

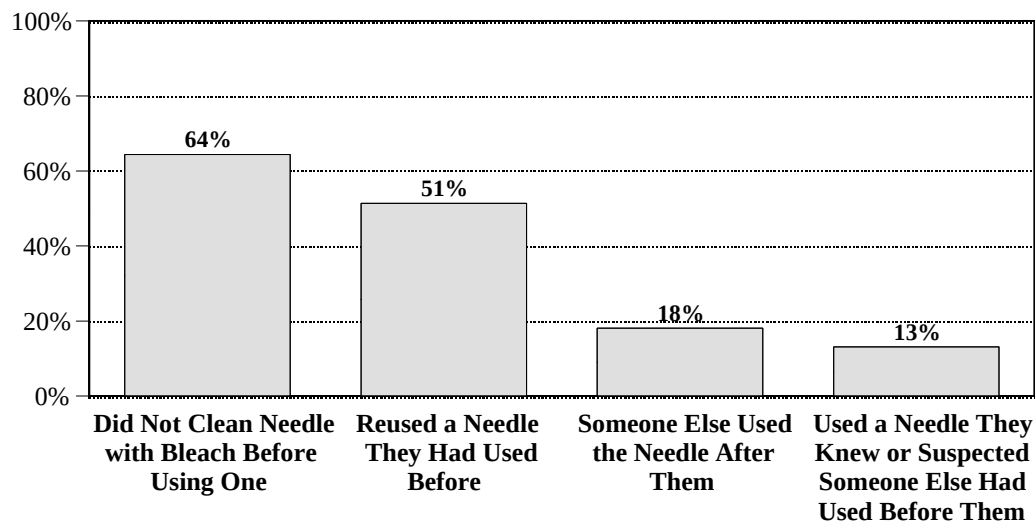
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Risky Needle Practices Among Injection Drug Users in U.S.

An estimated 354,000 U.S. residents aged 12 or older had used a needle to inject heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, or other stimulants during the past year, according to data from the 2002 and 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Many of these injection drug users reported engaging in unsafe needle practices the last time they injected drugs. Nearly two-thirds (64%) reported that they did not clean their needle with bleach and one-half (51%) reused a needle they had used before. More than one in ten (13%) reported using a needle they know or suspected someone else had used before them and 18% reported that someone else used their needle after them. Research has shown a strong association between injection drug use and the transmission of blood-borne infections (e.g. HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C), particularly when needles are reused or shared, and injection drug users have high rates of such infections (see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 8, Issue 24).

Percentage of Past Year Injection Drug Users Who Reported Engaging in Risk Behaviors the Last Time They Used a Needle to Inject Drugs, 2002 and 2003



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, "Injection Drug Use Update: 2002 and 2003," *The NSDUH Report*, April 8, 2005. Available online at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k5/ivdrug/ivdrug.cfm>.

• 301-405-9770 (voice) • 301-403-8342 (fax) • CESAR@cesar.umd.edu • www.cesar.umd.edu •

CESAR FAX is supported by BYRN 2004-1206, awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice through the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention. *CESAR FAX* may be copied without permission. Please cite CESAR as the source.