The B.C. Harm Reduction Program administered a survey to harm reduction supply distribution site clients across BC from October to December 2019 to assess regional differences in drug use and inform harm reduction planning and service quality improvement. Key findings from the survey are presented here. The total number of respondents for each question may differ.

Who took part in Interior?

- 5 communities
- 5 sites
- 112 participants

Cranbrook, Kamloops, Nelson, Penticton, Vernon

Self-identified gender

- Man: 60%
- Woman: 37%
- Trans, gender non-conforming, and other genders: 3%

Drug use

More than half of respondents (55%) identified SMOKING or INHALATION as the preferred method of drug use, while 36% preferred injection, and 4% preferred snorting.

Past 3-days self-reported drug use

- Crystal Meth: 70%
- Fentanyl: 48%
- Heroin: 35%
- Crack: 12%
- Cocaine: 12%

Potential harms

Of 84 people that used glass pipes to smoke drugs in the past 6 months:
- 26% used a second-hand pipe
- 39% injected instead when they couldn’t find unused smoking equipment

Of 56 people that injected drugs in the past 6 months:
- 19% had trouble getting unused needles
- 4% had fixed with a needle used by someone else

Nearly two thirds of participants (62%) reported using drugs alone often or always. Reasons for using drugs alone included:
- not wanting to share drugs;
- not having anyone else around;
- convenience and comfort; and,
- not wanting others to know.

Overdose

- 10% experienced an OPIOID OVERDOSE in the past six months
- 14% experienced a STIMULANT OVERDOSE in the past six months
- 53% witnessed an OPIOID OVERDOSE in the past six months

Keeping safe and harm reduction

- 73% of participants owned a Take Home Naloxone kit; 51% owned a cell phone.
- Of those that injected drugs, about two thirds (64%) had used drugs at an Overdose Prevention Services site in the past 6 months.
- Of 70 people that had tried to access opioid agonist therapy (OAT) in the past six months, 81% did not report difficulties while 19% reported difficulties, including:
  - were not offered preferred OAT
  - unable to find a prescribing physician
  - worry about being stigmatized at clinic
  - had no pharmacies nearby

Updated: September 11, 2020