

## Injections and Infections: Understanding Harm Reduction Utilization in a Rural State

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### Introduction

- Maine has some of the highest rates of acute hepatitis B, C, & drug overdose deaths in the U.S
- Increasing rates of injection drug use associated-infections suggest significant syringe service program (SSP) underutilization
- Study objective: assess patient knowledge, attitudes, & practices of safe injection techniques & to determine predictors of SSP utilization

### Methods

- 15-month cross-sectional study of people hospitalized with IDU-associated infections at 4 hospitals in Maine
- Data collected through survey + medical records
- Descriptive analysis of 15-month data performed to characterize injection knowledge, attitudes & practices.
- Logistic regression analyses to identify factors associated with past 3 month SSP utilization.

### Results

- Of 101 participants, 65 participants (64%) reported past 3 month SSP utilization; 33% used SSPs frequently
- Injection of stimulants (31%) and opioids (71%)
  - 66% prescribed MAT (medication for addiction treatment) prior to admission
- 54% reported difficulty accessing an SSP.
- Higher proportion of MAT, naloxone, vaccine uptake among those who used SSP
- Participants who lived within 10 miles of an SSP were more like to use it (adjusted odds ratio 5.5 (95% CI: 2.1-14.3).

### Discussion

- Unsafe injection practices are common, even among people prescribed MAT
- Expansion of harm reduction services, including supervised injection facilities, is needed, especially in rural areas

People living within 10 miles of syringe service programs are **5.5x more likely** to use them. Expansion of harm reduction services in rural areas is needed.

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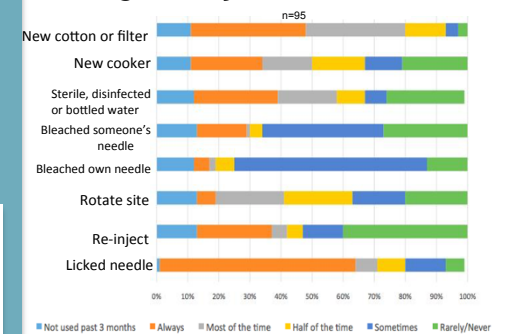


Table. Select Characteristics and Outcomes of Study Population

Demographics	n=101 n (%)	Uses SSP 65 (64%)	No SSP 36 (36%)
Female	56 (55%)	41 (63%)	15 (42%)
Median age (SD)	35 (7)	34 (8)	26 (6)
Insurance*			
Medicaid	59 (60%)	39 (61%)	20 (59%)
Medicare	6 (6%)	6 (9%)	0
Commercial	5 (5%)	2 (3%)	3 (9%)
Uninsured	25 (26%)	14 (22%)	11 (32%)
Medicaid+medicare	3 (3%)	3 (5%)	0
History of incarceration	90 (89%)	61 (94%)	29 (81%)
Homeless	46 (46%)	39 (55%)	10 (28%)
History of overdose	54 (53%)	42 (65%)	12 (33%)
Small/Isolated rural	18 (18%)	5(8%)	13 (36%)
>10 miles from SSP	<b>57 (57%)</b>	<b>28 (44%)</b>	<b>29 (81%)</b>
Treated with MAT prior to admission	67 (65%)	46 (71%)	21 (58%)
Vaccine uptake			
Hep A	53 (53%)	37 (58%)	16 (44%)
Hep B	58 (59%)	39 (61%)	19 (56%)
Naloxone uptake	48 (48%)	36(55%)	12 (33%)

\*n=99

Figure. Injection Practices



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