

"But a spoon is not equipment": Risk Behaviour and Knowledge Seeking Among HCV-infected PWID

Aleksandra Bartoszko, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Social Sciences

Well-designed harm reduction programs and successful health projects such as Hepatitis C prevention depend on, among other things, effective communication with the targeted population. This requires an understanding of the local practices and logics of the people involved in injecting drug use. It also requires that the designers and the targeted population speak the same language, and agree upon the key concepts. During my ethnographic fieldwork, I followed the lacking consensus regarding categories and terms used in the PWID-field.

In this presentation, I will demonstrate one of the terms, which are taken for granted in the injecting drug use field – the *equipment*. What exactly is it? I will illustrate the various understandings of the term by presenting some of the practices *aimed* at reducing the risk of HIV and HCV transmission through contaminated injection equipment. What, according to users, can constitute equipment, what does not, and how do these local definitions influence people's risk management and preventive practices?

To visualize some of the practices among the injecting drug users in Norway, I will use pictures from our comic book "The Virus", which will be launched and available during the symposium.