Opioid Crisis Knowledge Synthesis

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Discoveries for life / Découvertes pour la vie
Research in Substance Use

CIHR supports Canada’s top researchers to build the knowledge and evidence base supporting the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy.

This provides evidence that can be integrated into health policy and clinical practice to effectively protect and promote the health and safety of Canadians.

Over the last five years, CIHR invested more than $88 million in addiction research, including nearly $22 million in problematic opioid use.
Objective:
To inform policy and decision-making in order to address the most urgent needs of the opioid crisis.

The evidence produced is informing the activities of stakeholders on the front lines of the opioid crisis by including stakeholders and policy makers at all levels of government.

Systematic and Scoping Reviews

$1.9M invested in 22 projects
Opioid Knowledge Synthesis End of Grant Workshop

January 22, 2019

Objective:
To increase the application of knowledge related to policy and decision-making through dissemination of the results of the syntheses to primary knowledge users and other stakeholders.

- In collaboration with the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction
Workshop Format: Knowledge Syntheses Presentations

Rapid-fire presentation style for each study

Four themes:

- Harm Reduction
- Vulnerable Populations, Ethics and Social Determinants of Health
- Opioid Use Disorder Treatment and Prescribing Practices
- Pain Management

Each session was followed by a policy-maker’s perspective and panel discussion where the findings were discussed by the panel and the audience.
Workshop Format: Panel Discussions

• Following the knowledge syntheses presentations, the workshop facilitated three panel discussions.

• Useful for **knowledge exchange, and identifying knowledge gaps**.

• Topics included:
  
  – **Chronic Pain Management**
    
    • Current priorities, knowledge gaps, and best practices of pain management in Canada
  
  – **Learning from People with Lived Experiences**
    
    • Addressing stigma, navigating the health care system, and barriers to treatment
  
  – **Barriers to Implementation**
    
    • Advice and strategies from the many experts in the room to overcome specific implementation challenges and prioritize efforts
Invited Participants

More than 70 participants

Researchers:
From 12 Universities across Canada representing each of the 22 funded teams

Knowledge Users:
- Community organizations
- Chronic pain community
- People with lived experience (PWLE)
- Health professional associations
- Indigenous representatives
- Federal and municipal government representatives

More than 70 participants
Key Discussion Points:

• **Rapid, innovative and ethical** responses are required to address mortality rates, for example:
  - access to **safe opioid supply**
  - decriminalization of illicit drugs

• **Stigma** is still a major barrier

• **Indigenous communities** remain among the most vulnerable populations and warrant more attention/investment

• **Engaging policy makers** in research is critical to increasing its impact
Key Discussion Points (cont’d)

• **Best practices in pain management** need to be identified and disseminated

• **Physician training** is required for addiction treatment (including relapse) and pain management

• PWLE need to be **involved meaningfully** at the design of a research project

• The dominant narrative is often around the importance of pharmacological interventions but **more focus should be on behavioural care**
Key Messages

• It is beneficial to incorporate views from PWLE into investments **at the beginning** to ensure a strategic and relevant response.

• Pain and addiction are on the **same side of one coin**: Issues of pain and substance use disorders cannot be separated.

• **Behavioural therapy** offers promising results but needs to be encouraged by physicians and **made accessible** to all patients.

• Giving people purpose and **helping them to be well**, functional and socio-culturally connected is important.
Conclusion and Next Steps

**Conclusion:**
Workshop successfully provided a venue for:

- ✓ Information sharing
- ✓ Identifying barriers and facilitators to implementation
- ✓ Networking between researchers, policy-makers and other stakeholders

**Next steps:**

- Workshop Summary Report will be available in the coming months; Interested researchers are pursuing a joint publication
- CIHR continues to work with Health Canada to address knowledge gaps and generate needed evidence to address the crisis
- Possible future funding for innovative pilot feasibility studies
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