2}, Charette S^{1,2}, Bissonnet H^{2,4}, Longpre C^{1,2}, Blackburn ME^{1,2,4}, Arsenault S^{1,2,4}, Little R⁵ & Deschamps A⁶

¹Université du Québec en Outaouais (Canada), ²RISSC+ (Canada), ³McGill University (Canada),

⁵London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (United Kingdom), ⁴Centre Sida Amitié (Canada),

⁶Service cantonal de la santé publique du Canton de Neuchâtel (Switzerland)

Background:

North America is experiencing an unprecedented wave of overdoses, often related to opioids. It affects both people who use drugs and those who use prescribed opioids. Several strategies are being used to reduce the harm and death associated with overdose. This communication concerns the identification of North American strategies in response to the crisis, as well as the barriers and facilitators to their development and access.

Methods:

A review of systematic reviews was conducted. The literature search was conducted in the CINAHL, Medline, PsychINFO and PubMed databases using PRISMA guidelines. A quality assessment of the selected articles was conducted using the Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP) assessment tool.

Results:

Nine systematic reviews were selected that addressed strategies targeting: the prescription of opioids or alternatives; naloxone distribution; psychosocial interventions in conjunction with opioid agonist therapy; and research on opioid use disorder. Several barriers and facilitators were identified in relation to these strategies. They are most often deployed at the community and societal levels on a large scale, and rarely at the individual and interpersonal levels.

Conclusion:

This study identified strategies used in North America to address the opioid crisis, their facilitators, and barriers. With the exception of naloxone distribution, the strategies evaluated had little or no demonstrated effectiveness in preventing overdose or associated harms. Consideration should be given to linking research to the needs of those at risk of overdose to reduce opioid-related complications and deaths. To achieve this, strategies need to be individualized to the needs of the individuals.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

We have no conflicts of interest to declare in connection with the content of this presentation.