

WHAT DOES THE AUTOMATICALLY COLLECTED DATA TELL US TWO YEARS AFTER INSTALLING THE FIRST SYRINGE DISPENSING MACHINES IN VICTORIA?

Jacka, David; Lewis-Levy, Theresa; Alexander, Debra
Monash Health

Background: In 2014 prototype machines were installed at three public hospitals to provide 24hr dispensing of injecting equipment to people who inject drugs in South Eastern Melbourne. The machines were designed to provide collection of customer data consistent with that of the statewide Needle Syringe Program (NSP).

Results: The 'under the radar' implementation relied on peer marketing of the machines, and led to steady growth in consumption at all sites such that now almost 1000 twin packs of syringes per month are being dispensed. There have been no community concerns expressed, few incidents of unsightly litter and even fewer of vandalism, though evolution of the prototypes has proved necessary. The data collection (time, gender, age, postcode) has demonstrated that one of machines is far busier than the other two, that female customers make up nearly 50%, that young people (and adolescents) are more common than at NSPs, and that consumers appear able to purchase \$2 packs if the free packs are 'sold' out.

Conclusion: The routine collection of data at the first syringe dispensing machines in Victoria has enhanced the reputation of these machines, demonstrated a significant market demand and supported the contention that 24hr availability and access by women and youth can be enhanced by the option of dispensing machines.