

VOICING PWID IN THE DEBATE ON SIS WITH PHOTOVOICE METHOD

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Introduction:

Eposim is a community-based participatory research study which used the Photovoice method to include people who inject drugs (PWID) by identifying their needs and the strategies they used to reduce injection-related risks, in order to participate to the opening of a supervised injection service in (SIS). The objectives of the study were to document PWID injection practices in public spaces.

Method:

This study used a sociological approach and the Photovoice method. These photographs were first analysed individually with the participant-photographers within semi-structured interviews, then collectively in a dedicated workshop. Participants also conducted a review in a self-support journal to promote the project; they contributed to a podcast and organized an exhibition.

Results:

Of the 10 PWID initially recruited, seven participated in the whole study process. The photographs helped gain access to participants' private lives and to account for the spatiality and materiality of their practices. Being able to express their own point of view through photographs showed how important it was for the people concerned, that an SIS in Marseille would be a response to the unsanitary conditions of consumption in outdoor urban spaces.

Conclusion:

Photovoice method made it possible to voice the PWID's opinions and contributed to make them participate in the public debate. Individually, giving voice to PWID can help to enhance their self-esteem. Nevertheless, the opening of an SIS may stay in a blocking situation because of NIMBY (Not In My Back yard) syndrome. The difficulty of PWID to organize as a group may also hampered progress toward an agreement on this subject. The photographs taken by PWID give visibility to their practices and confront the audience to their own stereotypes in order to make them more sensible of the importance of the opening of an SIS in Marseille.

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