

# Possible initiatives for avoiding drug-related deaths

Best et al. (2001)  
Preston et al. (2001)

BEST, D. et al

Overdosing on opiates

*Drug and Alcohol Findings*

Issue 5, 2001, p.4-18

# Improving mutual aid by and for drug users

- Training in overdose assessment
- Advising immediate emergency calls
- Training in effective calls
- Encouraging witnesses to stay until paramedic help arrives
- Training in and encouraging use of resuscitation
- As above for first aid
- Provision of naloxone

# Drug services/ Primary Care services

- Reorienting away from reduction towards maintenance
- Ongoing overdose risk assessments incorporated into individualised action plans
- Routine assessment of risk of suicide
- Assessing and addressing heavy drinking
- Training clients in self-protection and mutual aid
- Extending above to friends and families

# A & E services

- Providing contact and advice cards to known drug users
- Informing patient's GP or other principal care worker about the incident
- Establishing criteria which trigger referral to social, psychiatric and substance misuse services
- Screening admitted patients for drug use problems
- Offering services to those identified
- Employing specialist staff to implement the above tactics

# Prison services

- Drug testing that leads to treatment not punishment
- In-prison methadone maintenance
- Self-protection and mutual aid training
- 1-2-1 post-release taking to services

# 10 key strategies for reducing overdose deaths -

Andrew Preston, Neil Hunt and Jon Derricott

## Exchange Campaigns / DOH (2001)

1. First aid training for staff so they can pass on information
2. Information on overdose risk factors for injecting drug users
3. First aid training all injecting drug users, their relatives and friends
4. First aid training must be delivered by qualified and competent staff
5. Information on the risks of overdose for prisoners, rehab and detox facility leavers
6. Methadone treatment that keeps patients in treatment
7. Information about preventing and managing overdose from A & E
8. DATs ensure police involvement in emergency calls for overdoses prioritise preventing death, and police attend only when essential
9. Drug users know about policies on police involvement in overdose emergency calls
10. All ambulance crews should carry the opiate antagonist naloxone and be trained in how to use it