

# Intravenous Drug Use related infections and treatments:

## A Review

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### Abstract

Persons who inject drugs have higher mortality rates and are at a higher risk of developing infections. Infections can be bacterial, viral, or fungal in nature with the most common being skin and soft tissue infections, and the most fatal being infective endocarditis. Treatment of these conditions usually requires prolonged courses of antibiotics and, in some cases, such as case infective endocarditis, may require surgery. Moreover, infection management requires an individualized approach and can vary from one person to another even for the same infections thereby making treatment complex requiring a multi-disciplinary approach. This can further be complicated by co-infections and significant financial and psychosocial burdens. Review of articles on Pubmed published after 2000 shows a pattern of increased intravenous drug use (IDU) over the past decade with an increase in the presentations of the common complications. To mitigate the issue of IDU related infections, and due to the close relationship between IDU and illicit drugs, involvement on the governmental level is needed. Needle exchange programs and patient education have been shown to help reduce harm while decriminalization has helped reduce stigmatization as well as financial and social barriers.