Supervised Injection Sites

A recent survey of such sites found high rates of hepatitis C among patrons, but treatment for the virus was rarely offered on-site.

December 3, 2018 By Benjamin Ryan

Supervised injection sites for people who inject drugs (PWID) are opportune places to offer hepatitis C virus (HCV)–related services and treatment, although many such opportunities are missed.

In 2016, researchers surveyed 49 supervised drug consumption sites, including eight in the Netherlands, 17 in Germany, nine in Spain and seven in Switzerland as well as one site each in Denmark, France, Australia, Canada, Luxembourg and Norway.

“To tackle HCV in people who use drugs, testing and treatment need to take place in community and harm reduction settings,” says an author of the survey, Eberhard Schatz of Correlation, a harm reduction network in Amsterdam.

Each site received an average of 80 visits daily. On a typical day, the sites had seven paid staff and one unpaid or volunteer staff member.

Eighty percent of the sites had nurses, 78 percent had social workers, 44 percent had medical doctors on-site, 28 percent had health educators and 22 had peer counselors.

Sixty-five percent of the sites offered testing for HCV on-site as well as pre- and post-test counseling. About 80 percent of clients received such screening; 60 percent had the virus.

Only two sites, or 4 percent of the sample, offered treatment for hep C on-site. One other site had plans to do so.

Sites were more likely to offer HCV treatment if they had nurses or doctors on staff and if they offered opioid medication treatment on-site.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.