

Call for Retraction of Alberta's Supervised Consumption Sites (SCS) Report¹

An Open Letter from Concerned Scientists and Scholars to Premier Jason Kenny of Alberta

March 18, 2020

Dear Premier,

We, the undersigned scientists and scholars, produce methodologically-sound research and knowledge. Our aim is for the evidence we produce to be used by decision-makers for informing the development of effective health and criminal justice policies and systems.

We write to you during the opioid overdose crisis, which has devastated families and communities in Alberta, the rest of Canada, and globally. The crisis is ongoing, having claimed the lives of 14,000 Canadians to date. Like other public health crises, it is vital that the government's response to the opioid overdose crisis be shaped by rigorous research and high-quality evidence. Rigorous evaluations of supervised consumption sites have shown strong positive effects on numerous health and social outcomes, making them central to an evidence-based public health strategy that aligns with international human rights principles.

We have reviewed Alberta's SCS report and are writing to express our grave concern with its poor methodological quality, lack of transparency, and biased presentation of results. Our collective concern draws from multiple disciplines, extensive experience, and deep knowledge of evaluation methods as well as subject matter expertise.

We declare, clearly and unequivocally, that the findings contained in Albert's SCS report were produced using unsound research methods and deficient analytic procedures. Alberta's SCS review does not satisfy the minimal standards for a credible evaluation or a quality study. The report lacks validity and reliability and, therefore, should not be used to inform public policy.

It is vital that we speak out now because the unsound findings and claims undermine efforts for effectively addressing the opioid overdose crisis. We are, therefore, calling for the immediate retraction of Alberta's SCS report.

CC: Honourable Tyler Shandro, Alberta's Minister of Health
Honourable Jason Luan, Alberta's Associate Minister for Mental Health and Addictions
Honourable Doug Schweitzer, Alberta's Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
David Weyant, Chair of the Alberta Health Services Board
Rod Knecht, Chair of the SCS Review Committee
Geri Bemister-Williams, Co-Chair of the SCS Review Committee

¹ Alberta Health. (2020). *Impact: A socio-economic review of supervised consumption sites in Alberta*. Alberta. Retrieved from <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460147054>

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