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SUBSTANCE ABUSE DEPARTMENT

The Rapid Assessment and Response guide on injecting drug use (IDU-RAR)



SOCIAL CHANGE AND MENTAL HEALTH
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

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(WHO/SAB)

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FOREWORD:

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION SUBSTANCE ABUSE DEPARTMENT STUDY ON DRUG INJECTING

This guide was developed for the World Health Organization Substance Abuse Department, Phase II Study on Drug Injecting. It has been designed to be used in any setting where a rapid assessment of drug injecting is required. This guide is still being developed and suggestions for changes should be sent to the authors and to WHO-SAB.

Aims of the WHO study on drug injecting

The aim of the WHO Drug Injecting Study is to facilitate the reduction of adverse health consequences of injecting drug use (IDU).

The primary objectives of the study are:

- (a) to assess the extent, nature and diffusion of IDU
- (b) to assess the extent of adverse health consequences of IDU, especially HIV infection and also other blood-borne infections and overdose
- (c) to assess risk behaviours associated with drug injection leading to adverse health consequences
- (d) to identify and initiate effective interventions to reduce the adverse health consequences associated with drug injection
- (e) to identify and initiate effective interventions to influence transitions to less harmful routes of drug administration

To achieve the aim and objectives, the study employs Rapid Assessment and Response methods (RAR) (covered in this guide), and surveys of drug users including testing for HIV-1 and hepatitis B/C infection.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide inevitably draws on the work of a vast number of people and organizations who have been involved in work on injecting drug use and HIV infection over the last decade. It has been heavily influenced by others who have worked on rapid assessments, not only of drug use but across a wide range of fields including malaria control, water sanitation and hygiene control. It has also been influenced by many methodologists, especially in sociology, anthropology, epidemiology, and evaluation research. As such it is a distillation of 'current wisdom' about applied research methods. We would therefore like to thank numerous people who have directly or indirectly influenced or contributed to the production of this guide.

In particular we would like to thank Dr Andrew Ball, Dr Gundo Weiler, Sujata Rana, Martin Donoghoe, Professor Lenore Manderson, Dr Ann Larson, Dr Swarup Sarkar, Dr Lev Khodakevich, and Dr Sam Friedman, for help with developing the guide; the United Nations International Drug Control Programme; Hazel Mann, Robert Lilly, Nicky Metrebian, Matthew Hickman, Betsy Thom, Gillian Hunter, Alan Quirk, Paul Turnbull, Rob Harnett, Silvia Mazabel and Linda Cusick, for comments and other help in its production; Martin Frischer, Roland Simon, Antónia Domingo-Salvany, Clive Richardson, Irene Agyepong, Bertha Aryee, and Helen Dzikunu for use of extracts from their work.

This draft document is complemented by:

WHO/SAB (1988) The Rapid Assessment and Response guide on substance use and sexual risk behaviour (Draft for Field Testing). Geneva: WHO/SAB

WHO/SAB (1998) The Rapid Assessment and Response guide on psychoactive substance use among especially vulnerable young people (Draft for Field Testing), Geneva: WHO/SAB

It is recommended that the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) guidelines on Drug Abuse Rapid Situation Assessments and Responses (1999, ISBN 92-1-148116-3), prepared by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), be considered by those responsible for undertaking and coordinating rapid situation assessments and by those involved in developing or implementing interventions. A draft of these guidelines was consulted during the development of this guide.

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RAPID ASSESSMENT AND RESPONSE GUIDE ON INJECTING DRUG USE

Summary

This chapter gives an overview of the aims of the Rapid Assessment and Response Guide on Injecting Drug Use - and instructions on how to use it. It is necessary to read this chapter before reading the rest of the guide.

Aims

This guide describes the Rapid Assessment and Response approach (RAR) that is used to undertake rapid assessments of drug injecting and its adverse health consequences.

Audience

It is designed for those who wish to assess, within a city or region, the current situation regarding drug injecting, and who wish to use this information to develop interventions to reduce the adverse health consequences of injecting.

It should be used by principal investigators - i.e. those who have overall responsibility for undertaking a rapid assessment. It should also be read by those who have responsibility for field work. Parts of it will be selected by principal investigators and used in training research and field staff.

Objectives

The objectives of the guide are to:

- describe the need for undertaking rapid assessments of drug injecting and its health consequences, in order to assist the development of appropriate interventions
- outline the key areas to be investigated
- describe the rationale for using RAR
- show how the guide can help a team undertaking a rapid assessment
- describe various methods used for undertaking a rapid assessment
- describe various sources of data used in a rapid assessment
- describe different modules for assessing key issues
- describe how the rapid assessment can be used to develop an Action Plan

Complementary documents

This guide is complemented by a WHO/SAB guide for undertaking surveys of the prevalence of HIV-1 infection and of the characteristics and risk behaviours of IDUs. References have not been given in the text. A useful source book for principal investigators is:

G.V. Stimson, D. Des Jarlais and A. Ball (Eds), 1998, *Drug Injecting and HIV Infection: Global Dimensions and Local Responses*. London: Taylor & Francis.

It is recommended that the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) guidelines on Drug Abuse Rapid Situation Assessments and Responses (1999, ISBN 92-1-148116-3), prepared by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), be considered by those responsible for undertaking and coordinating rapid situation assessments and by those involved in developing or implementing interventions. A draft of these guidelines was consulted during the development of this guide.

How to use this guide

The chapters are grouped into three sections. The guide is available on disk in Word for Windows v 7.0a which enables sections to be printed out and adapted for local use.

Section 1 Background

Section 1 provides a background to the Rapid Assessment and Response guide and rapid assessments.

Chapter 2 outlines the relationship between the RAR guide and rapid assessment. Chapter 3 covers the spread of injecting drug use, its adverse consequences for health, and public health approaches to reducing drug-related harm. Chapter 4 identifies the key issues that are covered by a rapid assessment. Chapter 5 looks at the principles that distinguish rapid assessment methods from other social science approaches. Chapter 6 provides an overview of the principles of public health interventions with examples of interventions which have been applied to the issue of injecting drug use. Chapter 7 outlines the need and importance of community participation and advocacy and provides an example of how to mobilize the community around the issue of injecting drug use. Chapter 8 outlines the practical issues involved in organizing a rapid assessment and response with a step-by-step description of the

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