Trend of Substances Reported Used

During 2012-2015, substances used in the past 7 days were reported; in 2018 substance use in the past 3 and 7 days was reported to be congruent with substances detected in the urine. In 2019 and onwards, substance use in the past 3 days only was asked. (See Figures 1 and 2).

Crystal meth has been the most commonly used substance among clients of harm reduction sites in British Columbia (BC) since 2018; 72% of respondents reported crystal meth use in 2019 and 2021. Crystal meth is frequently reported as being used concurrently with opioids as found in publications and urine toxicology. 1-3
Trend of Substances Reported Used

Although more than 40% of respondents reported heroin use in 2019 and 2021, less than 4% of opioid samples from BC tested by the Health Canada laboratory in 2021 contained heroin. 4

Figure 2 - Reported Opioid Use in Past 7 / 3 Days
Overdoses and Take Home Naloxone Ownership

In 2013, questions were added regarding experiencing and witnessing an overdose in the past 6 months and in 2014 a question was added about take home naloxone kit ownership (Figure 3).

In 2014, 12% of respondents reported owning a take-home naloxone kit. Since 2018, this has increased to above two-thirds of respondents.

Respondents reporting witnessing an overdose have increased over time. In 2021, 62% of respondents reported witnessing an overdose and 24% reported experiencing an overdose in the past 6 months.

Figure 3 - Opioid Overdose (past 6 mos) & Take Home Naloxone Kit Ownership
References

1. Correlates of concurrent use of stimulants and opioids among people who access harm reduction services in British Columbia, Canada: Findings from the 2019 Harm Reduction Client Survey.  (Apr 2022)
3. Urine toxicology screening among 2018 and 2019 harm reduction client survey participants (Dec 2021)