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Drug-related harm associated with synchronized government income assistance cheque issue: A structural trial of alternative approaches to improve population health outcomes

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Sparkling Public Health Solutions Summit, Ottawa, ON
26 April 2016



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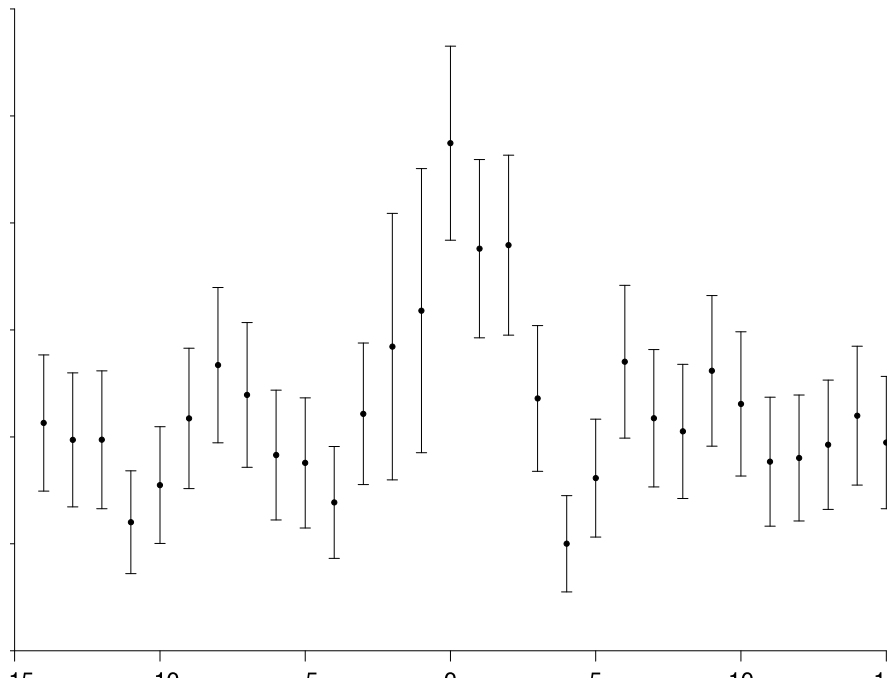
Income assistance cheque issue in BC 2016

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Cheque issue and non-fatal overdose at InSite

Rates of non-fatal overdose at Insite, one of Vancouver's supervised injection facilities, relative to provincial income assistance cheque issue, 2004-2010

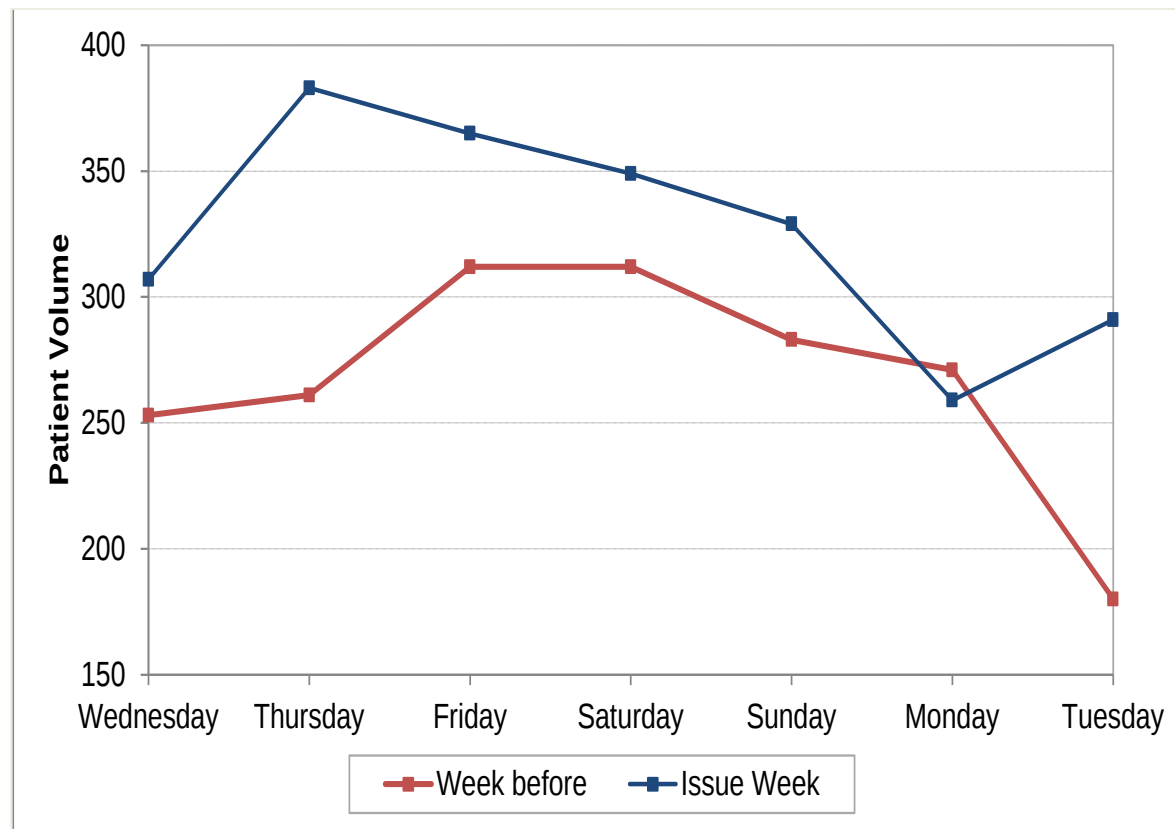


Adapted from Zlotorzynska et al., IJDP, 2014



Drug-related harm coinciding with cheque issue days

Fig 2. St. Paul's Hospital emergency department and mental health patient volumes in times surrounding cheque issue days, 2012





Cheque Issue and Drug Harm

Provincial Government Cheque Issue *(usually the last Wednesday of the month)*

- Hospital discharge against medical advice
- Overall and high-risk drug and alcohol use
- Fatal and non-fatal overdose
- Drug-related ED and mental health hospital admissions
- Addiction and HIV treatment interruption
- Health, social and financial service access barriers
- Public disorder
- Mental health apprehensions
- Police service calls



Institutions and population health: Four processes

Redistribution

- Resource transfers

Compression

- Limits on how low or high individual possession of a resource can go

Mediation

- Third variable that affects the distribution of a resource

Imbrication (Overlap)

- Policy/institution that amplifies, cross-cuts or moderates

**Distribution
of population
health
outcomes**



Cheque issue: Two distinct, interrelated effects

Individual Effect

- Cue for increased drug use
- Impediment to controlling use



Social/Community Effect

- Cue for use magnified through concentration of recipients
- Situated micro-socio phenomenon
- Elevated service demands

**Policy driven
escalations in
drug-related
harm**



Structural intervention: Social assistance cheque issue

JANUARY

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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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31						

FEBRUARY

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MARCH

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AUGUST

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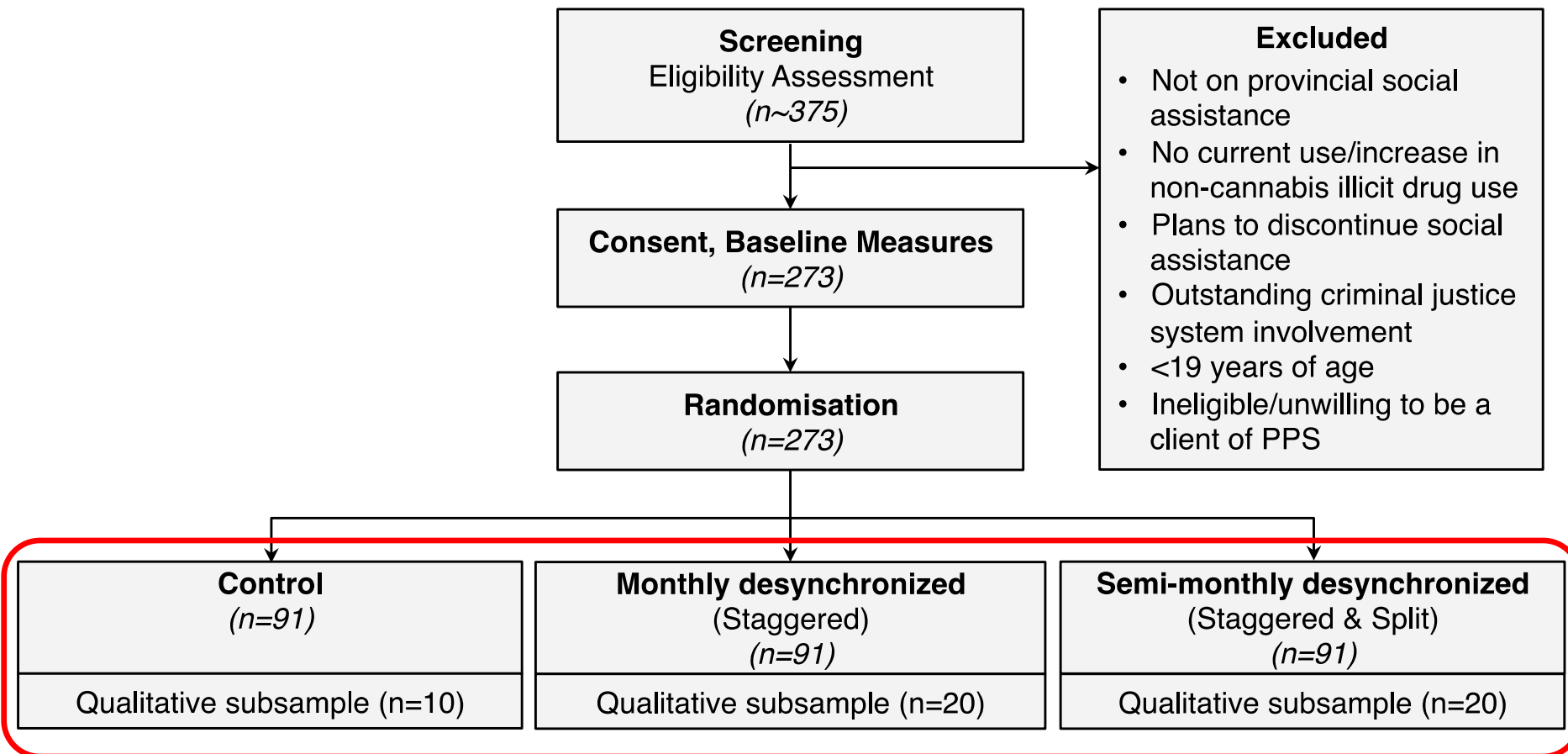
DECEMBER

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TASA: Evaluating the impacts of alternative assistance

Study Recruitment and Randomization



CASH
REQUES
for just
\$1.99
10/10 \$1.0000
Ask inside for details

19
9
42

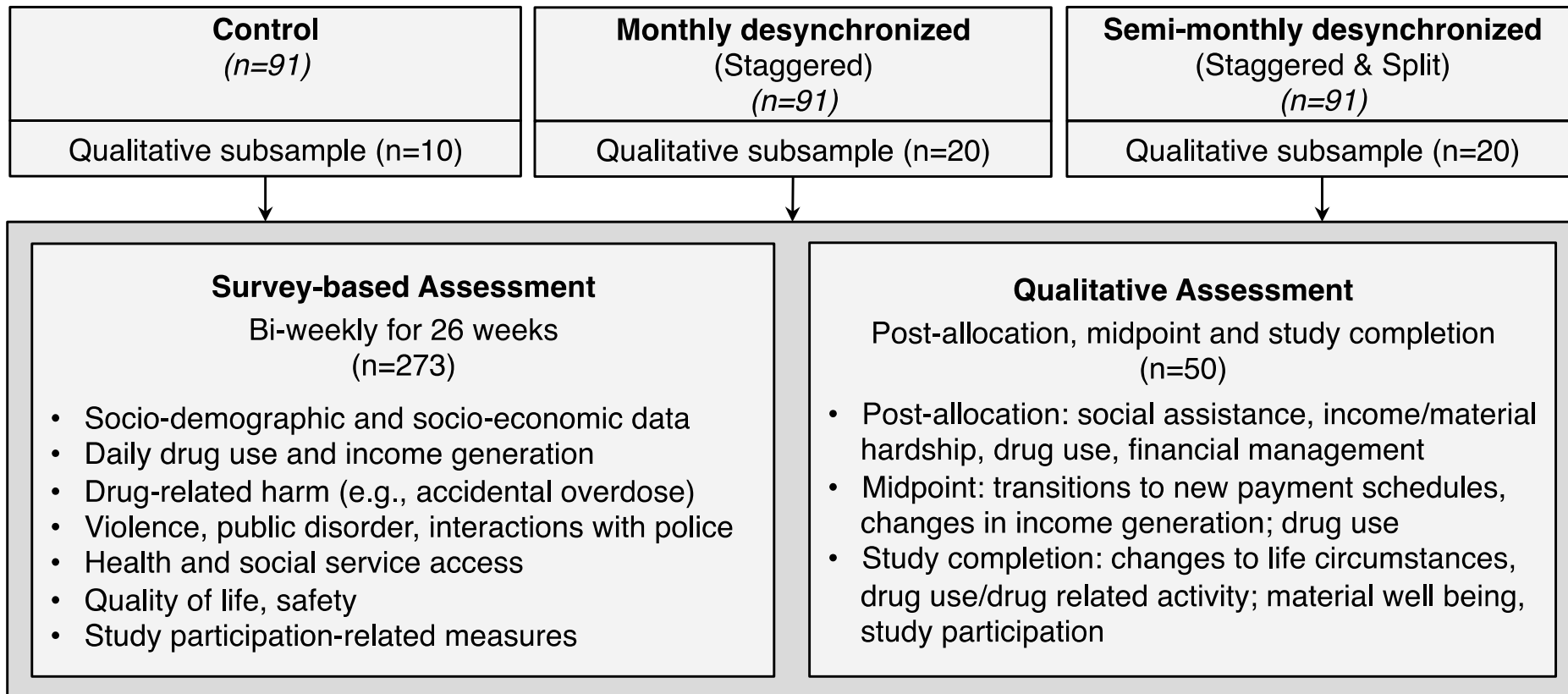


PIGEON
PARK
SAVINGS



TASA: Evaluating the impacts of alternative assistance

Mixed Methods Evaluation





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BRITISH COLUMBIA
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Vancouver
CoastalHealth
Promoting wellness. Ensuring care.



VANDU

Vancouver Area Network
of Drug Users


CITY OF
VANCOUVER



Implementation challenges, lessons learned

- ***Participant study arm preferences***: trial literacy, participant planning, mitigating potential loss to follow up
- ***Administrative requirements***: external dependencies, admin procedures, partner interactions, unforeseen challenges
- ***Transitioning to new payment schedules***: waiting and watching; impact of the 'social' effect
- ***Retention in the intervention***: lack of contingency among socio-economically marginalized individuals



Emerging questions:

- *How can we promote support for public health outcomes outside the health sector (e.g., finance)?*
- *How can we leverage community partnerships in support of public health-promoting policy and programmatic changes?*
- *How can we develop an evidence base for population health interventions prior to roll out?*

Acknowledgements

Study participants

Study Partners

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Vancouver Coastal Health
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WAHRS
City of Vancouver

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