



MAY  
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## Psychosocial outcomes of families of the opioid epidemic

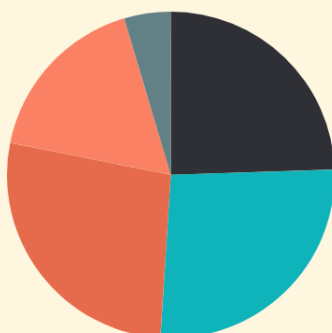
# MOMS STOP THE HARM

## STUDY OVERVIEW

This study aimed to identify and describe the characteristics and perceived needs of families affected by the opioid crisis.

Participants were recruited through Moms Stop the Harm (MSTH), a network of Canadian families impacted by substance-use related harms and deaths. Participants completed an online battery of self-report measures. Analyses for this study were conducted on a subset of participants to focus on those residing in British Columbia (N = 354).

## WHO TOOK PART



■ Fraser (24.49%)  
■ Interior (26.53%)  
■ Vancouver Island (27.14%)  
■ Vancouver Coastal (17.24%)  
■ Northern (4.59%)

- The majority of reporters were female (94%) who identified as white (90%).
- The majority of loved ones were men (74%), under age 35 (66%), who used drugs for five years or more (73%).
- In this group, 30% of loved ones were living in active addiction, while 70% had deceased.
- Almost everyone (98%) endorsed interest in receiving therapy or felt they would benefit from more support (87%).

# HEALTH OUTCOMES

How are loved ones doing emotionally, socially, and physically?

- Participants indicated elevated rates of depression, anxiety, and reduced efficacy in managing emotions.
- Nearly half of the sample reported feeling stigma or judged from peers after the death of their loved one. No differences were found between health regions in stigma.
- Drug-related harms and loss of a loved one were related to high levels of grief and subsequent physical health changes.
- Those with living loved ones reported higher anxiety, financial strain, and helplessness than the bereaved, who reported less happiness and meaning in daily life.

## BARRIERS

What did respondents report is currently interfering with receiving services?

1 Financial Cost  
Reported as barrier by 30.5%

2 Access to Appropriate Services  
Reported as barrier by 29%

3 Discomfort/Stigma  
Reported as barrier by 14.5%

4 COVID-19  
Reported as barrier by 5.5%

Only 13.2% of the sample reported experiencing no barriers to support services.



## SUMMARY

What did respondents teach us?

- The current study investigated demographic and psychosocial predictors of main health outcomes for families affected by substance use related harms and deaths.
- Family members are showing high rates of emotional and physical health concerns overall. Families of loved ones who are struggling appear to be at ongoing risk.
- Caregivers of loved ones using substances are at increased risk during and following this chronic stressor. Overall, family members are motivated for treatment, despite reported barriers. Focused study and targeted supports are required.