

# Communiqué

## **Overdoses related to the consumption of street drugs**

The Public Health Department of Montreal reports on the situation

Montreal, July 3, 2014 - The Department of Public Health (DSP) of the Public Health and Social Services of Montreal now investigating 53 cases of severe poisoning, including 18 deaths related to the consumption of street drugs. The data indicate that the number of deaths was particularly high in May (13 deaths) and then decrease in June (5 deaths). Three quarters of these deaths are related to IV drug use. may estimate that this represents ten deaths out of 13 in May, four out of five in June. These numbers are considered high when compared with an analysis conducted from 2000 to 2009 showed that, on average, 1.3 reported in a four week period of death was related to IV drug overdose.

### **Further investigation and implementation of preventive measures**

Collection and data analysis is ongoing. The results of laboratory tests will be available soon and should enable us to better understand what substances or drugs are involved in these overdose cases.

To prevent other overdoses and deaths, informative material has been widely distributed. For example, a video is broadcast on local TV and a poster has been posted in a fifty restaurants and bars in Montreal. Training will also be provided to stakeholders and people who use drugs to remind them how best to intervene in case of overdose.

The DSP Montreal continues to work closely with the health and social services network, community groups, the Coroner's Office and the Police Department of the City of Montreal.

Remember that these cases occurred in people who use heroin, cocaine or tablets taken by injection, nasally or by inhalation. Those affected are between 20 and 65 years old. Some of them are casual consumers.

### **Advice to people who use drugs**

DSP recommends that people who use drugs to be alert to changes in the appearance of the drug, not only consume, reduce their dose, inject more slowly and call 911 at the first sign of any unusual signs or symptoms.

# OVERDOSES in the city :

## lower your dose

### it won't kill you

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## IF YOU USE DRUGS OFTEN OR ONLY FROM TIME TO TIME:

- Never do it alone
- Lower your dose (cut it in 4)
- Take it slowly

If you think someone is in danger, **quickly call an ambulance (911).**

You could save this person's life!

## WATCH FOR THESE SIGNS:

- difficulty breathing
- breathing slower and slower
- blue lips
- loss of consciousness (the person doesn't wake up)

Agence de la santé  
et des services sociaux  
de Montréal

Québec 