

# EXPLORING INJECTING PRACTICES, BBV RISK, HEALTH SERVICE ACCESS AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AMONG 644 MEN WHO INJECT PERFORMANCE AND IMAGE ENHANCING DRUGS (PIEDS)

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**Introduction and Aims:** In the context of a reported increase in performance and image enhancing drug (PIED) use among Needle and Syringe (NSP) attendees in NSW, this study aimed to update earlier research on injecting practices and BBV risk, as well as explore health-seeking practices and socio-cultural characteristics to inform harm-minimisation with this group.

**Design and Methods:** An anonymous, self-completed cross-sectional survey was conducted from September 2014 to January 2015 at 9 Primary NSP, across 5 Local Health Districts in Sydney. Men who were 18+ and currently injecting PIEDs were invited to participate.

**Results:** Among 644 participants, the median age was 27 years (SD 7.45; range 18-58). Participants were predominantly heterosexual (97.5%), and from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds (58.2%). Median time since first PIEDs injection was 2 years. Within the 12 months prior to participating in the study, 2% of participants reported sharing needles, re-using syringes (5.1%), sharing vials (4.6%), injecting other illicit drugs (4.8%), injecting non-standard intramuscular sites (6.2%), and accidental injection into a vein/artery (2.1%). Approaching half of participants (43.3%) had never been tested for BBVs, which was associated with belonging to a CALD background. Among participants who had been injecting for <12 months, 51.1% had spoken with a GP about injecting PIEDs.

**Discussion and Conclusions:** The results confirm the existence of injecting risk behaviours among this group. Differences among the study group related to BBV transmission risk practices and screening rates highlight the need to ensure harm minimisation efforts are equitable.

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