



INVESTIGATING THE FEASIBILITY FOR A DRUG CONSUMPTION ROOM IN THE ACT

Jack Gunn, Amy Kirwan, Rebecca Winter, Filip Djordjevic, Michael Curtis, Paul
Dietze

Background

- In 2020 the Burnet Institute was contracted by the Australia Capital Territory (ACT) Health Directorate to conduct a feasibility study into establishing a Drug Consumption Room (DCR)
- DCRs are safe and supervised sites for people to legally use drugs
- Two DCRs in Australia (King's Cross, Sydney & North Richmond, Melbourne)
- Legislation for a DCR in the ACT has existed since 1999



Aims

- Identify drug use patterns, risk behaviours and associated issues in the ACT
- Identify gaps and needs for service provision in the ACT
- Describe DCR models in other jurisdictions and development processes
- Assess the need, support and feasibility for a DCR in the ACT and potential models

Methods

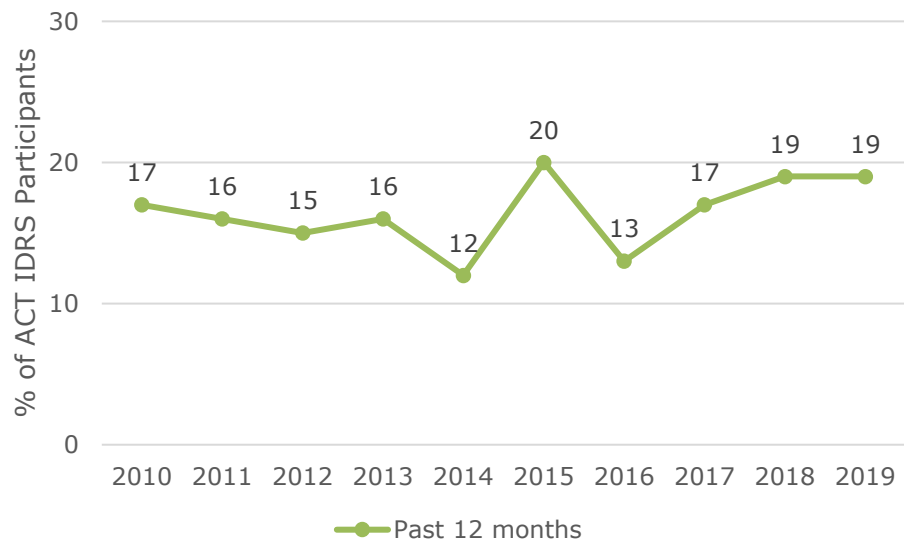
Four research activities:

- Desktop review of the literature
- Qualitative interviews with key stakeholders (n=27)
- Quantitative surveys with ACT residents who use drugs (n=101)
- Snapshot surveys with NSP clients (n=242)

Findings

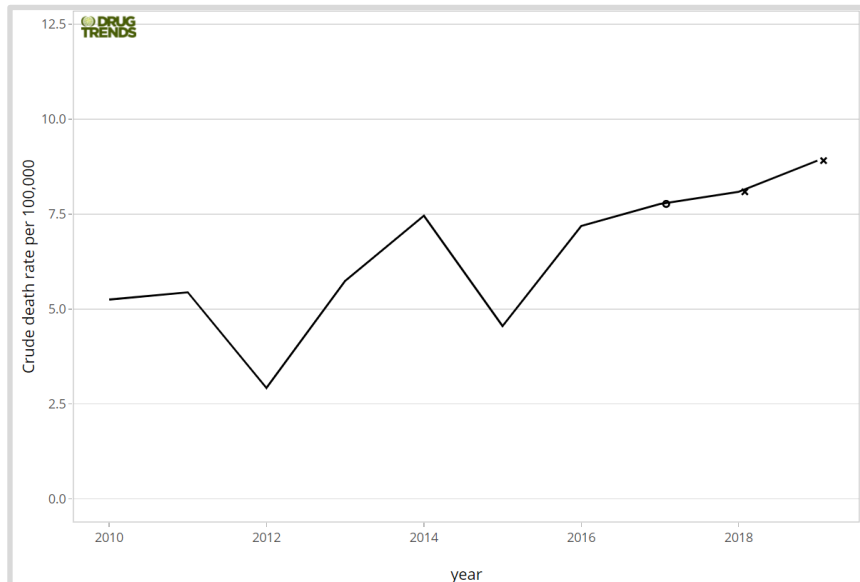
- Converging sources of evidence suggest that drug-related harms are prevalent and increasing in the ACT

Non-fatal overdoses in the past 12 months, ACT IDRS, 2010-19



Source: Uporova J, and Peacock A. *Australian Capital Territory Drug Trends 2019: Key findings from the Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS) Interviews*. 2019. National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW Sydney.

Drug induced deaths in the ACT, crude death rate, 2010-2019



Source: National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre. *Drug-induced deaths by jurisdiction, intent, age, and sex*. 2020. University of New South Wales.

Findings

- There was strong support for a DCR among sector stakeholders, ACT residents and potential service users

Intentions to use a DCR in the ACT, consumer and NSP snapshot surveys

	Consumer survey		NSP snapshot	
	n = 98		n = 163	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Would you use a DCR?				
No	<5	<5	39	(24)
Yes	85	(87)	104	(64)
Maybe/Don't know	9	(9)	20	(12)

Findings

Qualitative data with sector stakeholders found:

- Strengths
 - Cooperative service system
 - High NSP and naloxone coverage
 - Drug court system
- Gaps in the ACT AOD system
 - Geographically scattered service availability
 - Limited access to rehabilitation and opioid substitution therapy
- A potentials DCR should
 - Be linked with a range of services, have few restrictions on access and be in the Civic or Belconnen area

Outcomes

We recommended establishing a small DCR with 6-8 booths in central Canberra, which:

- Is designed, developed and delivered in partnership with peers and nurses;
- Is integrated with an existing AOD service;
- Is low-threshold and with minimal exclusion criteria; and
- Primarily accommodates injection, but designed to be adaptable to accommodating other forms of drug administration.

The full report can be accessed on the Burnet Institute's website:

burnet.edu.au/act-msir

Acknowledgements

- Chris Gough and Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy
- ACT Health
- Survey and interview participants



Burnet Institute
Medical Research. Practical Action.



Equity Through Better Health

burnet.edu.au

85 Commercial Road Melbourne, Victoria, 3004