

# Special Issue of CJEN – The importance of harm reduction in emergency nursing practice

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The *Canadian Journal of Emergency Nursing (CJEN)* is dedicating this special issue to exploring the connections between emergency nursing, substance use, and harm reduction. Inviting guest editors and dedicating special editions to specific topics is not new or novel - CJEN has partnered with other organizations; hosted conference abstracts (McLane and Lang, 2020; McLane & Lang, 2021; Fisher et al. 2022; Fisher et al., 2023); co-published statements from the CIHR (Lau, 2021); and has worked closely with the Canadian Forensic Nurses Association (Doyle, 2013; Early, 2014; Forensic Nurses Society of Canada, 2014). While inviting guest editors and curating special issues on specific topics is a well-established practice for CJEN, this issue marks a first for CJEN by unifying the entire edition under a single theme: substance use and harm reduction.

CJEN has a proud history of exploring the impacts of substance use on nurses, their workplaces, and substance-related patient characteristics (Rush, 2005). The interplay between mental health and substance use (Hilton et al., 2023), and the effects of substance use at a population level (Patterson & Douma, 2020;

Picard et al., 2024) also reflect previously published articles. CJEN has a strong history of amplifying voices in harm reduction, examining how these practices are implemented (Horvath & Carter, 2024; Low, 2020), their effects on nurses (Mercier et al., 2023), their impact on patient outcomes (Whitman et al., 2020) and system burdens (Vorobeichik et al., 2022).

Substance use and harm reduction have a significant impact on the daily operations of our emergency departments. As our healthcare system continues to grapple with the opioid crisis and other substance-related challenges, harm reduction strategies play a crucial role in delivering comprehensive care while mitigating adverse health impacts related to substance use. This special edition features original research articles that shed light on how these pressing issues are impacting nurses, patients, and emergency department teams across Canada. The articles delve into theory, impressions, and efforts to address these rising challenges. To ensure a well-rounded perspective, we have collaborated with our harm reduction nursing counterparts in presenting this edition. We hope you enjoy this special edition!

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