

“CRACK PIPE KIT” PROJECT

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Background:

The project started in Southern Switzerland (Canton Ticino), at the day centre of Ingrado – Services for addiction. It has been observed an increase in cocaine consumption through inhalation among users who apply creative solutions to consume crack using unsuitable materials, which are often shared, resulting in risk of transmitting viral diseases such as Hepatitis C, HIV and other illnesses. The aim is to mitigate harm associated with this consumption practice by offering clean materials designed to educate consumers and meet their needs, ultimately aiming to improve their quality of life.

Approach:

The project was established in 2022 as part of harm reduction policy, involving the distribution and exchange of crack pipe kits. Users are entitled to one free kit per week through the exchange with their used pipe, and they can customize the kit with materials that best suit their consumption habits.

Analysis:

The project allows for comparing consumption practices to reduce harm while staying updated on evolving consumers' needs. According to the survey conducted among service users, 85% admit sharing their pipe, and 57% of them affirm replacing the mouthpiece. Additionally, distribution has facilitated engagement with new individuals subsequently supported by the service. Furthermore, incentivizing exchange has helped improve the issue of littering at major consumption sites.

Conclusion:

From the beginning of the project until the end of 2023, 1642 kits have been delivered, with an average of approximately 78 kits distributed monthly. A total of 151 individuals have taken advantage of this offer. The kits used and disposed of at our facility amount to 419. We observed a positive response to the project; therefore, we will continue distributing crack pipe kits, aiming to further educate drug users about the risks and harms associated with this practice.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Authors have no conflict of interest to disclose for the development of this study.