

## Alexandra Loverock



### Biography

Alexandra is a first year MSc student in the School of Public Health. As part of her undergraduate program (BSc in Psychology) at the University of Alberta, she completed a 16-month internship at the Edmonton Early Psychosis Intervention Clinic. In this position, she assisted with various research projects and completed neuropsychological assessments with individuals with psychosis. After completing her BSc, Alexandra worked as a research assistant for the Bebensee Schizophrenia Research Unit (U of A Department of Psychiatry) for two years. In this role, she was involved in research that examined the effects of cannabis use on cognition in psychosis patients and healthy controls.

From her experience working with early psychosis patients, Alexandra realized that she would like to advocate for groups of vulnerable people especially those with mental illness or substance addictions. She has also become very interested in the broader public health issues surrounding substance use in the community such as the disconnect between services preference and availability. Alexandra is now studying cannabis use at the population level and opioid service preferences in out-of-treatment opioid users. Overall, she is determined to promote mental health and wellness at the community and patient level to reduce substance related harm.

### Project Summary

#### *Assessing Patient-Centredness in Services for Opioid Use*

Evidence-based addiction treatment and harm reduction programs are being expanded in Canada as a result of an on-going public health emergency in relation to opioids use. The impact of these services may be limited, however, because there are existing knowledge gaps in the way opioid users view treatment and harm reduction services, and how well existing services use procedures and implement policies designed to enhance client interest and engagement. The proposed research consists of two studies.

The first study will ask opioid users from across Canada, who have not attended any treatment, about their opioid use patterns, awareness of harm reduction and treatment services, their perceptions on accessing these services, and awareness and attitudes toward five well-known opioid-related services (i.e., naloxone, medically-supervised consumption, methadone, suboxone, and drug testing/checking). This information will be collected anonymously online. The goal is to see what opioid users not currently involved in treatment know about existing services, and if these services are appealing. There is also uncertainty about whether existing opioid addiction services value patients' thoughts, feelings, and input.

The second study will complete a scoping review of existing research on opioid treatments to see if patient factors (e.g., choice in treatment) are considered in treatment services. All research papers about opioid treatment published in the past 15 years will be reviewed for population, study type, patient-oriented factors, treatment type, and main outcomes. This review will provide a better understanding of the patients' role in treatment and indicate areas of treatment that can be improved.