Effective Implementation of King County Safe Injection Sites

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# ABSTRACT

March 7th 2017. This research paper analyzes the trend of heroin use and overdose in King County, and attempts to demonstrate how the creation of a safe injection site in the area could alleviate the problem. Finally, this paper proposes guidelines for the implementation of said site to maximize its effectiveness.

## Author Keywords

Public Health; Overdose; Heroin; King County

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# Implications of Results

King County health board officials have recently voted to implement two safe injection facilities in the county. As demonstrated in our research, we have found that these sites would be effective at preventing deaths due to opioid overdose, as well as help alleviate the impact that the opioid crisis has had on the community. Culturally and geographically similar to the Seattle area, Vancouver BC has achieved very promising results with their Insite safe injection site, and we believe the Seattle area would notice a similar impact.

We hope that our findings will help influence the voting public to take action, and vote for public officials that support the site. Our hope is that our findings on the widening scope of the problem will also convince more people to take action and make a difference in their community. Our findings about the switch from prescription drug use to heroin use should also be considered in policy making, it is important for lawmakers to know that their well intentioned move to decrease prescription drug use has had unintended consequences.

The final portion of this project gives some guidelines for how such a site should be implemented to maximize its effectiveness. Our analysis of the Seattle Police Incident reports has shown that there are two main epicenters of overdose in the Seattle Area. We believe that officials in charge of building the site should use this data to help place the site in an area that would draw the most injection drug users out from the streets, while being cautious about the impact it may have on the surrounding community. We believe our location choices of the SODO district and University District meet these criteria, and should be looked at in the planning process of the County. Officials should carefully study the findings of Insite, and look to improve the process of getting incoming users placed in addiction treatment programs. are formatted using the Normal style.

## FUTURE WORK

While we were able to deduce some interesting insights with available data, our project could have greatly benefited from access to large data sets from King County and the CDC. We made requests to access their data on multiple occasions, but the time it would take them to get it to use was not inline with our time frame. We could draw many more interesting conclusions, such as rates of addiction across different demographic and changes in types of opioid abuse, if we had access to the large mortality database at the CDC. While we were able to access the some of the data through a hacky Python script, it did not include the correct cause labeling or geographic encoding to make it useful in our project. Access to King County death records could have also been beneficial.

Machine learning could also be implemented to look at past crime reports and mortality data, and project into the future to see how things will change, and how policy makers can plan for said changes. This type of model could help choose a better location for building the site, and could even help authorities predict where a future overdose death might occur.

If we truly want to accomplish the mission of our project proposal, which was to influence public opinion in support of safe injection sites, it would be important to distribute and market our research so that it reaches a large number of people. Getting our research in the hands of Washington politicians would bring attention to the scale of the problem at hand, and lead them to support resources that contribute to a solution.**Adding and Removing Author Fields Above**

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