

The Importance Of Needle Syringe Programs In The Prevention Of Chronic Disease

Rural Health Conference 2008

Background

- History – Established in 1986
- NSPs
 - Aim: To reduce the spread of blood borne viral infections (BBVI's) among IDU's, and thereby the general community.
- Needle and Syringe Programs are a public health measure, consistent with the National Drug Strategy's harm minimisation framework, to reduce the spread of infections such as HIV and hepatitis C among injecting drug users.

Who needs the service & what does it provide?



- How many people are we talking about?
- NSP's provide:
 - sterile injecting equipment
 - education on reducing drug use
 - health information
 - referral to drug treatment, medical care, legal and social services

The Prevention of Chronic Health Diseases



- NSPs in Australia are estimated to have resulted in:
 - Hep C – prevention of 21,000 cases
 - HIV – prevention of 25,000 cases
- The savings to the health system in avoided treatment costs over a lifetime are estimated to be between \$2.4 and \$7.7 billion.

The Benefits



- NSPs have been one of the major public health success stories, saving thousands of lives
- NSPs provide the broadest interface between health services and injecting drug users
- NSPs are cost effective
- NSPs help decrease the number of inappropriately discarded needles and syringes
- NSPs do not increase injecting drug use, but rather decrease injecting drug use

Reference



- Dolan, K. MacDonald, M., Dilins, E. & Topp, L. 2005. *Needle and syringe programs: A review of the evidence*. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

Contact details



Name: Rachel Boehm
Role: Alcohol & Drug Community
Education Coordinator

Bendigo Community Health Services

Phone: 54 300 500

Email address: rachelboehm@bchs.com.au