

# Sexual behaviour and sexually transmitted infections among people who inject drugs: a systematic review

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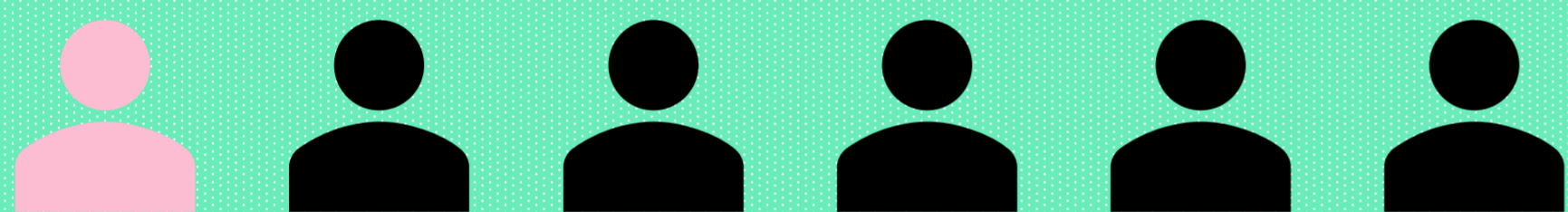
## Background

Research suggests **people who inject drugs are at excess risk of acquiring sexually transmitted infections (STI)** but **there has been no systematic review of the evidence**. In the context of increasing STI incidence globally, this is particularly critical.

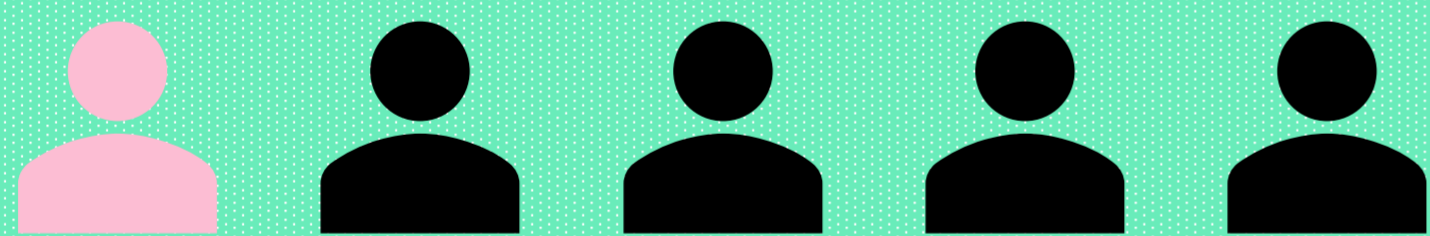
## Methods

We conducted searches of the peer-reviewed and grey literature for data on recent (i.e., past year) sexual behaviour, recent STI testing uptake, and STI prevalence among people who inject drugs. Where sufficient data were available, regional and global estimates weighted by population size were generated using random-effects meta-analysis.

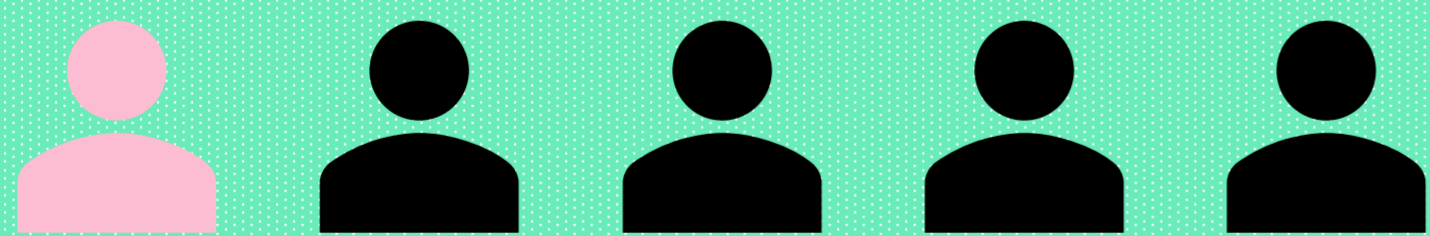
## Sexual behaviour and access to STI testing



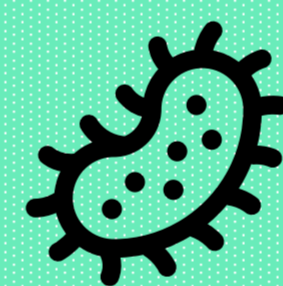
1 in 6 people who inject drugs reported **recent sex work**.



1 in 5 people who inject drugs reported **recent sex with a casual partner without a condom**.



1 in 5 people who inject drugs reported **recent STI testing uptake**.



The **global pooled prevalence of syphilis** was **4.4%** (95% CI: 3.0-6.9), ranging from 1.2% (0.5-2.5) in Western Europe to 12.0% (9.6-14.7) in Central Asia.



Sparse data for other STIs (chlamydia, gonorrhoea, genital herpes, human papillomavirus, and trichomoniasis) precluded meta-analysis.

## Global prevalence of sexually transmitted infections

## Take away messages

1. To our knowledge, **this is the first global prevalence estimate of syphilis among people who inject drugs**, which may serve as a baseline for monitoring disease burden.
2. Future STI prevalence estimates among this population would benefit from an increase in quality and quantity of data.
3. The low proportion reporting recent STI testing uptake suggests **improving access to routine testing is critical to control STIs among people who inject drugs**.

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