

## A Survey of the Availability of Injecting Material in Pilsen in the First Half of 2010 with a Focus on Pharmacies



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**BACKGROUND:** the attempt to map the situation in pharmacies and their connection to the harm reduction service in Pilsen stemmed from the cooperation between the Ulice Outreach Programme and a pharmacy in Rokycany. As not all PDUs are in contact with the low-threshold programmes, the focus was placed especially on pharmacies. The distribution of syringes is provided not only by pharmacies but also by three non-profit organisations. **AIMS:** to find out the number of syringes circulating on the Pilsen drug scene in both directions, with special regard to understanding the role of pharmacies in this circulation. **DESIGN AND MEASUREMENTS:** a short survey in the form of questions addressed to pharmacies, medical supplies shops, non-profit organisations working with PDUs, and the Municipal Police. The data generated by the survey were processed by descriptive statistics. **PARTICIPANTS:** the research sample consisted of 45 pharmacies, 7 medical supplies shops, 4 low-threshold programmes of 3 non-profit organisations working with PDUs, and the Municipal Police.

**RESULTS:** the total amount of injecting material issued in the first six months of 2010 was 94,791 syringes. The amount of injecting material received and safely disposed of was 81,527 syringes. **CONCLUSIONS:** Pharmacies in Pilsen sell 10% of the total amount of injecting material issued. This number is not high; the coverage of the population of injecting users by low-threshold services seems to be sufficient. 39% of the pharmacies in Pilsen do not sell injecting material, which corresponds with the overall trends in the Czech Republic. During the survey, we managed to establish cooperation with three pharmacies, which account for 6.7% of the pharmacies. This number is below the average of nationwide survey results. The absence of standards for cooperation with pharmacies and the lack of a definition of the role of pharmacies in relation to addictological services lead to the lack of a systematic approach and insufficient utilisation of pharmacies' potential for work with problem drug users.

**KEY WORDS:** PILSEN – PHARMACIES – HARM REDUCTION – DISTRIBUTION OF INJECTION MATERIAL

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