

Key Findings from the Tracks Survey of People who Inject Drugs in Canada

Phase 4, Thunder Bay Site, 2019

The Tracks survey of people who inject drugs in Canada (formerly known as I-Track) monitors HIV and hepatitis C rates and risk behaviours among people who inject drugs in Canada. This survey can serve as an early warning system and help inform existing public health responses to HIV and hepatitis C among people who inject drugs.¹

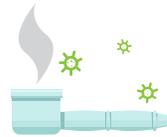
Risk Behaviours Related to Drug Use

35%



injected with used equipment other than a needle (e.g. cookers, ties, filters) in the past 6 months.

59%



reused non-injection drug equipment 'sometimes' or 'every time'.

49%



injected drugs in a public place in the past 6 months.



Both HIV and hepatitis C can be spread by sharing other drug-using equipment (e.g. cooker, pipe, or filters), not just a needle. Injecting drugs in public settings has been linked to a higher risk of a range of drug-related harms, including overdose, increased risk of HIV infection, and current HCV infection⁵.

HIV and Hepatitis C Testing

50%

who were HIV positive were unaware of their HIV positive status.

52%

were tested for HIV and only 58.0% were tested for hepatitis C in the past year.



Individuals who get tested regularly and know their status can be linked to clinical care and treatment, which suppresses their viral load (HIV) or cures the infection (hepatitis C), and prevents the spread of the infection to others^{2,3}.

Stigma and Discrimination

72%

had experienced stigma or discrimination based on their drug or alcohol use.



Individuals facing stigma and discrimination are less likely to access healthcare services for testing and treatment, increasing the risk of spreading infection to others⁴.

Risk Behaviours Related to Sexual Practices

46%

of those with at least one sex partner used drugs or substances during sex or within 2 hours before sex in the past 6 months.

62%

used a condom to reduce their risk of HIV infection through sex.



Individuals that are under the influence of substances are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours, which can increase their risk of spreading HIV⁶. Condoms are a highly effective way to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV⁷.

The most common types of healthcare accessed:

69%

Walk-in clinic



68%

Hospital emergency room

63%

Community health or wellness centre



People who inject drugs often access walk-in and emergency services, where they may not see a consistent healthcare provider familiar with their needs who can offer regular testing, care and treatment.

To read more about these findings, please see the full report: tbdhu.com/trackssurvey

¹ Public Health Agency of Canada. (2019). Unpublished document. Ottawa, ON: Centre for Communicable Disease and Infection Control.

² Li Z, Purcell DW, Sanson SL et al. Vital signs: HIV transmissions along the continuum of care – United States, 2016. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 2019; 68(11):267-72.

³ <https://www.catie.ca/en/hepatitis-c/key-messages/treatment>

⁴ <https://www.catie.ca/en/hiv-canada/8/8-2>

⁵ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0955395920300049>

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/idu.html>

⁷ <https://www.catie.ca/en/fact-sheets/prevention/condoms>