

The Limits of Harm Reduction?

Neil McKeganey

Centre for Substance Use Research

West of Scotland Science Park

Glasgow

Scotland

Principle of Harm Reduction

First Do No Harm

Hippocratic Oath

- I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgement but never with a view to injury and wrong-doing.

All medicines have potentially harmful side effects

- Agitation; constipation; dizziness; drowsiness; dry mouth; enlarged pupils; jitteriness; nausea; stuffy nose. Severe allergic reactions (rash; hives; itching; difficulty breathing; tightness in the chest or throat; swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue; unusual hoarseness; wheezing); chest pain; confusion; decreased coordination; drooling; fainting; fast, slow, or irregular heartbeat; mask-like face; muscle spasms of the face, neck, or back; muscle weakness; new or worsening mental or mood problems; numbness of an arm or leg; prolonged or painful erection; restlessness; seizures; severe or persistent constipation; severe or persistent dizziness, drowsiness, or headache; shuffling walk; sleeplessness; stiff or rigid muscles; sudden shortness of breath or vomiting; swelling of the hands, ankles, or feet; symptoms of infection (eg, fever, chills, persistent sore throat); symptoms of liver problems (eg, yellowing of the skin or eyes; dark urine; pale stools; severe or persistent nausea, stomach pain, or loss of appetite); tremor; trouble urinating; twisting or twitching movements; uncontrolled muscle movements (eg, twitching of the face or tongue; loss of balance; uncontrolled movements of arms or legs; trouble speaking, breathing, or swallowing); unusual bruising or bleeding; unusual eye movements or inability to move eyes; unusual or excessive sweating; unusual tiredness or weakness; unusually pale skin; vision changes (eg, blurred vision)

Two Hard Reduction Interventions

- Needle and Syringe Exchange
- Routes out of Prostitution

The Limits of Harm Reduction

- 1) Moral or Political Climate
- 2) The Cost Effectiveness of Harm Reduction
- 3) The Definition of Harm and Whose Harm to Reduce
- 4) The Balance Between Reducing Harm and Increasing Harm
- 5) The Limits of Any Agency to Intervene in Individual's Lives
- 6) The Balance of Harm and Pleasure
- 7) The Competence of Agency Staff
- 8) Longevity in Impact

Edinburgh GP Cohort (Kimber et al BMJ)

- Our results confirm the beneficial effects of opiate substitution treatment delivered in routine primary care over long periods. We found a dose-response relation between exposure to such treatment and survival before long term cessation. The overall median duration of injecting, however, was longer for injecting drug users who were exposed to opiate substitution treatment. (Kimber et al 2010)
- (O)piate substitution treatment was inversely related to the chances of achieving long term cessation. (Kimber et al 2010)

Conclusion

- Harm Reduction is Not a Call To Arms
- It is a set of principles and interventions which no less than any other set of public policy principles or intervention requires assessment in terms of cost, effectiveness, political acceptability, impact, duration, risks, requirements, desirability, timeliness and resources.

Conclusion

- Harm Reduction is Not a Call To Arms
- It is a set of principles and interventions which no less than any other set of public policy principles or intervention requires assessment in terms of cost, effectiveness, political acceptability, impact, duration, risks, requirements, desirability, timeliness and resources.

Conclusion

- Harm Reduction is Not a Call To Arms
- It is a set of principles and interventions which no less than any other set of public policy principles or intervention requires assessment in terms of cost, effectiveness, political acceptability, impact, duration, risks, requirements, desirability, timeliness and resources.

Conclusion

- Harm Reduction is Not a Call To Arms
- It is a set of principles and interventions which no less than any other set of public policy principles or intervention requires assessment in terms of cost, effectiveness, political acceptability, impact, duration, risks, requirements, desirability, timeliness and resources.

Conclusion

- Harm Reduction is Not a Call To Arms
- It is a set of principles and interventions which no less than any other set of public policy principles or intervention requires assessment in terms of cost, effectiveness, political acceptability, impact, duration, risks, requirements, desirability, timeliness and resources.