

Harm reduction services and interventions for people who use drugs in Latin America and the Caribbean between 2013-2024: a scoping review

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Introduction

- In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the response to substance use has primarily been abstinence-based, acute-care-oriented treatments.
- While harm reduction services (HRS) and interventions have expanded in LAC over the last decade, the research evidence on such initiatives has been sparse and disjointed.

This scoping review maps peer-reviewed literature on HRS and interventions in LAC, and synthesizes gaps and opportunities for policy, practice, and research.



Methods

- **We included** opioid agonist therapy, syringe services programs, drug consumption facilities, safer consumption kits, managed alcohol programs, and drug-checking services **as search terms.**
- We conducted searches in English (PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science), Spanish, Portuguese (SciELO and BIREME), and French (BIREME). **We included original research written in English, Spanish, Portuguese, or French** published between January 2013 and December 2024
- Two reviewers independently screened the literature.
- **Narrative synthesis will be used** to summarize implications for policy, research, and practice.

Results (preliminary)

- 2,823 records identified.
 - 974 unique and 1,849 duplicates.
 - 75 records were included for full text review.
 - Currently under extraction...
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- Most articles described HRS in Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia.
 - Services described and evaluated in peer-reviewed literature included opioid agonist therapy, drug checking services, psychosocial support, street outreach clinics, HIV prevention, and safer consumption kits, among others.

Conclusions (preliminary)

- HRS in LAC have been implemented and studied across healthcare, substance use treatment, and community-based NGO settings.
- **Research on HRS for people who use alcohol, cannabis, and cocaine is scarce**, although these are commonly used drugs in LAC.
- In some countries, HRS are available in low-threshold treatment programs, however, **they are usually unavailable outside healthcare.**