

Feasibility of psychosocial interventions for preventing blood borne virus infection in people who inject drugs

ID number

Type of service recruited from

- ₁ Drug treatment service
₂ Needle Exchange
₃ Sexual Health Clinic
₄ Hostel/ Homeless service

Gender

- ₁ Male
₂ Female
₃ Transgender

Age

Time interview started

Time interview finished

As we previously discussed, we are doing this research to inform the development of an intervention to reduce blood borne viruses and increase knowledge about how you get or pass on HIV, Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B among people who inject drugs in the UK. Today I want to talk to you about injecting and sexual risk behaviours among people who inject drugs to work out whether there is a need for an intervention and also ask you about the kind of intervention you would find useful and acceptable.

Before we start, I just wanted to check

Have you injected drugs at least once in the past 4 weeks?

Yes ₁ No ₀ **(if no, thank and end interview)**

What drug/s have you injected at least once in the past 4 weeks?

(Interviewer: Read all options and mark all relevant responses)

- | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|----|---|--------------------------|----|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Heroin | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Cocaine | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | Crack cocaine | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Methadone | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | Amphetamines | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 | Methamphetamines | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 |
| Hallucinogenics | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 | Benzodiazepines | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 | Novel Psychoactive
Drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10 |
| Cannabis | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11 | Steroids or other
performance
enhancing drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12 | Other (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13 |

Specify:

(Interviewer: Note if participant has only injected steroids or other performance enhancing drugs, thank participant and end interview)

What drugs did you inject most often in the past 4 weeks?

- | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|----|---|--------------------------|----|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Heroin | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Cocaine | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | Crack cocaine | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Methadone | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | Amphetamines | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 | Methamphetamines | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 |
| Hallucinogenics | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 | Benzodiazepines | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 | Novel Psychoactive
Drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10 |
| Cannabis | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11 | Steroids or other
performance
enhancing drugs | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12 | Other (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13 |

Specify:

How long have you been injecting drugs for?

< 2 years _0 ≥ 2 years _1

Are you currently receiving treatment for problems related to drug use?
(Interviewer: Mark only one response)

Yes, opiate substitution _1 Yes, other _2 No _0

What are your current living arrangements? (Interviewer: Read all options and mark relevant responses)

- | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Alone | <input type="checkbox"/> | 0 | With sexual partner
and children | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | With sexual
partner alone | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| With children
alone | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | With parents | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | With family | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| With friends/
flatmates | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 | Homeless | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 | No stable
arrangements | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 |
| Other living
arrangements | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10 | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11 | | | |

Specify:

Section 1. Bloodborne viruses

I would now like to ask you about bloodborne viruses such as HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C

- 1.1. **Can I ask you what you know or what you've heard about how people get blood borne viruses, like HIV, Hep C and Hep B? [probe for HIV, Hepatitis B and C]**
- 1.2. **From what you know or you've heard, which do you think is the easiest virus to get? Why is that?**
- 1.3. **From what you know or you've heard, which do you feel would be the worst virus to get/have? Why is that?**
- 1.4. **Do you feel you are at any risk of HIV, Hepatitis B and/or C? Why is that? Why not? [probe for personal risk perception/risk behaviours engaged in]**

Section 2. Injecting drug use

I would now like to ask you about injecting risk behaviours.

- 2.1. **Under what circumstances do you think people who inject drugs might be more likely to take risks when injecting (e.g. sharing needles, cookers, water etc in the preparation and administration of drugs for injection)?(Alternative phrasings if needed: Are there certain situations in which people who inject drugs might be more likely to share needles**

or syringes? Are there certain situations in which they might be more like to share other equipment such as filters, cookers, or water? *Explore who injecting with/ context (location, intimate partner violence etc) in which risks occur – injecting couples, dyads, groups and therefore explore sharing of equipment/ preparation/‘aftermath’ – including potential cleaning and disposal of equipment and potential risk of transmission. [Explore any issues of power and/or dominance in injecting dyads/groups, gender, sex work, withdrawal and negative mood].*

Some probes I have found useful:

Where would you normally be when you are injecting? Would you ever inject anywhere else?

Would you ever inject in the company of other people?

Do you/have you ever needed help injecting? Why is/was that?

Have you ever had to help someone else inject? Why is/was that? How do you/did you feel about helping them?

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you have had to share injecting equipment?

Are there certain people you’d feel comfortable sharing equipment with?

When you have had to share, would you always get an opportunity to clean the equipment?

How would you normally clean it?

Are there certain times when people are more likely to share injecting equipment?

Who disposes of the equipment and how is it disposed of?

2.2. Do you think there are different risks involved in preparing and injecting different drugs (e.g. heroin vs. cocaine or methamphetamine)? What are the different risks?

2.3. Are there times, however rare, when you think people who inject drugs lose control over how they inject? If so describe these circumstances/ drugs used etc

- *What about you, is that the same for you?*

2.4. What help or support [ie explore about more knowledge, more motivation, more skills?] do you think could be given to people who inject drugs to help them inject more safely? [PROBE: barriers/ what would motivate them]

Probes: Is there anything that might stop people from changing or make it difficult for them to change?

What might help people in that situation?

- *Have you ever had any help or support or education around safer injecting? Can you tell me about it and what you found most/least helpful*

Now I would like to talk about sexual risks for blood borne viruses

Section 3. Sexual behaviour

3.1. Do you have intimate relationships with....?

Men	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁
Women	<input type="checkbox"/> ₀
Both men and women	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂

3.2. Under what circumstances do you think people who inject drugs might be more likely to have unsafe sex or engage in riskier sexual practice? (Alternative phrasing if needed: Are there certain situations in which people who inject drugs might be more likely to have unprotected sex or engage in riskier sex?) (Explore who having sex with/ context (sex trading, CHEMSEX, intimate partner violence, withdrawal, negative mood etc) in which risks occur. [Explore any issues of power and/or dominance, gender].

- *What about you, is that the same for you?*

Probes:

What do you think stops people using a condom or having safer sex in these situations?

Would it be easy do you think for you/others in that situation to use a condom if you wanted?

3.3. What help or support [ie explore about more knowledge, more motivation, more skills?] do you think could be given to people who inject drugs to help them have safer sex? [PROBE: barriers/ what would motivate them]

Probes: Is there anything that might stop people from changing or make it difficult for them to change?

What might help people in that situation?

- *Have you ever had any help or support or education around safer sex? Can you tell me about it and what you found most/least helpful*

Section 4. Development/need for intervention

The next stage of this project is to develop a specific intervention to help people who inject drugs reduce the risk of getting or passing on blood borne viruses such as HIV, and hepatitis B and C, by reducing drug and sexual risk

behaviours and increasing knowledge around transmission and re-infection. Interventions might include i) information to increase knowledge, ii) teach skills to practice safer injecting and sex, and iii) motivate people to practise safer injecting and sex. We would like to ask you whether you would find such an intervention useful and if so, what kind of intervention you would find useful.

4.1. What sort of information/skills do you think the intervention should focus on to help people who inject drugs to practice safer drug use and safer sex? [PROBE for whether this is already happening/ experience of interventions in the past they have attended]

4.2. Would you participate in something like that? Why/ why not?

4.3. Who do you think would be best to deliver it? [PROBE peer, drug worker, Needle Exchange, GP etc.] Why is that? Where do you think it would be best delivered?

4.4. How do you think it should be delivered? [PROBE in group, individual sessions, by leaflet, mobile app, online etc.] Why?

4.5. How many sessions do you think would be realistic? And how long should they be?

4.6. Sometimes it is difficult to get people to attend interventions, what do you think some of the barriers might be to people attending? What could be done to improve uptake of this type of intervention?

Thank you so much for taking part that is the end of the interview. Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered?