

# Public support only moderate for opioid harm reduction strategies

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(HealthDay)—Stigmatizing attitudes toward those who use opioids are

associated with lower support for two evidence-based opioid harm reduction strategies, according to a study published in the June issue of *Preventive Medicine*.

Emma E. McGinty, Ph.D., from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, and colleagues conducted a web-based survey of a nationally representative sample of 1,004 U.S. adults to examine [support](#) for two evidence-based harm reduction strategies for combating the [opioid](#) epidemic, as well as attitudes to those who use opioids. Respondents' support for legalizing safe consumption sites and syringe service programs in their communities were measured.

The researchers found that 29 and 39 percent of respondents supported legalizing safe consumption sites and legalizing syringe service programs, respectively. High levels of stigmatizing attitudes were reported toward people who use opioids: 16 and 28 percent were willing to have a person using opioids marry into their family and to have a person using opioids start working closely with them on a job, respectively. Persons using opioids were rated as deserving (versus worthless) and strong (versus weak) by 27 and 10 percent of respondents, respectively. There was a correlation for stigmatizing attitudes with lower support for legalizing safe consumption sites and syringe service programs.

"Development and evaluation of evidence-based messaging strategies to reduce stigma and educate the public about effective harm reduction strategies should be a public health priority," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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