

EHT (Emerging Health Threat) Implementation Science Program on Opioid Interventions and Services: At-Risk Youth/Newer Users

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Opioid Crisis in North America:

- In Canada and internationally, there are serious concerns regarding opioid use among young people under 30 years of age. Recently fentanyl use among youth has generated unprecedented alarm.
- The increase in prescriptions of opioid pain relievers has been accompanied by dramatic increases in misuse and by a more than 200 percent increase in the number of emergency department visits from 2005 to 2011 (Surgeon General's report)
- The group with the fastest growing rates of prescription drug misuse are ages 15-25
- The OSDUHS study reports that one in ten students in grades 7-12 report using report using a prescription opioid non-medically in the past year
- Reports from various Canadian provinces indicate an increase in the number of deaths/year as a result of opioid poisoning among youth (BC report)
- The perceived availability of prescription opioids (without one's own prescription) shows a slight, but significant, increase between 2015 and 2017 from 18% to 22% (OSDUHS)
- A need to better understand and characterize the opioid crisis among youth in Canada specifically

Research Questions:

- What are the characteristics of the opioid emergency/crisis among youth in Canada?
- What are the needs of youth with regards to opioid use and of service providers providing treatments/interventions for youth?
- What are the barriers to the implementation of these services/treatments?

Objectives:

1. Guide service providers and policymakers to reflect on their current interventions and current approaches, then review the extent to which their current strategies respect the principles of youth
2. Support service providers to develop their understanding and knowledge of the needs young people, and increase their ability to implement new evidence-based interventions.
3. Facilitate and expand the implementation of evidence-based and youth-driven/informed interventions in the delivery of youth services

Methods:

1. Scoping Review to identify the characteristics of the opioid emergency/crisis, for (at-risk) youth

- Summarize current evidence-based intervention strategies for reducing prevalence, etc.
- Identify other existing effective interventions

2. Critical Gap Analysis

- Identify existing service providers across Canada that deal with opioid treatment/youth
- Characterize service delivery gaps for youth and young people
- Identify existing strategies/interventions for opioid-dependent youth

Methods Cont'd:

3. Youth Focus Groups

- Different groups of youth will be represented in each province (street-entrenched youth, indigenous youth, etc.)
- Montreal node focusing on pediatric pain patients and high school students
- Understanding experiences with opioids
- The gaps and needs of their population
- Characterize service delivery gaps for specific youth populations

4. Youth Summits & Engagement

- Individual one-day youth summits will be held at each of the node and will be virtually connected
- Young people share their perspectives with other young people and develop youth-driven/informed interventions strategies