

*Even if supervised injection sites are really popular in mass media recently, it is important to keep in mind that this is not a miracle solution to the drug addiction problem. Many other tools are available in the harm reduction policy and are needed to complement this kind of site.*

What exactly are the supervised injection sites?

The supervised injection sites (or S.I.S), are places where drug users using injected drugs can do it in good safety conditions with the help of trained personnel. These kinds of sites also offer new needles in exchange for used ones.

For which reason do we hear that much about these sites recently?

Currently, there is some controversy about the only S.I.S in Canada, located in Vancouver, BC. The conservative federal government has always been opposed to supervised injection sites. In the same time, the Supreme Court of Canada is still hesitating on whether or not these sites are legal.

While these debates take place, two projects of opening S.I.S are currently being developed in Québec. The first one would be in the St-Roch neighbourhood of Québec City and the other one would be in downtown Montréal. These two projects receive very little support from the governments. Because of that, the opening is always pushed to a subsequent date. For example, the Montreal project was supposed to open his doors in June 2011 but since the number of people opposed to it is big enough, that project will probably not see the light this year.

### What is the interest of these centers?

In the last few years, many scientific reports have showed that S.I.S are able to save many lives each year. Indeed, since drug injection often take place in non-healthy conditions (drug injection in the street, needles trading...) it is easy to get infected by HIV or hepatitis C that way. Supervised injection sites allow people to consume in good conditions where they will not be at risk of aggravating their health (often already fragile). Also, injection in a safe, supervised place helps to reduce the number of deaths by overdose because D.U are helped by a health professional.

This is an advantage for our society because the Vancouver center is estimating that in 10 years and only with the needle exchange program, 14 million will be saved in healthcare fees for HIV and hepatitis C treatment. Another advantage for the general population is that criminality is decreasing in Downtown-eastside neighbourhood since the Vancouver S.I.S opened.

### Do programs like this encourage drug use?

These programs are part of a war on drugs approach called harm reduction. It is important to know that even if they provide the equipment and location for the use of drugs, they will never offer the drug itself. Also, the Vancouver center along with some others in Europe helped to prove that S.I.S increase in no way drug use neither the traffic of it. On the contrary, by allowing the society to reach marginal people, the S.I.S concept helps those in need to get access to detoxification programs and/or other services.