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for Drugs and Drug Addiction

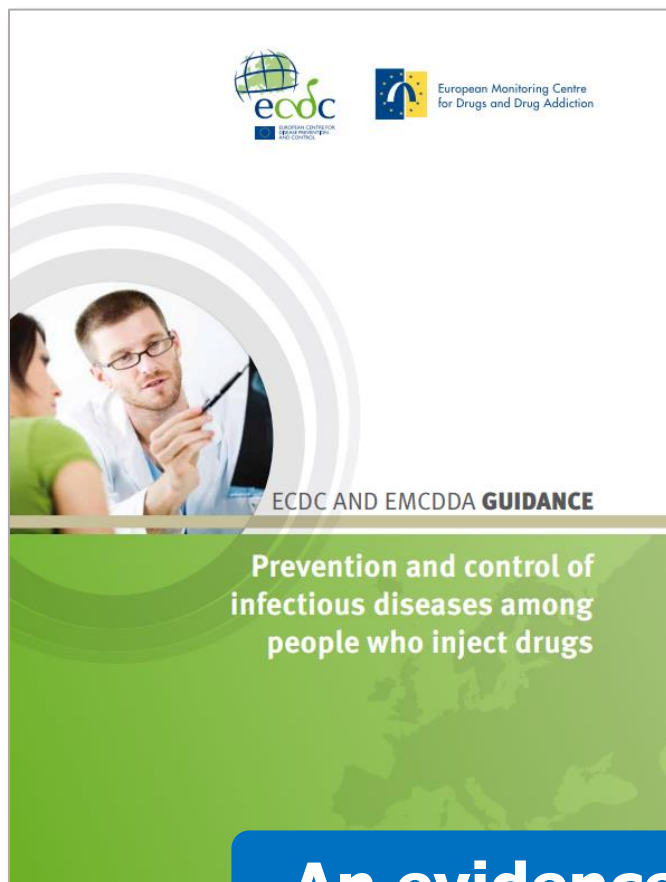
# Prevention and control of infectious diseases among people who inject drugs in 2022 and beyond

Janelle Sandberg (ECDC) and Anne Bergenström (EMCDDA)  
Joint ECDC and EMCDDA session, Lisbon Addictions, 23 November 2022

# Joint ECDC-EMCDDA Guidance on prevention and control of infectious diseases among people who inject drugs (2011)

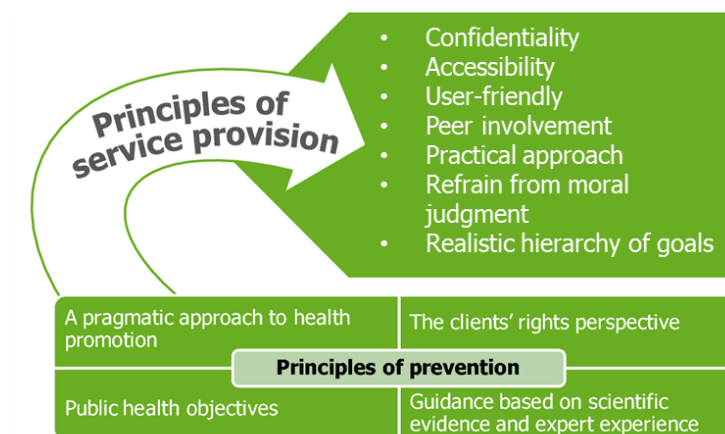


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Seven key interventions:

1. Injection equipment
2. Vaccinations
3. Drug dependence treatment
4. Testing for infections
5. Infectious disease treatment
6. Health promotion (e.g. safer injections, safer sex, BBVs)
7. Targeted delivery of services



**An evidence-based approach**

# Why the update?

- Epidemiology of drug-related infectious diseases – considerable morbidity, vulnerability of people who inject drugs
- Stakeholders survey feedback – need for evidence-based practice
- Insufficient or tentative level of evidence for several interventions in the 2011 evidence review – need for update
- Advances in therapies, testing technologies – new interventions
- Sustainable Development Goals, global elimination targets – people who inject drugs a priority population

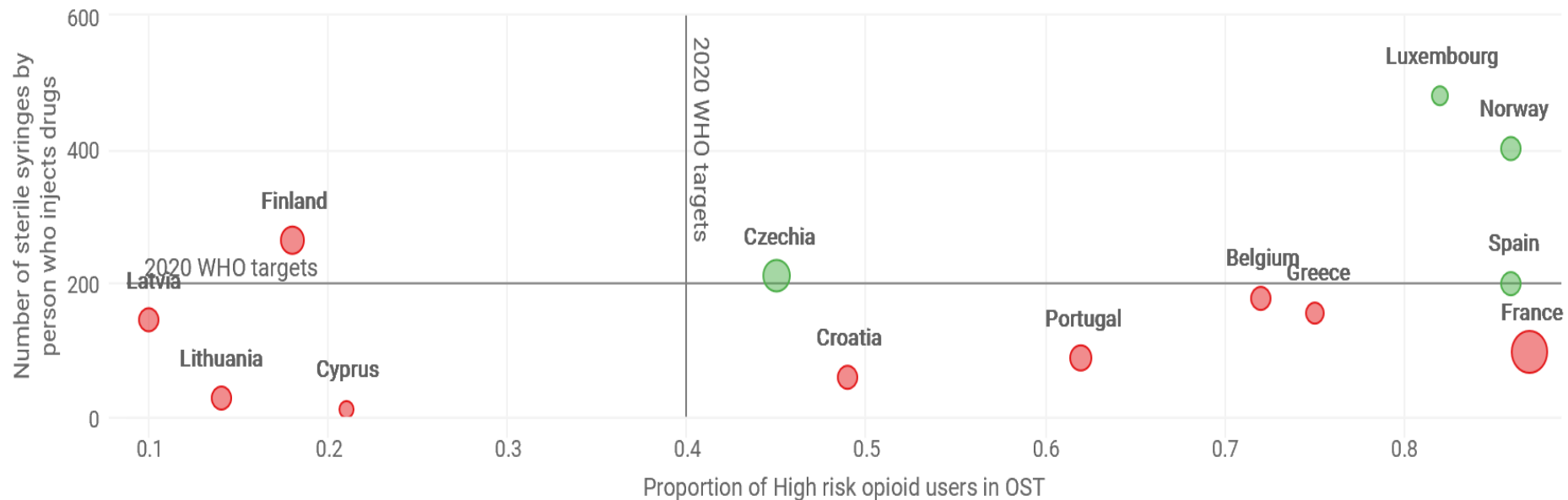
# Injecting drug use and infectious diseases

- IDU prevalence: 2.5 (UI: 2.0-3.5)/1,000 population 15-64 years, estimated 559,000 people who inject drugs in EU + Norway (2020)
- Remains the most commonly reported route of transmission for HCV
- High prevalence of active HCV infection (26-59%) and active HBV infection (0.8-17%) in people who inject drugs despite effective treatment for HCV and effective vaccine against HBV
- Downward trend of HIV notifications linked to IDU, but local outbreaks
- Also skin and soft tissue infections, STIs, tuberculosis and respiratory infections

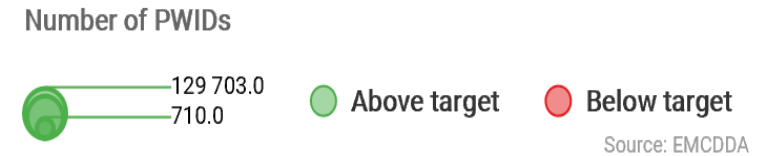
**IDU remains a major risk factor for acquiring blood-borne and other infectious diseases in the EU/EEA and ENP area**

# Coverage of key interventions

Figure 8. Number of clean syringes distributed per PWID and proportion of high-risk opioid users in opioid substitution treatment, EU countries, 2020 or latest available data

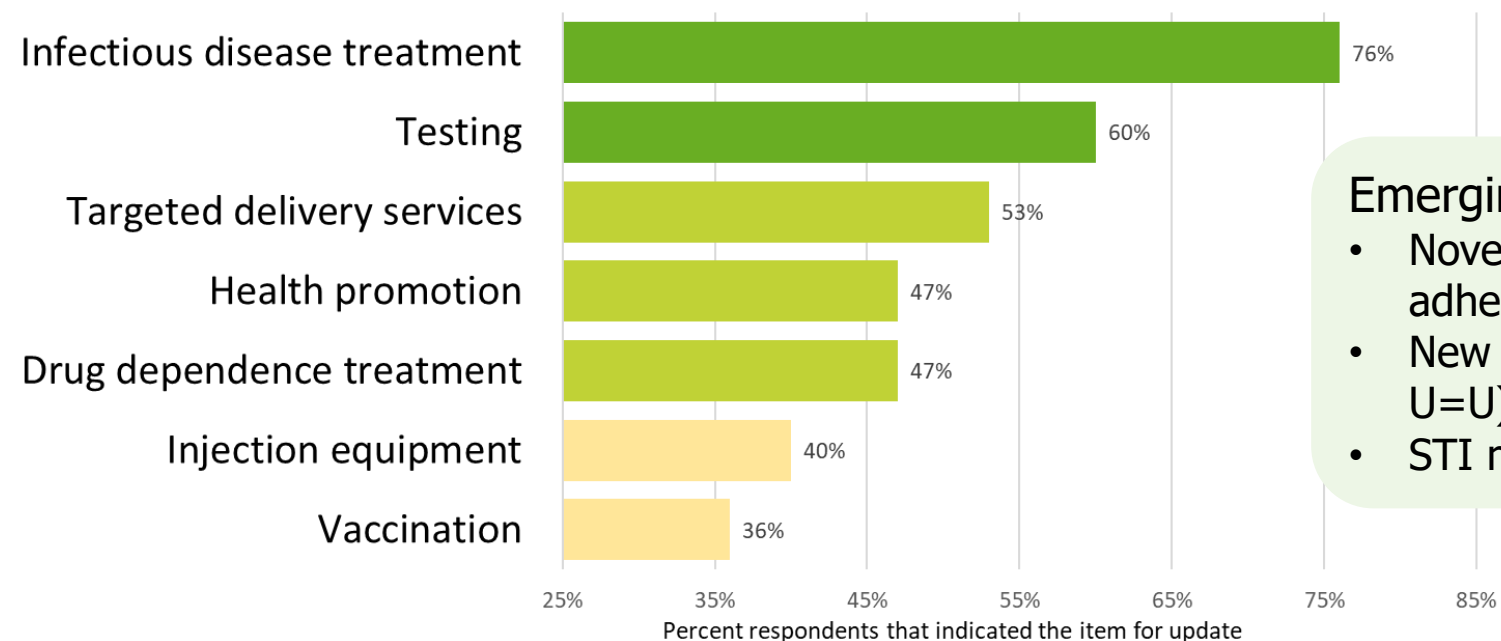


**Suboptimal harm reduction coverage**  
**Insufficient data on care continuum**



# Responding to stakeholders needs

- 2018 survey on guidance use and need for update
- Overall, 74% (45/61) respondents indicated a need for an update
- By key intervention:



## Emerging topics:

- Novel HCV therapies (DAAs); access and adherence to DAAs; prevention of reinfection
- New concepts in HIV prevention (PrEP, TasP, U=U); adherence to ART
- STI management

# Guidance update process



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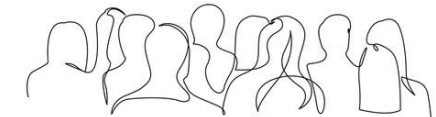


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GmbH



Public Health  
Scotland



## Preparatory work

- Identify areas for update (2018 survey, ECDC/EMCDDA expert opinion)
- Formulate research questions (PICO model)
- Identify new relevant evidence (scoping searches)
- Prioritisation of topics (importance of new evidence, disagreement between 2011 and recent evidence)
- Final list of topics for the update

## Commissioned evidence reviews

- By EMCDDA: update of review of reviews on effectiveness of drug treatment, NSP, DCR in the prevention of risk behaviour and HCV, HIV transmission; review of modelling studies;
- By ECDC: systematic review of interventions to improve linkage to care and adherence to treatment of infections

## Call for models of good practice

- By ECDC: linkage to care, adherence to treatment, community based testing, health promotion

## Expert panel\* consultations

- On the evidence:  
Part 1, March 2021  
Part 2, June 2021
- On the updated guidance: May-July 2022

\*Experts from 18 European countries, representatives of civil society, public health, harm reduction organisations, infectious diseases, drug treatment/mental health

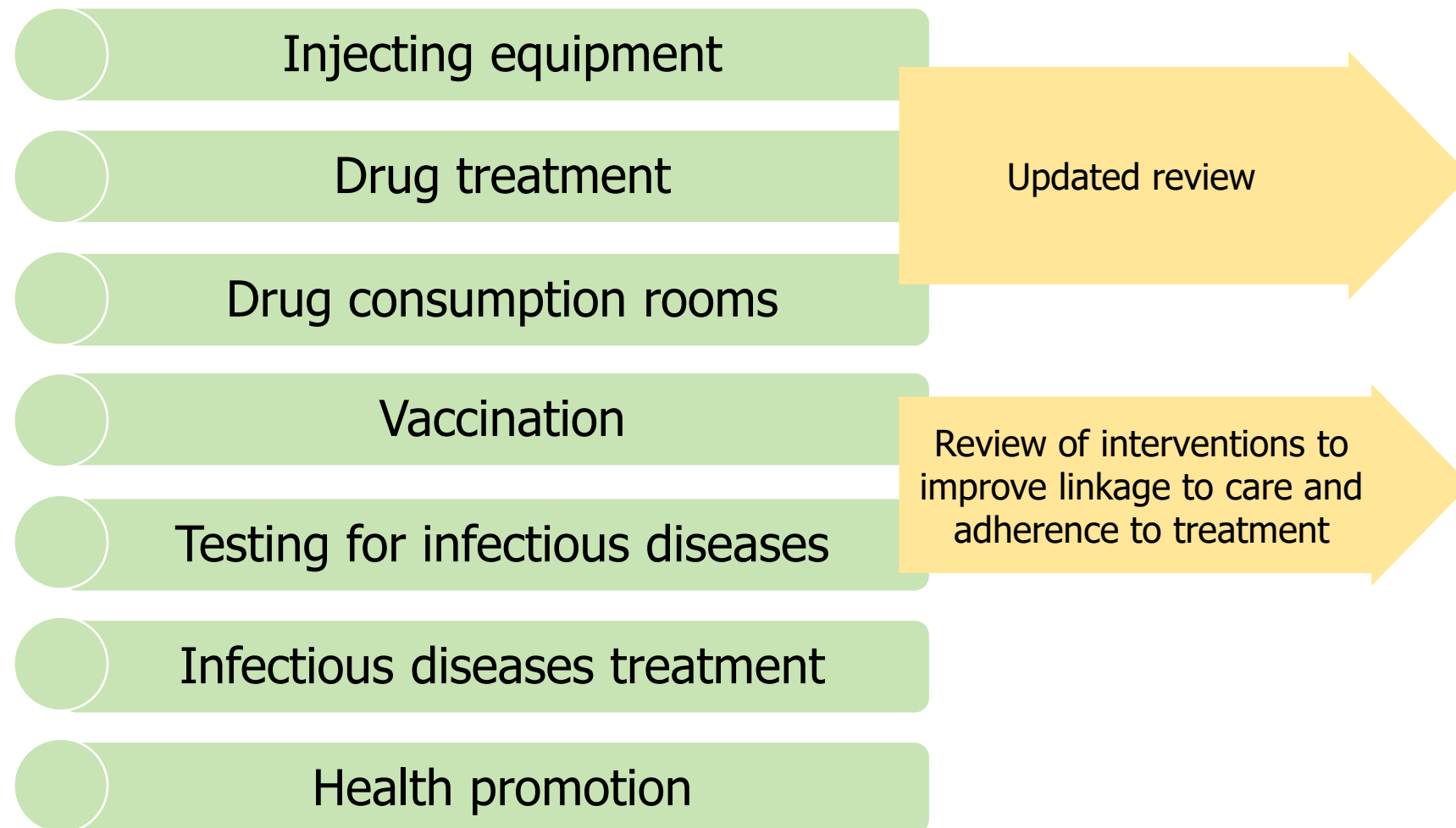
**2018-2019**

**2020-2022**

**Final review of the updated guidance is ongoing**

# The evidence-base for the updated guidance

- Review-level evidence
- Evidence from primary studies
- Expert opinion
- Recommendations from international guidance documents





# Conclusions from the updated guidance

- Evidence reviews published



International Journal of Drug Policy

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Review

Interventions to increase linkage to care and adherence to treatment for hepatitis C among people who inject drugs: A systematic review and practical considerations from an expert panel consultation

Tanja Schwarz <sup>a, b</sup>, Ilonka Horváth <sup>a</sup>, Lydia Fenz <sup>a</sup>, Irene Schmutterer <sup>a</sup>, Ingrid Rosian-Schikuta <sup>a</sup>, Otilia Mårdh <sup>b</sup>



International Journal of Drug Policy

Volume 109, November 2022, 103872



Review

Interventions to prevent HIV and Hepatitis C among people who inject drugs: Latest evidence of effectiveness from a systematic review (2011 to 2020)

Norah Palmateer <sup>a, b</sup>, Victoria Hamill <sup>a, b</sup>, Anne Bergenstrom <sup>c</sup>, Harriet Bloomfield <sup>a</sup>, Lara Gordon <sup>d</sup>, Jack Stone <sup>d</sup>, Hannah Fraser <sup>d</sup>, Thomas Seyler <sup>c</sup>, Yuejiao Duan <sup>a</sup>, Richard Tran <sup>a</sup>, Kirsten Trayner <sup>a, b</sup>, Christopher Biggam <sup>a, b</sup>, Shanley Smith <sup>a, b</sup>, Peter Vickerman <sup>d</sup>, Matt Hickman <sup>d</sup>, Sharon Hutchinson <sup>a, b</sup>

- Two of three ECDC technical reports published, EMCDDA technical reports forthcoming

**Publication of jointly-updated guidance planned for early 2023**

# Future work for the prevention and control of infections among PWID



- Gaps in evidence (low quality, non-existent, geographical bias)
  - e.g. DCR, LDSS, treatment for stimulant dependence
- Interventions targeted at specific sub-populations
  - e.g. people who inject drugs who are migrants, homeless or with co-morbidities
- Cost-effectiveness studies to inform choices of policy makers and programme planners
- Standardised collection of evidence interventions and enablers from implementation practice

# Acknowledgments

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- ECDC and EMCDDA colleagues
- Expert Panel: Alina Bocai (Romania); Aljona Kurbatova (Estonia); Anna Tarjan (Hungary); Antons Mozalevskis (WHO Regional Office for Europe, Denmark); Arian Boci (Albania); Astrid Leicht (Germany); Daniel Simões (Portugal); David Otiashvili (Georgia); Domingos Duran (Portugal); Elli Peltola (Finland); Ganna Dovbakh (Lithuania); Ketevan Stvilia (Georgia); Marie Jauffret-Roustide (France); Marta Torrens Melich (Spain); Mat Southall (EuroNPUD); Rafaela Rigoni (Italy); Ruta Kaupe (Latvia); Sladjana Baros (Serbia); Viktor Mravcik (Czechia); Vivian Hope (United Kingdom); Vyacheslav Kushakov (Ukraine)