

# INJECTING RISK QUESTIONNAIRE (IRQ)

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

IRQ was developed by the Centre for Research on Drugs and Health Behaviour

### Background

This questionnaire measures the extent and nature of the sharing of needles and syringes and other injecting equipment. It is useful for programmes which aim to reduce the transmission of infections such as HIV, HBC and HCV among injecting drug users.

It can be used to help assess levels of injecting risk behaviour. It identifies different sharing practices and is suitable for different types of injecting drug users. It can be used to assess need and to target interventions. With suitable research design it can be used to help assess the impact of prevention services such as needle and syringe distribution schemes, publicity campaigns, peer education, and drug treatment programmes.

It was developed in order to measure progress towards the UK government target to reduce the proportion of injectors who share injecting equipment.

### Special features

The questionnaire covers both the direct sharing of needles and syringes, and the sharing of ancillary equipment ('indirect sharing').

It can be administered :

- in agency and non-agency (community) settings
- by self completion and by interview
- by agency staff, researchers or field workers
- to different types of injectors of illicit drugs. (It has not been validated for use with injectors of steroids.)

It takes about five minutes to complete.

Responses are recorded by circling an answer or writing in a number.

Performance data are available (Stimson *et al* 1997).

### Eligibility

IRQ is for use with people who have injected drugs in the last four weeks.

### Versions available

There are four versions of the questionnaire. Each version is identifiable by a reference code printed on the first page. The printed version has the title INJECTING QUESTIONNAIRE.

IRQ-I-A	<i>IRQ administered by Interview in Agency settings</i>
IRQ-SQ-A	<i>IRQ for Self-completion in Agency settings</i>
IRQ-I-NA	<i>IRQ administered by Interview in Non-agency settings</i>
IRQ-SQ-NA	<i>IRQ for Self-completion in Non-agency settings</i>

### Questions and sub-scales

IRQ comprises 17 questions which measure the occurrence of different sharing practices, and the number of people with whom these have been done. It is preferable that all 17 questions are asked. However Question 1 can be used alone where use of the whole questionnaire is not feasible. Question 1 has been designed as a basic *Health of the Nation Question* (HNQ). Note however that HNQ *under-estimates* the level of sharing when compared with results from the whole questionnaire (IRQ). (For details of under-estimation and a suitable correction factor, see Stimson *et al* 1997).

### Seeking cooperation from injectors and avoiding bias

Although the questionnaire performs well when administered by staff in drug agencies, care should be taken that subjects' answers are not biased by features of the situation in which questions are asked. In some settings respondents may feel that their answers may affect their relation with staff (and *vice versa*). In such cases consideration should be given to the collection of information by people independent of the agency.

Subjects should be told why the information is being collected, and consent should be obtained. They should be told that:

the information will help assess the effect of HIV prevention services - such as needle exchanges, publicity campaigns, and drug treatment programmes

in the case of those attending agencies, their answers will not affect the help and advice that they receive

their answers will be kept confidential.

### Instructions to respondents and question wording

'Equipment sharing' and 'syringe sharing' are capable of various interpretations and the way questions are worded affects the results that are obtained. It is therefore *essential* that the exact wording of questions is followed.

### Interview version

Instructions to interviewers are in the grey shaded boxes. All wording not in grey boxes should be read out to subject.

### Self-completion version

Completed questionnaires should be placed and sealed in an envelope.

### Subject record numbers

Names are not written on the questionnaire. At the bottom of the last page is a five digit box which can be used for a subject identifier.

### Subject characteristics

On the last page of the questionnaire some limited information is recorded on subject characteristics (sex, age and main drug classes injected).

### Scoring

Questions are answered on a graded scale (*ie* 'frequently', 'sometimes', 'hardly ever', 'never' or 'number of people'). For assessing progress towards the *Health of the Nation* target, a positive response to *any* question indicates equipment sharing. Agency staff and researchers may wish to conduct further analyses on responses to questions about different kinds of sharing, frequency of sharing, and numbers of people with whom equipment is shared. This may be useful where more detail is required for needs assessment and impact evaluations.

### Availability

Printed copies of the Injecting Risk Questionnaire may be obtained from:

IRQ Questionnaire Centre for Research on Drugs and Health Behaviour 200 Seagrave Road London SW6 1RQ Tel: 0181 846 6565	Please fax: 0181 846 6555 for costs of bulk purchases of the different versions of the questionnaire.  Quote the appropriate reference code (eg IRQ-I-A) for the versions of the questionnaire that you require.
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### Reference and further information

Stimson G.V., Jones S., Chalmers C. and Sullivan D (1997) A short questionnaire (IRQ) to assess injecting risk behaviour. *Addiction*. In Press.

Stimson G.V. (1997) Measuring the *Health of the Nation* target for injecting drug users: the injecting risk questionnaire. *Executive Summary No.54* London: Centre for Research on Drugs and Health Behaviour

# INJECTING QUESTIONNAIRE

## Instructions to Interviewer

Proceed with interview only if respondent has injected a drug in the last 4 weeks.

Say to respondent:

*This research will be used to help assess the effect of HIV prevention services - such as needle exchanges, publicity campaigns and drug treatment programmes.*

***All answers will be kept confidential. No names are required.***

***our answers will not affect the help and advice you get here.***



CIRCLE THE ANSWERS THAT APPLY TO THE RESPONDENT

Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never

OR



WRITE IN THE Number of people \_\_\_\_\_

Say to respondent:

***The first two questions are about sharing injecting equipment in general.***

***Sharing means you using someone else's equipment, which has already been used, or someone using yours, regardless of whether you were both present at the time.***

***Injecting equipment includes needles, syringes, filters, spoons and cookers, and washouts.***

**Q1** During the last 4 weeks, how often have you shared injecting equipment ? Frequently Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never

**Q2** During the last 4 weeks, with how many different people have you shared injecting equipment ? Number of people

***The next questions are about using other people's equipment or them using yours. I will also ask you with how many different people you have done any of these things. Finally I will ask your age and type of drug you mainly inject.***

***During the last 4 weeks, how often have you done any of the following things***

**Q3** given or lent used needles/syringes to a sexual partner ? Frequently Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never

**Q4** given or lent used needles/syringes to a friend or acquaintance ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever Neve

➔ PLEASE TURN OVER

- Q5 given or lent used needles/syringes to a stranger ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever
- Q6 injected with needles/syringes that had already been used by a sexual partner ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q7 injected with needles/syringes that had already been used by a friend or acquaintance ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q8 injected with needles/syringes that had already been used by a stranger ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q9 filled your syringe from one that had already been used by someone else ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q10 let someone else fill their syringe with a syringe you had already used ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q11 drawn up from a container or spoon into which someone else had put a used syringe ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever
- Q12 put a used needle into a container or spoon that was then used by someone else ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q13 used a filter into which someone else had put a used syringe ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q14 let someone else use a filter into which you had put a used syringe ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q15 used the same water or bleach as someone else for flushing out or cleaning ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q16 used old syringes that had been kept in the same container or 'sin bin' as someone else's old syringes ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q17 During the last 4 weeks, with how many *different* people have you done any of the things on this page ? Number of people

Circle, as appropriate	<i>What is your age, in years ?</i>	<i>What type of drug do you mainly inject ?</i>		
Male : Female	_____	Opiates eg heroin, methadone and similar drugs	Stimulants eg amphetamine, cocaine and similar drugs	Steroids

Thank respondent for their help and assistance.

*IRQ interview version for use in agency settings. For further copies, please quote IRQ-I-A*

Centre for Research on Drugs and Health Behaviour  
200 Seagrave Road, London SW6 1RQ



# INJECTING QUESTIONNAIRE

## Instructions to Interviewer

Proceed with interview only if respondent has injected a drug in the last 4 weeks.

Say to respondent:

*This research will be used to help assess the effect of HIV prevention services such as needle exchanges, publicity campaigns and drug treatment programmes.*

*All answers will be kept confidential. No names are required.*



CIRCLE THE ANSWERS THAT APPLY TO THE RESPONDENT

Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never

OR



WRITE IN THE Number of people \_\_\_\_\_

Say to respondent:

*The first two questions are about sharing injecting equipment in general.*

*Sharing means you using someone else's equipment, which has already been used, someone using yours, regardless of whether you were both present at the time.*

*Injecting equipment includes needles, syringes, filters, spoons and cookers, and washouts.*

**Q1** During the last 4 weeks, how often have you shared injecting equipment ? Frequently Sometimes Hardly ever : Never

**Q2** During the last 4 weeks, with how many different people have you shared injecting equipment ? Number of people

*The next questions are about using other people's equipment or them using yours. I will also ask you with how many different people you have done any of these things. Finally I will ask your age and type of drug you mainly inject.*

*During the last 4 weeks, how often have you done any of the following things ?*

**Q3** given or lent used needles/syringes to a sexual partner ? Frequently Sometimes Hardly ever : Never

**Q4** given or lent used needles/syringes to a friend or acquaintance ? Frequently Sometimes Hardly ever : Never

→ PLEASE TURN OVER

[IRQ-I-NA]



- Q5** given or lent used needles/syringes to a stranger ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q6** injected with needles/syringes that had already been used by a sexual partner ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- injected with needles/syringes that had already been used by a friend or acquaintance ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- injected with needles/syringes that had already been used by a stranger ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- filled your syringe from one that had already been used by someone else ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q10** let someone else fill their syringe with a syringe you had already used ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q11** drawn up from a container or spoon into which someone else had put a used syringe ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q12** put a used needle into a container or spoon that was then used by someone else ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q13** used a filter into which someone else had put a used syringe ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q14** let someone else use a filter into which you had put a used syringe ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q15** used the same water or bleach as someone else for flushing out or cleaning ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q16** used old syringes that had been kept in the same container or 'sin bin' as someone else's old syringes ? Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never
- Q17** During the last 4 weeks, with how many *different* people have you done any of the things on this page ? Number of people

Circle, as appropriate	<i>What is your age, in years ?</i>	<i>What type of drug do you mainly inject ?</i>		
Male : Female	_____	Opiates eg heroin, methadone and similar drugs	Stimulants eg amphetamine, cocaine and similar drugs	Steroids

Thank respondent for their help and assistance.

*IRQ interview version for use in non-agency settings. For further copies, please quote IRQ-I-NA*

Centre for Research on Drugs and Health Behaviour  
200 Seagrave Road, London SW6 1RQ



# INJECTING QUESTIONNAIRE

HAVE YOU INJECTED A DRUG IN THE LAST 4 WEEKS ?      Yes    :    No  
(If you have NOT injected in the last 4 weeks, do not answer the remaining questions)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP - IT WILL ONLY TAKE A FEW MINUTES

YOUR ANSWERS WILL NOT AFFECT THE HELP AND ADVICE  
THAT YOU RECEIVE HERE

YOUR ANSWERS WILL HELP US ASSESS THE EFFECT OF HIV  
PREVENTION SERVICES - SUCH AS NEEDLE EXCHANGES, PUBLICITY  
CAMPAIGNS, AND DRUG TREATMENT PROGRAMMES

YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL

DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS

ALL QUESTIONS REFER TO THE *LAST 4 WEEKS*  
PLEASE ANSWER *EVERY* QUESTION



CIRCLE THE ANSWER THAT APPLIES TO YOU  
Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never

OR



WRITE IN THE Number of people \_\_\_\_\_



PLEASE PLACE YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE  
IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED

THE FIRST TWO QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT SHARING INJECTING EQUIPMENT IN GENERAL

Sharing means using someone else's equipment which has already been used, or someone using yours, *regardless* of whether you were both present at the time.

Injecting equipment includes needles, syringes, filters, spoons and cookers, and washouts.

During the last 4 weeks, how often  
have you shared injecting equipment ?

Frequently    Sometimes    Hardly ever : Never

During the last 4 weeks, with how  
many different people have you shared  
injecting equipment ?

Number    people

→ PLEASE TURN OVER

[IRQ-SQ A]

THE NEXT QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT USING OTHER PEOPLE'S EQUIPMENT  
OR THEM USING YOURS

During the last 4 weeks how often have you done any of the following things?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| given or lent used needles/syringes to a sexual partner ?  | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| given or lent used needles/syringes to a friend or acquaintance ?  | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| given or lent used needles/syringes to a stranger ?  | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| injected with needles/syringes that had already been used by a sexual partner ?  | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| injected with needles/syringes that had already been used by a friend or acquaintance ?                                | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| injected with needles/syringes that had already been used by a stranger ?  | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| filled your syringe from one that had already been used by someone else ?  | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| let someone else fill their syringe with a syringe you had already used ?  | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| drawn up from a container or spoon into which someone else had put a used syringe ?                                    | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| put a used needle into a container or spoon that was then used by someone else ?                                       | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| <b>Q13</b> used a filter into which someone else had put a used syringe ?  | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| let someone else use a filter into which you had put a used syringe ?  | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| used the same water or bleach as someone else for flushing out or cleaning ?   | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| <b>Q16</b> used old syringes that had been kept in the same container or 'sin bin' as someone else's old syringes ?    | Frequently : Sometimes : Hardly ever : Never |
| <b>Q17</b> During the last 4 weeks, with how many <i>different</i> people have you done any of the things on this page | Number of people                             |

Are you?	What is your age, in years ?	What type of drug do you mainly inject ?		
Male : Female	_____	Opiates eg heroin, methadone and similar drugs	Stimulants eg amphetamine, cocaine and similar drugs	Steroids

*IRQ Self completion version for use in agencies. For further copies, please quote IRQ-SQ-A*

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