

Abstract

Background:

Colorado's age-adjusted fatal opioid overdose rate increased over 400% from 2000-2020. Public libraries are increasingly valuable community resources for accessing health-related information. We sought to evaluate the availability and types of opioid use disorder (OUD)-related resources offered through Colorado Public Libraries in different settings using secret shoppers to collect data.

Methods:

This was a cross sectional study of 272 Colorado Public Libraries in 2021. Anonymous auditors posed as library patrons asking a brief standardized script about availability of OUD-related resources over the phone. We conducted descriptive analyses of the libraries contacted, the response types of OUD resources provided, and information about naloxone availability.

Results:

Approximately 50% of libraries were classified as urban. Most (81%) of the libraries offered a valid OUD-resource, and over half (51%) provided a referral to a treatment center offering at least one medication for OUD. Over a third (36%) of librarians referenced the statewide naloxone standing order allowing patients to obtain naloxone from a pharmacy without prescription. One in ten libraries provided at least one invalid referral resource.

Conclusions:

Libraries may benefit from the development of a standard for OUD-related resource training/education in public libraries that can be distributed across the state to create a safe space for community members to obtain resources related to substance use.