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Georgia Southern Assesses Syringe Exchange Program Access

February 12, 2016



Prior research has explored spatial access to syringe exchange programs (SEPs) among persons who inject drugs (PWID), but these studies have been based on limited data from short periods of time. No research has explored changes in spatial access to SEPs among PWID longitudinally.

The purpose of this research is to examine spatial access to SEPs among PWID who accessed services at a SEP in Washington, District of Columbia (DC), from 1996 to 2010. The geometric point distance estimation technique was used to calculate the mean walking distance PWID traveled from the centroid point of their zip code of home residence to the mobile exchange site where they accessed SEP services. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences in walking distance measures by year.

The results of this research suggest that the distance DC PWID traveled to access SEP services remained relatively constant (approximately 2.75 mi) from 2003 to 2008, but increased to just over 4 mi in 2010. This research provides support for expanding SEP operations such that PWID have increased access to their services. Increasing SEP accessibility may help resolve unmet needs among injectors.

[“Assessing Syringe Exchange Program Access among Persons Who Inject Drugs \(PWID\) in the District of Columbia,”](#) was published in the *Journal of Urban Health*.

Dr. Sean Allen, lead author, and Dr. Monica Ruiz, co-author, are with the Department of Prevention and Community Health at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at the Georgia Washington University. Dr. Jeff Jones, assistant professor of Health Policy and Management at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University was also a co-author.

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