

BREAK-AND-ENTER TRENDS BEFORE AND AFTER THE OPENING OF A SUPERVISED CONSUMPTION SERVICE IN TORONTO, CANADA: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL ANALYSIS

Authors:

Mitra S¹, Na Y¹, Laurence G², Mitchell K¹, Robertson A², Karamouzian M¹, Werb D¹

¹Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation, Toronto, ON

²Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre, Toronto, ON

Background:

The Health Minister of Ontario — Canada's most populous province — recently cut funding to Toronto's Parkdale Community Health Centre's supervised consumption service (SCS), citing concerns about increased crime, including break-and-enters. However, evidence examining the relationship between SCS implementation and local crime remains limited. We examined trends in break-and-enters surrounding the Parkdale SCS using quasi-experimental methods.

Methods:

Using Toronto Police Service crime data (2014–2025), we compared trends in break-and-enters in the Parkdale neighbourhood relative to all other downtown Toronto neighborhoods using an interrupted time series (ITS) analysis. The 'pre-SCS' period spanned January 2014 to January 2018 (when the SCS opened); the 'post-SCS' period extended from the SCS opening through to July 2025. Additionally, a difference-in-differences (DiD) analysis estimated the effect of the SCS opening on break-and-enter rates, comparing changes near the SCS (200m and 500m radii) to those at a control site with a comparable client base.

Results:

The ITS analysis showed no statistically significant level or trend change in break-and-enters in the Parkdale neighbourhood following the SCS opening. In contrast, a statistically significant level increase in break-and-enters was observed in other downtown neighborhoods ($p < 0.01$). A statistically significant downward trend in break-and-enters was also observed in the Parkdale neighbourhood post-SCS opening ($p < 0.01$). DiD estimates showed no significant difference in break-and-enter rate changes within either the 200m or 500m radius of the SCS relative to the control site ($p > 0.05$ for both).

Conclusion:

The SCS' establishment was not associated with an increase in break-and-enters in the Parkdale neighborhood. Rather, a significant decrease in the trend of break-and-enters was observed, an effect not detected in other downtown neighbourhoods. DiD analysis further confirmed no SCS-attributable increase in the immediate surrounding area. These findings counter the premise underlying recent funding cuts and underscore the importance of evidence-based policy decisions regarding SCS.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

DW has a financial interest in a private company, DoseCheck Technologies Limited, that is developing a mobile drug checking technology.