

# Integrated harm reduction services for drug users and homeless people

2018  
FEANTSA  
POLICY  
CONFERENCE  
FUTURE CHALLENGES  
FOR THE HOMELESS  
SECTOR IN EUROPE



# Content

- Introduction
- Presentation of Correlation Network
- Harm Reduction in a nutshell – basic principles and critical factors
- The link between Harm Reduction and Hepatitis C
- The need for integrated services
- Conclusions and open questions

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# Correlation Network (CN)

- Launched in 2004
- Newly reformed in 2018
- Operational Grant
- CN pillars
  - Network
  - Monitoring
  - Capacity Building
  - Advocacy

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## Other European projects and activities

- Civil Society Involvement in Drug Policy
- Research project addressing the pathways of Stimulant Type Amphetamine Use
- Street Support Project
- Betrad Project (Aging Drug Users)
- 48 hours out (Overdose prevention for released prisoners)
- Eurosider (Effectiveness of Safe Use Trainings)
- Hepatitis C Initiative
- European Civil Society Forum on Drugs & HIV/HCV and TB

# What is Harm Reduction

Harm Reduction refers to policies, programmes and practices that aim primarily to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of the use of legal and illegal psychoactive drugs without necessarily reducing drug consumption.... The harm reduction approach to drugs is based on a strong commitment to public health and human rights” (Definition of Harm Reduction International, 2015).

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# What is Harm Reduction

- HR is non-judgemental and not abstinence based
- Harm Reduction works!
- Interventions are practical, feasible, (cost) effective and evidence-based

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# A broad harm reduction approach

- Correlation argues for a broad definition of HR, combining health and social aspects
- Relation to stigma and marginalisation
- Holistic and integrated approach
- Cooperation between different services is needed, including: housing, mental health care, education, training and employment) education buddy support...

# Harm Reduction Interventions

- Needle syringe programmes (NSP)
- Drug Consumption Rooms
- Opioid Substitution Treatment (OST)
- Heroin Assisted Treatment
- Overdose prevention and naloxone
- Harm Reduction for recreational drug use
- Peer involvement
- HCV Treatment
- Chemsex
- HR interventions targeting specific populations such as migrants, MSM, sex workers, prisoners, ....

# Harm Reduction challenges

- Insufficient coverage of harm reduction in Europe
- Some countries have only small programmes (often only in bigger cities)
- Political and ideological restrictions: HR is under pressure
- Legal restrictions
- Lack of funding
- Lack of monitoring and data collection
- Hepatitis C
- New drug trends and developments
- Overdose

# HCV and drug use

- Worldwide 150 million people are living with chronic hepatitis C virus (9 million in the European region).
- WHO has identified people who inject drugs as a key target group for HCV prevention and treatment.
- New treatment opportunities
- PWID have limited access to prevention, testing and treatment (stigma, discrimination and criminalisation)
- Lack of knowledge among HR services about HCV
- Lack of knowledge in clinical settings about specific needs drug users

# Harm Reduction and HCV

- Civil society and HR services can play a vital role in the elimination of HCV among PWIDs
- HR services reach underserved populations
- Prevention, screening and treatment services can be organised in HR settings, if there are no legal restrictions and if there is an optimal cooperation with health care settings -> continuum of care
- HCV treatment in HR settings is cost-effective and brings treatment to those, who would otherwise stay untreated
- Experience on HR services can be transferred to other low-threshold services (e.g. housing first programmes)

# Conclusions

- Integrating harm reduction programs in the continuum of care requires policy changes (HCV testing / treatment on-site, access to treatment) and improved cooperation between different services
- Increased and stable funding is needed for harm reduction programs
- Skill building for HR workers in regard to prevention, treatment and care
- Skill building for medical staff (to reduce stigma and discrimination and to safeguard tailored services)
- Promotion and implementation of good practice examples to effective community-based approaches

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# Questions to discuss

In which way are harm reduction services and HCV-related services integrated in facilities for homeless people?

What are the main challenges and barriers in developing integrated services?

Which kind of good practice examples do exist?

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# Important dates and events

European HCV Community Summit  
18 September 2018, Lisbon

European Civil Society Conference  
5 November 2018, Brussels

European Harm Reduction Conference  
21-23 November 2018, Bucharest

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# More information

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