



KEY FINDINGS FROM THE 18- MONTH REPORT OF THE MEDICALLY SUPERVISED INJECTING CENTRE

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The Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) Evaluation Committee released further process findings of the 18-month evaluation of the MSIC today. The effect of the MSIC on overdose rates, entry to treatment for drug dependence, blood-borne viruses, and public amenity and crime and community attitudes will be reported in April 2003. Ongoing quarterly reports on process statistics will be available until October 2003.

Since opening, 3,818 individuals were assessed and registered to use the services at the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC).

- Registered clients made 56,861 visits to the MSIC during which their injection of drugs was supervised.
- The majority of these registered clients were male (73%), and less than one-third were female (26%). Male clients accounted for majority of visits (64%).
- Heroin was the drug most frequently injected at the MSIC (61% of visits) followed by cocaine (30% of visits).
- Clients made an average of 15 visits in the 18-months with a range of 1 to 641 visits. The average time spent in the MSIC per visit was approximately 28 minutes.
- On approximately one in every four visits, a health care service was provided to the clients (in addition to the supervision of their injecting). Over half of the occasions of service were injecting and vein-care advice (56%).
- Approximately one in 41 visits resulted in a referral for further assistance. Among the 1,385 referrals for further assistance, 43% were for the treatment of drug dependence, 32% were to primary health-care facilities and 25% were to social welfare services.
- Four hundred and twenty-four drug-overdose related incidents occurred at the MSIC requiring clinical management, a rate of 7 overdoses per 1000 visits. These comprised of 337 heroin-related overdoses, 60 cases of cocaine-related toxicity, and 16 benzodiazepine overdoses and 11 other opioid-related overdoses.

“The MSIC has been a controversial strategy that has been heavily scrutinised by both the general public and the media,” said Professor Richard Mattick, Chair of the MSIC Evaluation Committee and Director of the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre. “This is the end of the evaluation period and we are looking forward to presenting the final evaluation report on the effect of the MSIC on overdose rates, entry to treatment for drug dependence, blood-borne viruses, public amenity and crime, and community attitudes to the State Government by April 2003.”

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