



ENTRYPOINT

THE MEANINGS OF INJECTING IN
SEXUALISED DRUG-USE SETTINGS
(AMONG GAY MEN LIVING WITH HIV)

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Acknowledgements



- Study participants (survey and interview-ethnographic arms)
- Positive Life NSW & Living Positive Victoria
- Craig Cooper; Brent Allan
- Centre for Social Research in Health
- Kane Race; Kiran Pienaar

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Introduction

- People living with HIV as a priority population.
- Diagnoses of HCV among HIV-negative men have also recently been increasing.
- Associated with participation in sexually adventurous subcultures.
- The EntryPoint study aimed to identify points of intervention for peer education to increase HCV testing and treatment.



Participants

- All participants were gay men living with HIV.
- Self-identified as sexually adventurous.
- 15/18 reported any recent injecting drug use.
- 4 men had any experience of HCV diagnosis and treatment.
- Average age 46.1 years (range 23–61 years).
- Qualitative data were collected via individual face-to-face interviews, focus group, interview, and peer-ethnographic observations.
- Survey data (Brener et al. 2019) not reported here.



Mapping

POEN/VIDEO ROOM

HIGHEST TIER

LOWER TIER

NO CCTV IN AREAS WHERE SEX TAKES PLACE.

T.V. SCREEN

COUCH

SEX

BANTING

KITCHEN

SHOTS

SHOOTING

DESK

MIXING

BLASTING

BALCONY


BANTING AND SEX TAKES PLACE IN THIS AREA

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Injecting practices (1)



- All injected crystal methamphetamine.
- Injected in the context of sex ('chemsex', 'slamsex').
- Almost all had experiences of being injected by, and/or injecting, someone else.
- Attention to setting up (or arranging) things in order be affected (Gomart & Hennion, 1999)
 - Space,
 - Light
 - Sound
 - bodies, clothing

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Injecting practices (2)


- Roles as either the injector or the injected based on perceived skills and competence.
- Injector
 - Responsibility
 - Prevent others from learning (*"I don't want to teach anyone. I don't think it's been one of the best assets I've acquired"* (Victor, 52)).
 - Law (*"If something goes wrong, you know, it's my finger prints on that barrel, baby"* [Zain, 46]).
 - Rules
 - Initiating (*"I generally won't inject people who have never injected before"* [Jayden, 39]).
 - Teaching

Injecting practices (3)



- Relations formed through the act of injecting.
 - scripted (and gendered) sexual practices
 - intense (though often transient) feelings of connectedness and intimacy
- Highly valued by participants (esp. those being injected)






I really love it when somebody else blasts me. I love that power exchange because yeah, there is... I don't know what it is. There's something about it that you know, when somebody else does that to you, and then all of a sudden, you've got that rush, that rush is associated with that person. [...] Yeah, so I think that's what that is to me. And also, in his head space he's doing that to somebody else, and that also sets the scene for the emotional state of mind.


(Kai, 28)



I think it's very intimate and it's also it's very deliberate because you're doing it for a reason. You're not giving them an antibiotic or anything, you're doing it for a reason – for sex and for the rush, and to see them rush and everything like that. So I think that's... And they know that as well, so I think that's what, yeah, is the erotic part about it.



(Kade, 58)






Syringe


- Importance of syringe as an object.
- Syringe (or 'fitpack') 'affords' meanings and actions
 - e.g. injecting is an individual practice and safety an individual responsibility (Fraser et al. 2017; Fraser 2013)
- Syringe as prosthesis (Vitellone, 2003).



One of the myths of ice use is it only takes one dose; and as he was about to put the needle in, you know I thought [about that]. But that just increased the adrenalin. That just made me more excited, and I just kind of thought well, fuck it, you know.



(Royce, 55)





Risks for HCV transmission


- Potential risks for HCV transmission
 - syringe disposal
 - recapping of syringes after injecting someone else
 - injection site
- Exacerbated in a context where the immediate transition from injecting to sexual activity is highly valued.




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If you're injecting somebody else, the last thing you want to do after that is try and cap the needle you just used on somebody else, because there is a good chance that it's going to go into your finger or something like that. (Kade, 58)




Opportunities


- Risks for transmission include injecting *and* sex
 - Separating drug consumption and sex not desirable or even possible
- Testing and treatment (incl. treatment as prevention)
 - Testing awareness is currently low
 - What is TasP on individual level?
- Reinfection
- Adapt messaging for chemsex scenes (peer networks) (Schroeder et al. 2019)
 - Develop disclosure strategies
- Draw on clinical engagement and social networks (i.e. clinical and social infrastructure)





Disclosure of Interest

This research was funded through the Gilead Australia Fellowship: Research Grants Program.

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