

The Association between Sexual Risk Factors, Street Involvement, and Injection Drug Use among At-Risk Youth in Vancouver, British Columbia

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Background

- Proportion of Canadian street-involved youth who report using injection drugs: **20-50%**¹⁻³
- Prevalence of HIV and hepatitis C among young (<30 years old) injection drug users in Vancouver: **16%** and **57%**, respectively⁴

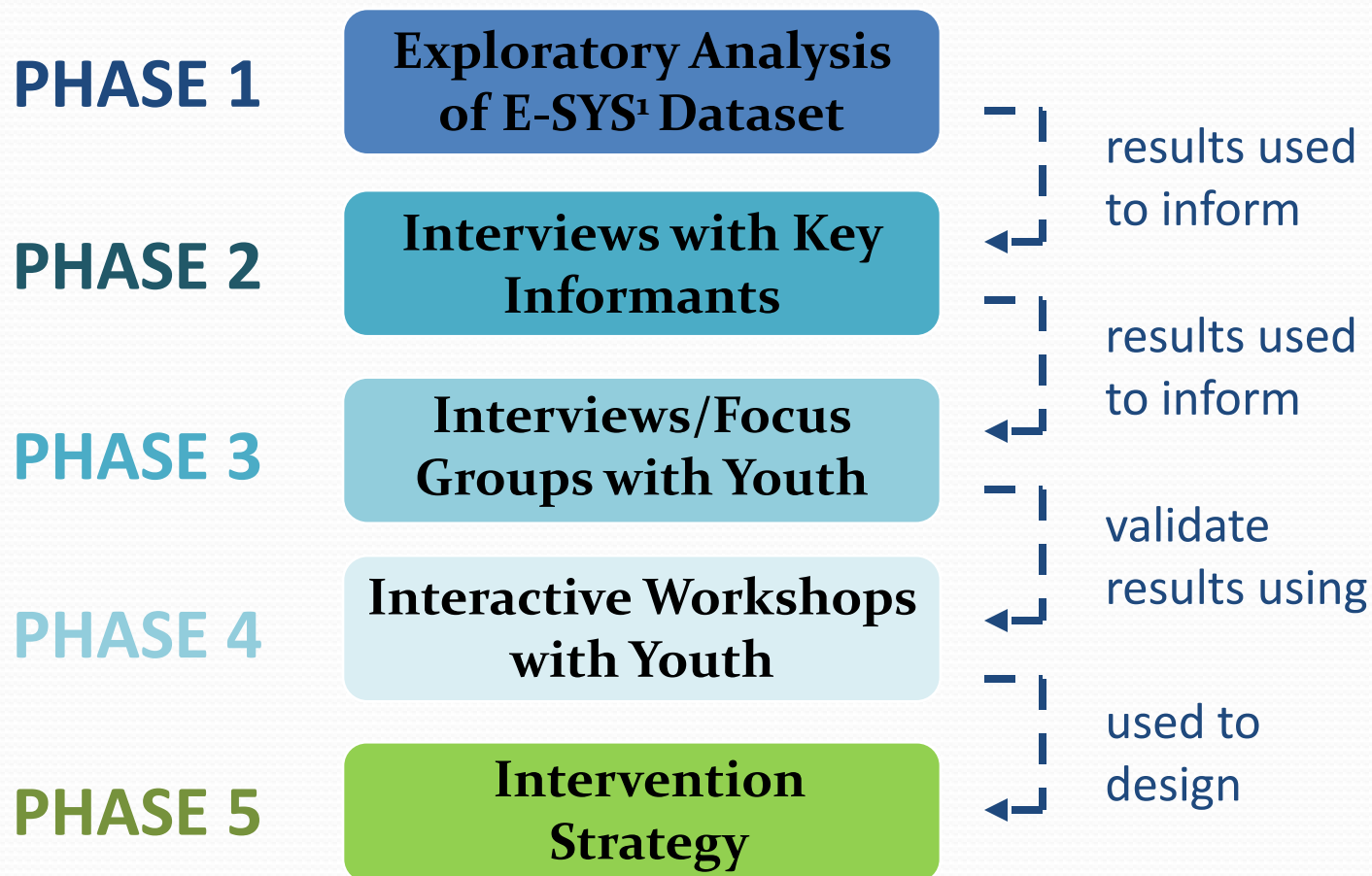
Purpose

- To identify factors associated with injection drug use among street-involved youth aged 15 to 24 and to investigate the role of gender on these associations

(1) Smith et al. McCreary Centre Society, 2007. (2) Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006. (3) Wood et al. Harm Reduct J. 2006;3:18.

(4) Miller et al. JAIDS. 2004;36:743-9.

Project Overview

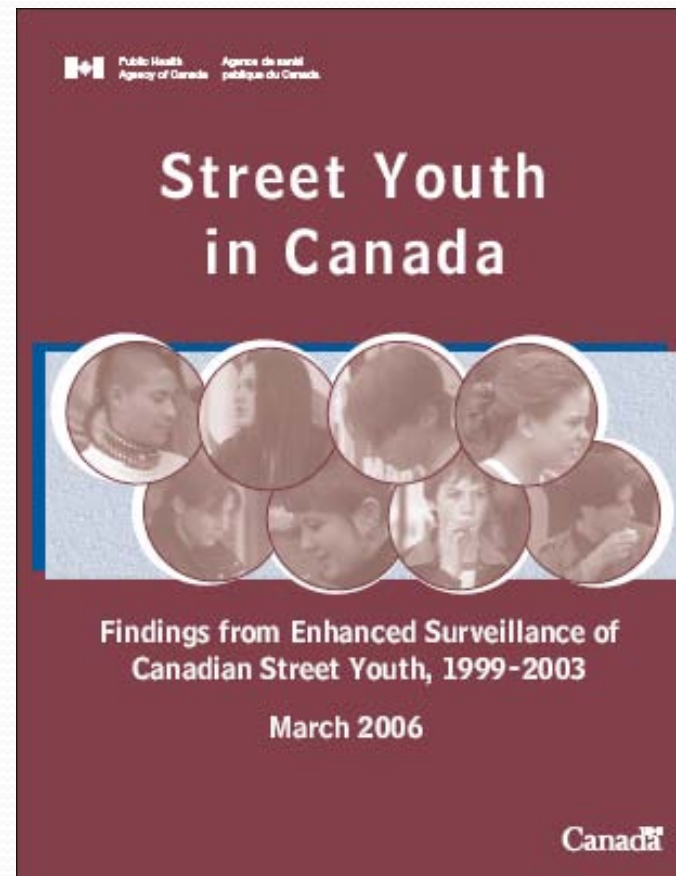


¹ E-SYS refers to the Enhanced Surveillance of Canadian Street Youth Survey

Data Source:

► Enhanced Surveillance of Canadian Street Youth Survey

- Collected data from Jan. – Nov. 2006
- Phase V
- Restricted to data collected from sites in Vancouver
- Recruitment through outreach workers, drop-in centres, and snowball sampling



Eligibility Criteria

- Youth were eligible to participate if they were:
 - 14-25 years old
 - Able to understand spoken English or French
 - Able to understand and recognize purpose of study
- In order to be considered street-involved, youth must have, in the past 6 months:
 - Run away from home for ≥ 3 days
 - Been thrown out of home for ≥ 3 days
 - Been without a fixed address for ≥ 3 days

Study Sample

In your life, have you ever injected or been injected at least once, with drugs in your veins or under your skin?

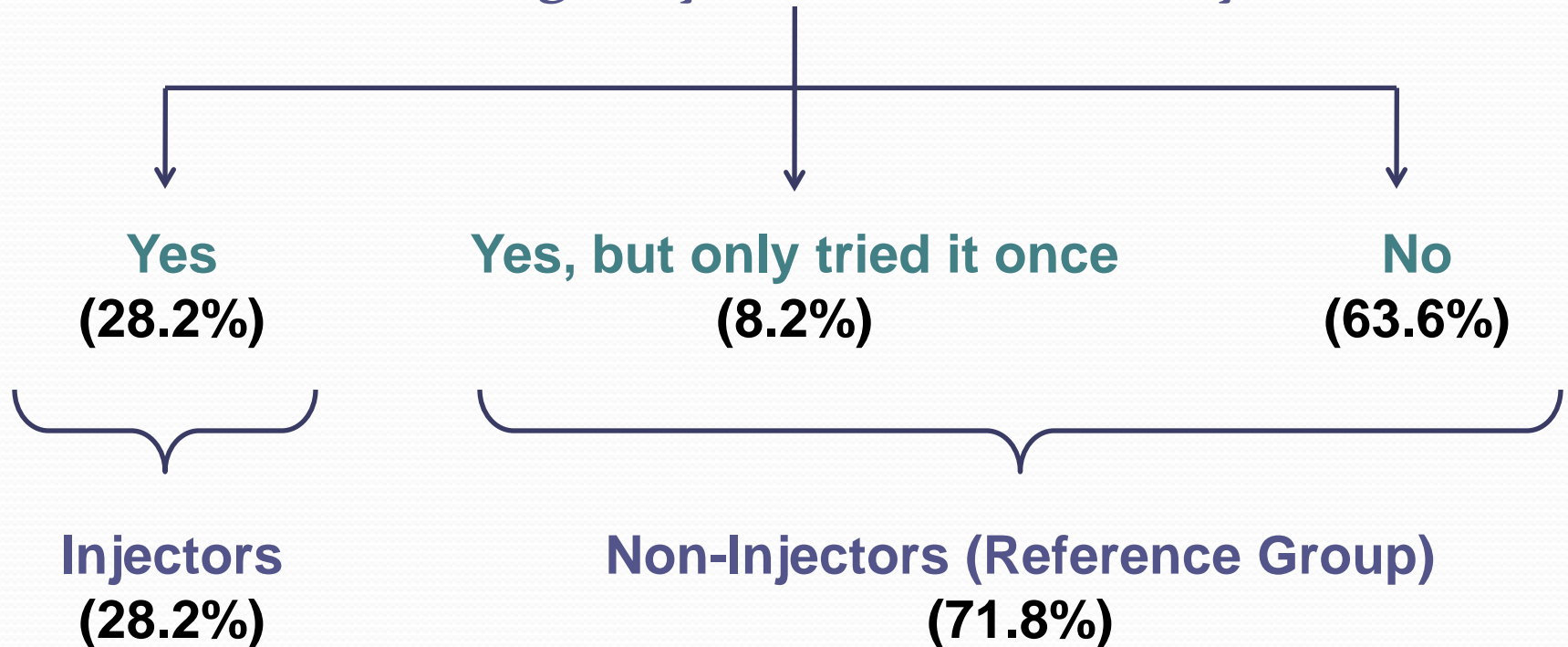


Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	No IDU (%)	IDU (%)	p-value
Age at interview, mean	19.8 yrs	21.0 yrs	0.001
Sex			
Male	66.4	61.1	0.489
Female	33.6	38.9	
Ethnic origin			
Non-Aboriginal	73.6	83.3	0.156
Aboriginal	26.4	16.7	
Place of birth			
In Canada	88.6	90.9	0.636
Outside Canada	11.4	9.1	
Type of recruitment			
Outreach	26.1	32.7	0.355
Drop-in centre	73.9	67.3	

Figure 1. Histogram Distribution – Age at first injection (years) among youth who report using injection drugs

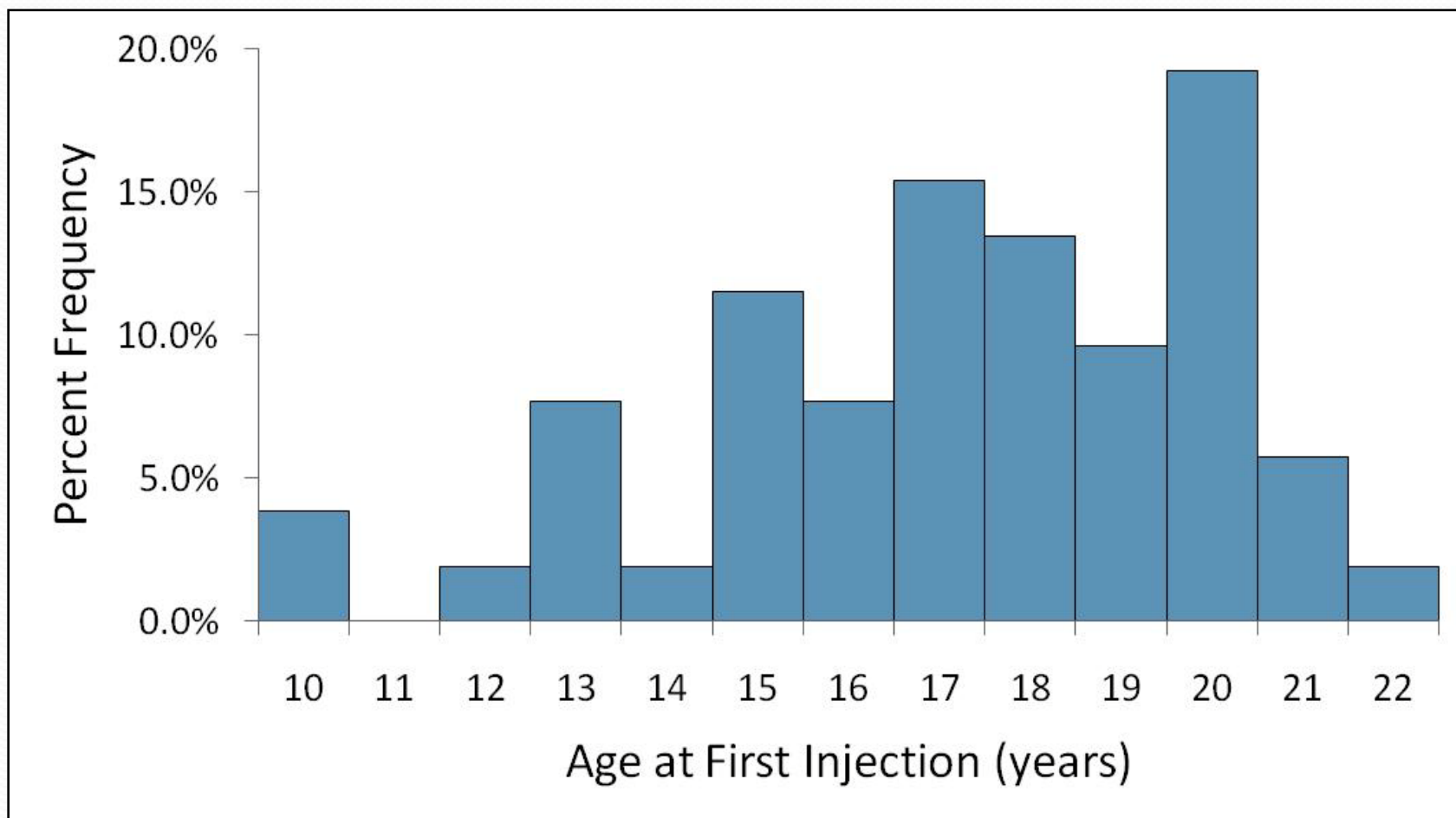


Table 2. Adjusted Odds Ratios (OR)

Variable	No IDU %	IDU %	Adjusted OR ¹ (95% CI)
Age at interview, mean	19.8 yrs	21.0 yrs	1.41 (1.18-1.69)
Sex, female	33.6	38.9	2.13 (1.01-4.48)
Participate in previous phase	5.7	24.5	3.68 (1.32-10.26)
Hangout on street >50 hrs/wk	59.4	76.4	2.43 (1.13-5.20)
Ever lived on the streets	81.3	98.2	11.42 (1.48-88.26)
Had a sex partner who used injection drugs	12.6	53.7	9.56 (4.17-21.89)
Had a sex partner who was a friend from the street	57.5	77.4	2.49 (1.13-5.46)
Ever had an STI	20.9	43.6	2.94 (1.42-6.08)

¹ Odds ratios adjusted for age and sex

Table 3. Gender Differences

Variable	MALES Crude OR (95% CI)	FEMALES Crude OR (95% CI)
Age at interview	1.58 (1.21-2.06)	1.26 (0.99-1.61)
Participated in a previous phase	6.11 (1.36-27.41)	4.78 (1.28-17.83)
Hangout on street >50 hrs/wk	3.73 (1.32-10.57)	1.33 (0.45-3.95)
Ever traded sex	1.75 (0.62-4.91)	3.85 (1.27-11.66)
Had a sex partner who used injection drugs	10.34 (3.66-29.19)	6.60 (2.09-20.86)
Ever had an STI	2.17 (0.86-5.49)	5.08 (1.67-15.43)



Discussion

- Our findings highlight the associations between injection drug use and:
 - Duration and degree of street entrenchment
 - Sexual networks and high-risk sexual behaviours
- Youth who use injection drugs are at increased risk for transmission of HIV, hepatitis C, and other sexually-transmitted infections
- Intervention strategies should aim to prevent the transition into injection drug use among at-risk youth and/or reduced the harms associated with injecting

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