



Perspectives, Pathways and Priorities of People with lived and living experience of substance use: Informing Policies

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The P5 Project Story

In 2017, Associate Professor Dr. Lori Hanson and her doctoral student Mr. James Dixon were discussing the Canadian opioid crisis as an area of focus for James' thesis. After consulting with different stakeholders in addictions medicine, public health, and community-based services it was clear that different stakeholders had varying understandings of what the crisis was and how to best respond.

Based on these consultations, the *Consolidating perspectives on the nature of Saskatoon's evolving opioid crisis* (CP) project was formed. This project team spoke with stakeholders across the continuum of care whose working roles were implicated in the crisis. Due to the short-term nature and smaller budget of the CP study, the researchers did not include the voices of lived and living experience. This absence is a barrier to understanding that was identified by both the research team and all care providers involved with the study. This absence is also frequently discussed in substance use-related research as stigmatizing people who use drugs and a driver of inequity in health services.

To address this shortcoming and hear from the experts, the CP team and other local stakeholders collaborated to design a project that is community-based and patient-oriented, centering the voices of lived and living experience to learn about health system pathways. This group of collaborators became the *Perspectives, pathways, and priorities, of people with lived and living experience of substance use: Informing policies* (P5 Project YXE) research team. Guidance for the project is provided by a 10-member advisory board comprised by people with lived or living experience of substance use, and the project guiding Elder Jo-Ann Saddleback.

Methods

The P5 Project YXE is a patient-oriented project that engages a community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) approach. Data collection is done through qualitative interviews and open-ended surveys. These sources will be thematically coded for data analysis. These methods of data collection and analysis offer an explicit, yet flexible approach to collection, coding, and interpretation of data that aligns with the principles of CBPAR.

This approach amplifies the voices of PWLLE, experts who can best identify and inform changes to service provision and policy. The researchers aim to conduct 60 interviews across three cohorts, 20 interviews per cohort. Cohorts reflect socioeconomic groupings to foster understanding about how education and income-level impact access to services and supports.

Research Questions

1. What do the **Perspectives** of PWLLE of problematic substance use reveal about the current nature of harm reduction or recovery services in Saskatchewan?
2. What are the actual **Pathways** of PWLLE of problematic substance use as they navigate harm reduction and recovery services?
3. What are the **Priorities** of PWLLE of problematic substance use for programs, services, and policy changes?

PWLLE = People with Lived and Living Experience

Community Partners



We are so grateful to collaborate with Prairie Harm Reduction & OUTSaskatoon!



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Research Objectives

1. **To Consolidate and Compare** perspectives of PWLLE of problematic substance use regarding their experiences of accessing harm reduction and recovery service supports in Saskatoon or Saskatchewan
2. **To Identify** priorities for equitable community and health system supports for PWLLE of problematic substance use
3. **To Map and Identify** gaps in the current pathways of care for PWLLE of problematic substance use
4. **To Identify** short- and long- term actionable changes to policies impacting PWLLE of problematic substance use
5. **To Communicate/Disseminate** findings in ways that: honour the stories of lived and living experience, diminish stigma, and create a public dialogue

Learning Together

The P5 Project YXE has just completed data collection, but we are already sharing resources and our research process!

You can access our environmental scan of substance use services in Saskatchewan by visiting the project website or access a rapid evidence review addressing the potential impacts of decriminalization of personal possession of substances in Saskatoon.



Our team will continue providing information requested by the communities we serve!

Knowledge Translation

We look forward to mobilizing our study findings for even more opportunities for learning together as the next phase of the project – knowledge translation – begins.

Our advisors are already brainstorming!



Policy Brief



Social Media Campaign



Brochures



Community Song



Escape Room



Walking Tour