

Voicing Service Providers Perspectives: Risk, Resiliency, and the Transition into Injection Drug Use among Street-Involved Youth

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The 'Preventing the Transition of At-Risk Youth into Injection Drug Use' study is a collaborative research project between the UBC School of Population and Public Health, UBC School of Nursing, BC Centre for Disease Control and our community partners. The purpose of the project is to identify risk and resiliency factors associated with the transition into injection drug use (IDU) among at-risk youth aged 15 to 24 in Vancouver, British Columbia. This phase of the study consists of interviews undertaken with service providers working directly with this target population. Data collection included in-depth, semi-structured interviews (n=15) with key informants and field observations conducted between February and April 2009. Audio recordings and field notes were transcribed and all transcripts reviewed and analyzed using NVivo qualitative software by two members of the research team. Domain analysis was conducted in an effort to identify three main threads: (i) perceived risk and resiliency factors related to IDU initiation; (ii) perceived gender differences related to IDU initiation; and (iii) perceived risk behaviours surrounding IDU. Preliminary findings suggest factors among at-risk youth that may prevent the transition into IDU include access to a positive social network, stable housing, employment, alternative education, non-judgmental service provision as well as knowledge of risk factors and practice of harm reduction; whereas, an absence of these factors may promote the transition. Results from this phase of the study will be used to inform a series of interviews and focus groups with at-risk youth.

Word count: 242