

PROUD

OUT LOUD!

Volume 1: June 20, 2013

Welcome to the PROUD out LOUD Newsletter

PROUD OUT LOUD is a newsletter produced to communicate research findings from the Proud Study, as well as relevant information for our community members and partner organizations. This current issue is an introduction into who we are and what we are about, and presents some preliminary findings from the first three months of our research.

What is PROUD?

Participatory Research in Ottawa: Understanding Drugs (PROUD) Study is a community-based research project that aims to understand the risk of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C, and to improve access to health care among people who use drugs in Ottawa. A **Community Advisory Committee (CAC)**, consisting of people with lived consumer experience, allies and academic researchers have been meeting since May 2012 to plan the PROUD Study. The CAC guides all aspects of this community-based project and ensures that research themes and questions investigated are identified by the local community of people who use drugs.

Community Connections & DUAL

The **Drug User Advocacy League (DUAL)** is an essential part of the PROUD Study. As an independent group of drug consumers and ex-consumers that fight for harm reduction, education and against stigma in regards to drug use, **DUAL helps to maintain the community driven focus of PROUD.** The Chairperson of DUAL, and co-principal investigator on PROUD, has been instrumental in advocating for more user driven services in Ottawa. **DUAL welcomes any and all input or assistance from the community.**

dual
www.dualottawa.org

**D. O. P. (e)
DUAL-Oasis-PROUD
drop-in** is being held
at **216 Murray** for
current drug users on
Fridays 9:30-11:30am



Drug Use & Harm Reduction

A critical component of the PROUD Study is understanding drug use and harm reduction practices among people who use drugs in Ottawa.

Harm reduction is any strategy or service that provides for drug users' health needs without requiring them to stop using drugs. Examples are needle exchanges or distribution of new crack pipes.

Our information collected on drug use and harm reduction is important to help us determine how to best provide community health services & to ensure drug consumers get the best treatment.

Homelessness and the Law

Housing and homelessness are very important issues for PROUD participants and for people who have used drugs. An area that is being explored in an additional research project is how "red zones", or being barred from particular areas by police, affects people who use drugs.

Health, HCV & HIV

Understanding the health needs that are most important to people who use drugs is a main objective of the PROUD Study. We know that people who use drugs have a high risk of HIV, Hepatitis C and overdose. One of our goals in this project is to provide services that are easy to access for people who are HIV-positive or Hepatitis C positive. We want to have health services in places that work for people who use drugs. Once HIV is diagnosed, it is so much easier to treat than it used to be. We want people to access treatment early and to live long and healthy. Under the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, and in partnership with Ottawa Public Health, **over 200 HIV point-of-care tests have been performed by PROUD researchers, making our community healthier!**

Some PROUD Stats

Recruitment began in March 2013, with the goal of enrolling 1200 participant. As of June 1st, we have completed over 300 surveys.

Community:

- **Of the 300+ PROUD participants, more than 60% would be interested in being a peer worker.**
 - **40% have received support from a peer worker in the past.**
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Harm Reduction:

- **80% of survey participants who inject drugs would use a supervised injection facility if one were opened.**
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Homelessness and the Law:

- **Over 88% of current participants have been homeless.**
 - **37% of participants have been 'red zoned' from a particular area.**
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Health:

- **Nearly 70% of participants knew someone who has died from an overdose.**
- **Of the 66 participants who have overdosed, the ambulance was called less than half the time.**
- **48% of PROUD participants have tested positive for Hep C.**
- **84% of participants have ever tested for HIV.**
- **80% agreed to an HIV point-of-care test.**

Special thanks to our:

Community Advisory Committee (Kelly F., Chris D., Dan M., Rick S., Tyler P., Hana D., Alana M., Tarah H., Caleb C., Sean L.)

PROUD participants for supporting our project and sharing their stories

Community Partners: DUAL, Ottawa Public Health, OASIS, Ottawa Inner City Health, ACO, Shepherds of Good Hope

Funding received from: SRC CIHR (#HCP-97106), The Ottawa Hospital, Department of Medicine and Division of Infectious Diseases

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