



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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LANCET LETTER EXPOSES SERIOUS ERRORS IN VANCOUVER INJECTION ROOM STUDY

The current edition of Lancet, one of the world's most prestigious medical journals, has published a letter which gives evidence that contradicts the findings of an April 2011 study which found that Vancouver's Insite had reduced overdose deaths in its immediate vicinity by 35%.

The flawed study was influential in the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in September 2011 to permit the Vancouver Drug Injection Site to remain in operation.

An international team including three Australian specialists has found serious errors in the study, conducted by chiefly Canadian researchers, which negate its claims. Their letter to Lancet, requesting retraction of the study, documents clear evidence that the researchers knew of a zero-tolerance policing crackdown commencing the year Insite opened and continuing to this day which reduced drug use indicators in the policed area by 46%, but failed to declare that knowledge. This fact directly skewed the study. The letter also demonstrates that there has been an increasing trend in overdose deaths in Vancouver and the Downtown Eastside area surrounding Insite since 2002, the year before Insite opened, despite the study erroneously claiming decreases of 9% in the larger Vancouver area.

The current Lancet issue also contains a response by the researchers in which they repeat their previously expressed claim that the police crackdown, starting 6 months before Insite opened, did not continue through to 2005, the end of their study period. However, it has been demonstrated that the same document cited by the researchers to end the crackdown in 2003 does in fact record that the crackdown was still in operation in August 2004, when this review of the initial 6-month trial period was being written.

The Editor-in-Chief of Lancet is a colleague of two of these Canadian researchers, sharing membership in the same scientific board for a Drug Law Reform organization, the International Centre for Science in Drug Policy. We appreciate that the publishing of the letter's evidence by Lancet indicates that he is staying at arms-length from this issue, as should be expected.

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