

Missing equity and equality in Harm Reduction.

Authors:

Nikki-Lee May¹

¹*Queensland Injectors Health Network (QuIHN), Townsville, Australia.*

Presenter's email: nikkim@quihn.org

Introduction: People who inject drugs who live in metropolitan areas have higher chances of accessing safe and supportive NSP services. However, people living in rural, remote and even regional areas are still left with unsafe access.

Abstract body text: Primary NSPs provide not just sterile injecting equipment, but also provide a supportive space that delivers education, referrals and social connection. People living in regional, rural and remote communities are often missing out on these due to secondary NSP access being limited to pre-made equipment packs in the cupboard of a hospital and health service wait room. While there is access to equipment, it is not equitable, equal and creates unsafe access.

Discussions and Conclusions: Working in a primary NSP in Townsville, we have consumers that travel to us for substantial amounts of equipment due to living in small communities. They express the stigma they experience trying to access sterile equipment locally as being in a small town "everybody talks" when they are seen trying to access this cupboard. They also put themselves at legal risk as they distribute equipment within their circles due to this stigma. There is no chance for harm reduction such as safe injecting, blood borne virus and overdose prevention education. Additionally, without data being recorded, it is also hard to determine the regions drug trends so appropriate support can be provided. Most importantly, they are also missing a safe space for social support and connection which is a big aspect of harm reduction.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: QuIHN's Harm Reduction Services are funded by the Queensland Department of Health Communicable Diseases Unit.