

# **“What is all the damage the drugs are doing to my body?” A study of the effect of internalized stigma on harm reduction information-seeking behavior of people who use opioids in Kensington**

Margaret Sullivan

The School of Information at Florida State University, United States of America

mzimmerman@fsu.edu

## **ABSTRACT**

The United States is in the midst of an opioid crisis. The rate of overdose deaths rose 30% from 2019 to 2020, numbers that represent an escalation theorized to have been brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. *Over 112,000 people died of drug overdoses, mainly from synthetic opioids, like fentanyl, in 2023* ([CDC, 2024](#)).

This poster will display the results of a mixed-methods survey conducted with 101 people who use opioids in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia- commonly called the epicenter of the opioid crisis. Participants were asked about their experiences with getting harm reduction information and how those experiences interacted with their own feelings of stigma. They were asked about their harm reduction information needs, experiences looking for this information, and how best to provide it to them.

This poster will display current unpublished results to-date. The data analysis has revealed a meaningful impact on information-seeking behavior for participants who have heightened internalized stigma- even to their known detriment. This study is meaningful to stakeholders, including librarians, who may provide public health information to the community of people addicted to opioids. And, to the conference theme, what is more ethical than providing harm-reduction information to the addicted?

## **ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS**

information needs; information seeking; specific populations; social justice.

## **AUTHOR KEYWORDS**

opioid crisis; harm reduction information-seeking; internalized stigma; health information-seeking behavior.

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