

# Report reveals impact of public injecting

May 20 2013

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New research undertaken on the streets of Richmond and Abbotsford has revealed increasing health risks for people who inject drugs and significant community concern over the impact of injecting in public areas.

The Burnet Institute report, North Richmond Public Injecting Impact Study, by Dr Robyn Dwyer, Professor Robert Power and Professor Paul Dietze was released today.

The researchers identified increasing high rates of heroin-related overdose attendances by Ambulance Victoria. The City of Yarra had the highest number of attendances of any local government in Melbourne. There was a four-fold increase in the past two years in the collection of needles and syringes from street-sweeps; and a lack of access to sterile injecting equipment after hours and on weekends leading to a medium to

high risk of blood-borne [virus infection](#) amongst people who re-used syringes.

Burnet's Professor Paul Dietze, jointly based in Monash University's Department of Epidemiology and [Preventive Medicine](#), said new public health responses were needed to address the public injecting issues in North Richmond.

"Our research identifies two main priorities; to improve access to harm reduction services and materials, and a need to improve public amenity for those who live and work in the area," Professor Dietze said.

"Effective public health responses require whole-of-community, holistic strategies that balance the requirements of health with those of law enforcement to reduce harm to individuals and the community."

Among the report's 13 recommendations are the need to extend hours and coverage of needle syringe programs to ensure 24-hour access; greater collaboration between Police and local services to encourage service use; and the need to encourage people who inject drugs to take control of their [health](#) and safety.

Data collected included structured observations, interviews with key stakeholders (including local traders [health workers](#), welfare and community workers, police, people who inject drugs and residents), and secondary indicators such as needle and syringe disposal, and Ambulance Victoria data.

**More information:** [www.burnet.edu.au/news/249\\_reporting\\_in\\_north\\_richmond](http://www.burnet.edu.au/news/249_reporting_in_north_richmond)

Provided by Monash University

Citation: Report reveals impact of public injecting (2013, May 20) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-05-reveals-impact.html>

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