

Exploring the health concerns and health solutions identified by women receiving services for substance use: An Interpretive Description study protocol.

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BACKGROUND. Substance use continues as a major public health concern in Canada. Although women use substances less frequently than men, the rate for women is noteworthy. Estimates from 2017 indicate that, in Newfoundland and Labrador, 34% of those accessing addictions treatment services were women (CCSA, 2021). This number may not reflect the prevalence of women's' substance use as many women do not seek services nor disclose information related to their addiction. Systemic structural and social barriers contribute to this reluctance (Gartner et al., 2018).

GOAL & STUDY DESIGN: The study will explore the major health concerns and solutions described by women who use substances in NL. It is a qualitative interpretive description study using interviews and focus groups (Thorne, 2012). This is the 1st phase of an exploratory sequential mixed methods study aimed at improving the health system response to women with addictions. A Research Advisory Group of women with lived experience of addictions will guide all aspects of the study.

RECRUITMENT & SAMPLE: Recruitment of adult women will be through the Recovery Center and the Opioid Treatment Hub by nurses and social workers in the circle of care. Women will be given the researchers' contact information to participate in an interview. A convenience sample of 15 to 20 women will be sought.

CONCLUSION. Findings from this study component will inform the collaborative development of an innovative intervention tailored to meet the health needs of this population.

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