

Capacity Research Unit Seminar Series

Date: October 19, 2023 from 12pm – 1pm PST

Title of presentation: Exploring the perceived impacts of safer supply program engagement on criminalized income-generating activities: Perspectives of program clients and service providers

Summary: In response to the devastating drug poisoning crisis, Canada is piloting safer supply programs (SSPs) which provide individuals who use illicit opioids with an 'off label' prescription for pharmaceutical-grade alternatives. Although the main purpose of these programs was to reduce overdose deaths and health-related harms stemming from exposure to toxic 'street' drugs, SSPs are having a broader impact. This project investigated the implementation of four SSPs in Ontario through semi-structured qualitative interviews with 27 service providers and 52 program clients. In this presentation, Dr. Katherine Rudzinski will discuss the ways in SSP clients and service providers saw program engagement impacting clients' reliance on criminalized income-generating activities (e.g., theft and sex work) and their interactions with police and the criminal legal system. Katherine will share some of the broader impacts of SSPs on safety and stability for people who use drugs, including ways SSPs improve social and structural determinants of health (income, food, housing security) and self-identity among program clients.

Presenter Bio:

Dr. Katherine Rudzinski is an adjunct assistant professor and an interdisciplinary postdoctoral research fellow in the School of Social Work, University of Windsor. She is also a postdoctoral research fellow with the Capacity Research Unit, School of Nursing, University of British Columbia and a research associate and sessional lecturer at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto. Katherine has over 15 years of experience working with and for people who use drugs on various community-based research projects. Her recent research explored the opportunities and challenges of implementing supervised consumption services in healthcare settings, including considerations around funding for harm reduction programs and co-creating a toolkit for client-centred supervised consumption services. Katherine's current work is focused on examining the women's experiences of safer supply programs (SSPs) in Ontario using an arts-based and theoretically-informed approach to understand how these programs may potentially impact the victimization and criminalization of women.

Where: Online on Zoom Meetings

Register at: [zoom link](#)

Note that this presentation will be recorded and available on the Capacity website at: <https://capacityresearch.ubc.ca/>

