

NODUS Needs Assessment

Northern Ontario Drug Use and Services Needs Assessment

What is the study?

Under the umbrella of the Ontario CRISM Node Team - part of the pan-Canadian CRISM Network for improved substance use interventions and systems, we are planning to conduct a community-based use and needs assessment of services and interventions for youth and young adults who use drugs in several communities across Northern Ontario.

What is the purpose of the study?

- To understand the characteristics of youth and young adults who use drugs, such as the drugs they use, their health, and their social characteristics.
- To learn what services and interventions are used by young drug users, what service gaps exist, and what barriers they face to accessing services.
- To provide information about young drug users' intervention and service use, gaps and needs to service providers, agencies and systems on different levels in Northern Ontario communities.

Who will participate in the study?

- People between the age of 14 and 25 years old who regularly use street drugs
- Local 'key informants' (e.g., service/treatment providers, health officials, police).

What does study participation involve?

1. Young drug users interested in participation will briefly be screened for study eligibility
2. Eligible participants will complete a brief survey, and 'focus group' discussion with 3-4 other youth who use drugs. Survey and discussion topics include:
 - personal health, drug use and service use
 - drug use patterns in the community
 - service and treatment availability, barriers and needs

Key informants will complete a brief interview.

Will participants be compensated?

Youth will be given a \$20 gift card for completing the survey and focus group.

Is the study anonymous & confidential?

We will not ask for young drug users' names or other personal identifiers and we will fully protect the confidentiality of all information participants share with

us. We will not tell anyone who participated and focus group participants will be asked not to tell others what was discussed or who attended. The study will follow a protocol approved by the Research Ethics Board at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH).

What will the role of community partners be?

We will conduct the study in close collaboration with a community-based partner serving the target population in each of the study sites. We hope that our community partners will help us disseminate information about the study to prospective participants and help us with some of the basic study logistics. We expect to conduct most of the study activities (including focus groups) in the CAMH 'Mobile Lab' which we hope to locate on or near our community-partners' premises. Overall, however, we are keen to work collaboratively with each of our local community partners to figure out how to best and most meaningfully make this study work.

How will the community receive feedback and benefit from the study?

Each community partner will receive a report on the results of the needs assessment. In addition, we will report back on the study findings to each individual study community. We will also feed this information to service providers, agencies and systems relevant to Northern Ontario communities.

Who is running the study?

The study will be conducted by a team of renowned researchers, system/policy representatives and community-based members of OCRINT. Dr. Pamela Sabioni is the study lead investigator, email: pamela.sabioni@camh.ca or tel. 1-800-463-2338 ext. 33094.

camh

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