

THE LATIN AMERICAN INTEREST GROUP FOR ADVOCACY AND HEALTH CARE CHALLENGES OF PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS.

Background and objectives:

The far-reaching impacts of the war on drugs and trafficking in Latin America, contributes to incarceration for minor drug offences, widespread human rights violations, the devastation of farming communities affected by drug eradication and use of pesticides. Punitive policies also contribute to an increase in HIV and Hepatitis infections, challenge access to care and increase social vulnerability leading to disability and death.

We aim to increase awareness and networking and to share knowledge about and within the region.

Description of how the session will encourage debate and idea sharing:

State-of-the-art presentations on three key subjects concerning community-led harm reduction services, burden and management available data on HIV and viral hepatitis, and drug policy models in Latin American countries. We will discuss current data and challenges to set the context for discussion with the audience as a round table. The purpose is to define adapted and innovative actions for the region and beyond.

Methods and format for promoting dialogue and networking:

The Latin American Interest Group started voluntarily at INHSU23. Members saw a lack of representation of the region and share a strong interest in working with people living with the impact of drug use and/or drug trafficking in Latin America. This session aims to promote the active participation of delegates from Latin America, share practices and create new international collaborations.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

E Castro is a grant recipient of AbbVie and Gilead pharmaceuticals as project leader of the HepC Virtual Clinic.

Speakers/Facilitators:

Rafaela Rigoni, head of research at C-EHRN, has over two decades of drug policy and harm reduction expertise. With a PhD in Development Studies, she specializes in monitoring, evaluation, and qualitative research methods. She coordinates the Civil Society Monitoring of Harm Reduction in Europe at C-EHRN and has contributed to harm reduction projects across Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America.

Ernesto Cortés is a social anthropologist, Master's degree in criminology and mental health. He is Director of the Costa Rican Association on Drug Studies and Intervention (ACEID). Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of People Who Use Drugs (LANPUD). Board member of INPUD and INHSU. Vice President of the United Nations New York Committee on Drugs (NYNGOC). Erika is an MD-PhD, tropical/internal & addiction medicine specialist, founder of the HepC Virtual Clinic in Lausanne. She works with migrants, MSM, chemsex users and other groups. She's expert in integrated-care services for People who use drugs. Her research work is focused on people living with HCV and/or HIV infections.

Dr. Pedro Mateu-Gelabert, associate professor at CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy, is a sociologist with over 25 years of research experience in New York City and globally, specializing in drug use epidemiology, urban studies, immigration, social networks, and public health. He has recently led two NIDA-funded studies on HCV care and prevention and opioid-related HCV risks.