

HIV Risk Factors Associated with Risky and Illegal Income Generation Among Street-involved Youth in a Canadian Setting

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Background

- Youth who are street-involved face increased risk of HIV infection through a range of social and structural factors. Little is known about the HIV risks associated with deriving income from illegal and risky quasi-legal sources.
- This study investigates risky income generation activities among a sample of street-involved youth.

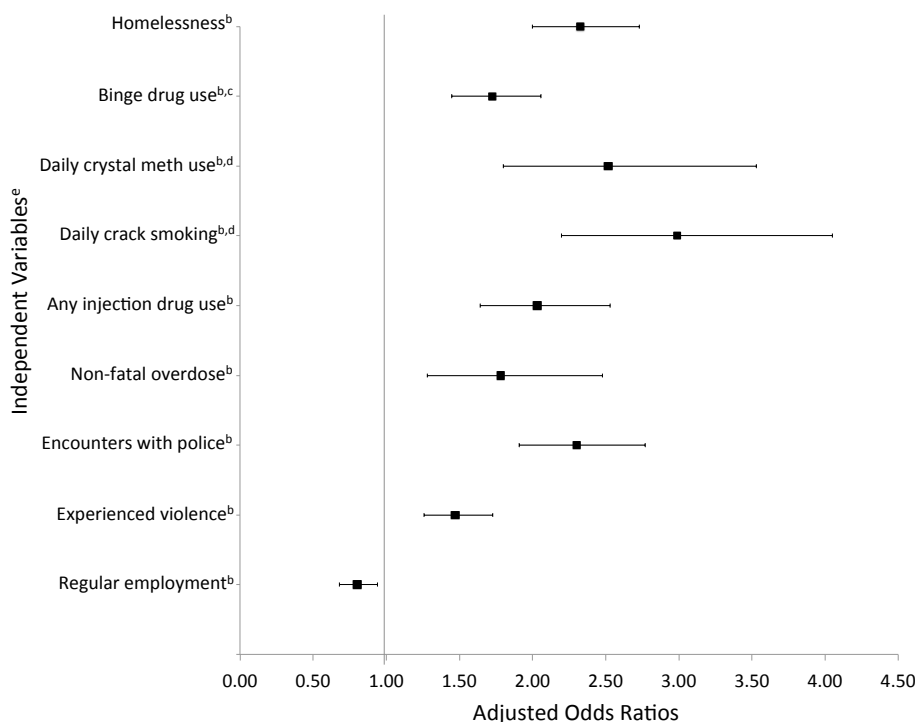
Methods

- Data were collected between 2005 and 2012 from the At-Risk Youth Study (ARYS), a prospective cohort study of street-involved youth aged 14-26 in Vancouver, Canada.
- Generalized estimating equations (GEE) were used to identify factors associated with risky income generation.
- We also examined which sources of income respondents would eliminate if they did not require money to purchase drugs.

Results

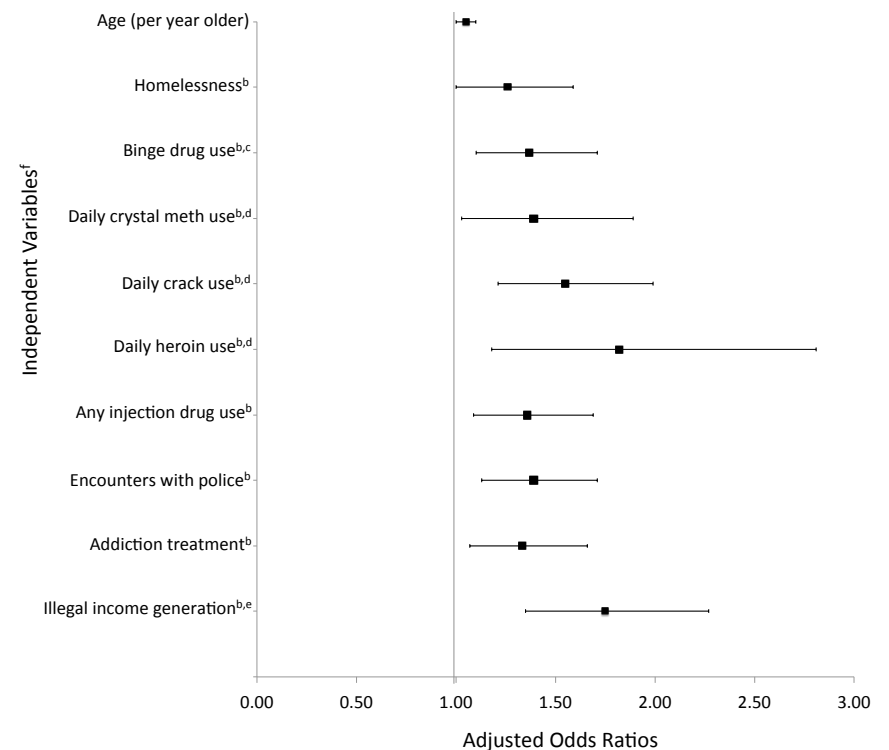
- Among 1,008 participants, 826 (82%) reported engaging in risky income generation activities at some point during the study period.
- Among those who reported risky income generation, 440 (53%) were willing to give up these income sources if they did not need money to purchase drugs.

Figure 1: Multivariate GEE analysis of factors associated with risky income generation^a among street-involved youth in Vancouver (n = 1,008; p < 0.05).



- a. Includes dealing drugs, sex work, recycling, squeegeeing, pan-handling, theft, robbing, stealing, other criminal activities.
- b. Behavioural and situational variables refer to activities occurring in the last six months.
- c. Includes injection and non-injection drug use.
- d. Non-injection drug use.
- e. Independent variables have been adjusted for daily cocaine use, daily heroin use, and incarceration in the last six months.

Figure 2: Multivariate GEE analysis of factors associated with willingness to give up risky income generation sources^a if not using drugs (n = 825; p < 0.05).



- a. Includes dealing drugs, sex work, recycling, squeegeeing, pan-handling, theft, robbing, stealing, other criminal activities.
- b. Behavioural and situational variables refer to activities occurring in the last six months.
- c. Includes injection and non-injection drug use.
- d. Non-injection drug use.
- e. Willingness to give up any illegal activity (drug dealing, theft, robbing, stealing, or other criminal activities) vs. exclusive willingness to give up quasi-legal activity (sex work, recycling, squeegeeing, or pan-handling.)
- f. Independent variables have been adjusted for heavy alcohol use in the last six months.

Conclusions

- Risky income generation was prevalent in our sample, and associated with known social and structural risk factors for HIV, such as higher intensity drug use, housing marginalization, and interactions with the criminal justice system.
- The majority of participants were willing to give up their risky income sources if they did not need money for drugs.
- Our results indicate that increasing youths' access to addiction treatment and low-threshold employment opportunities may reduce risky income generation and related HIV vulnerabilities.

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