

Preventing the Transition of At-Risk Youth into Injection Drug Use

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ABSTRACT

This 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, who serve an invaluable role on this project. The purpose of the project is to identify risk and resiliency factors associated with the transition into injection drug use (IDU) among street-involved youth aged 15-24 in Metro Vancouver, British Columbia. The project is divided into four phases: (i) exploratory analysis of a street-involved youth survey (ii) in-depth key informant interviews with service providers who work with at-risk youth; (iii) in-depth interviews and focus groups with street-involved youth; and (iv) interactive knowledge translation workshops with street-involved youth. Service providers are often not approached as participants; they offer unique insights to this project as key informants. This project also intends to hire and train youth collaborators who will provide insight from the perspective of their youth peer group. To date, we have completed Phases I and II of the project. Results from the initial two phases will be presented. The results of this study will inform community-level, evidence-based, youth-driven intervention strategies that intend to prevent the transition into IDU and/or reduced the harms associated with IDU among at-risk youth. These strategies aim incorporate youth input and will focus on the social structural influences around IDU initiation in conjunction with individual-level behavioural change. They will adopt a dual strategy of reducing environmental risk factors for IDU initiation, while promoting resiliency among marginalized youth.