



Chapter 10

Programmes for needle and syringe provision

Methods and definitions

The EU Member States, Bulgaria and Norway have in 2004 for the first time used a standardised format to collect the data on needle and syringe availability through specialised needle and syringe programmes (NSPs) and through pharmacy sales: the Standard Table 10 - Syringe availability (<http://www.emcdda.eu.int/?nnodeid=5777>).

This data collection tool includes information on the availability of different types of needle and syringe programmes (NSPs) in the country, including pharmacy-based programmes, and on the number of syringes provided at these programmes, as well as on pharmacy-sales and on syringe provision via vending machines. It includes data on the number of *syringe provision points*, defined as individual locations or physically distinct outlets where syringes are available for free or against payment, e.g. the number of community pharmacies.

While data on quantity and types of syringe provision points that are offered provide important background information, it is essential to interpret syringe availability in its national context, in particular with regard to the estimated prevalence level of drug injecting.

Information on the number of client contacts and the number of individual clients that make use of needle and syringe programmes are also collected with Standard Table 10, but as this information is patchy or unavailable in many countries, it is not presented here. The EMCDDA is carrying out further developmental work to increase the availability and quality of these data together with interested national focal points. For more information on EMCDDA harm reduction data collection see: <http://www.emcdda.eu.int/?nnodeid=4823>.

Overview of the data

Listed below are the tables in the bulletin and the associated graphics dealing with needle and syringe availability, along

with a brief overview. Please note that associated graphics are available only on the statistical bulletin website (<http://stats05.emcdda.eu.int>).

These tables give information on the provision of syringes through needle and syringe programmes (NSPs) and pharmacy sales in 25 EU countries, Norway and Bulgaria. Reported are the numbers of syringes distributed, exchanged and sold at different types of syringe provision points, including pharmacies, non-pharmacy-based services and vending machines. Data on the year of introduction of needle and syringe programmes complement the information.

References and sources used for the needle and syringe programme information provided in the other tables are given in [Table NSP-0](#).

Summary points

- [Table NSP-1](#) provides an overview of the number of points where syringes have been available for distribution, exchange or sale in the countries, including at vending machines and community pharmacies. The table also gives the reported number of syringes provided to drug users at these services in 2003.
- Despite continuous increases over the past years in most countries, differences are still apparent in the coverage of needle and syringe programmes among Member States, which affect data comparability. [Table NSP-2](#) provides information on the year in which needle and syringe exchange programmes were introduced in the Member States, from when on they were publicly funded, and which types of needle and syringes programmes were available in 2003.
- Nearly all countries have needle and syringe programmes based at drugs agencies, although comparatively few countries base them at pharmacies. [Table NSP-3](#) provides the numbers of non-pharmacy needle and syringe exchange programmes, including fixed and mobile points serviced by drugs agencies, outreach work and

peer-distribution, as well as total number of syringes exchanged, distributed or sold at these points in 2002 and 2003. Data from vending machines are not included. The table include local or regional information where national totals are not available.

- While nearly all countries have needle and syringe programmes based at drugs agencies, comparatively few countries make use of pharmacies as outlets for needle and syringe programmes. [Table NSP-4](#) gives information on the number of community pharmacies involved in needle and syringe programmes and on the number of syringes exchanged or distributed to drug users at these pharmacies in 2002 and 2003. The table includes only those countries where information on pharmacy-based NSPs were available, and the table includes local or regional information where national totals were not available
- [Table NSP-5](#) shows the reported numbers of syringe vending machines and total numbers of syringes distributed or sold in 2002 and 2003. The table includes only those countries where information on syringe provision via vending machines was available, again including local or regional information where national totals were not available.
- Data are particularly poor with regard to the number of syringes sold to drug users at community pharmacies and only a few countries are able to provide reliable data in this area. This is despite the fact that pharmacy syringe sale is legal in all countries except Sweden and it is therefore likely to be a main source of syringe provision for many drug users. [Table NSP-6](#) shows the reported numbers of pharmacy sales of syringes in 2002 and 2003. It includes only those countries where information on syringe sales in pharmacies was available and shows local or regional information where national totals were not available.
- The results presented in the tables reflect that data on the number of syringes provided are not available to the same extent from all types of syringe provision points in the Member States.

Data tables

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Table NSP-0. Needle and syringe programmes: information sources

| Ref. | Source |
|------|--|
| 1 | National Report 2004. |
| 2 | ST 10 2004, 2003. |
| 3 | SQ 23 2004. |
| 4 | Estimated value. |
| 5 | Personal communication H Stöver 31.01.05. |
| 6 | Personal communication M Camilleri 14.02.05. |
| 7 | Coutinho R (1995) Am J Public Health 85, 1490-1. |
| 8 | The sale of syringes without prescription is not legal in Sweden. |
| 9 | Circulaire DGS 05 May 1992 already allows a pilot study of NSPs, but full implementation only 1995. |
| 10 | Personal communication E Subata 28.02.05. |
| 11 | Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (www.pgeu.org). |
| 12 | Associação Nacional de Farmácias (www.anf.pt). |
| 13 | National Report Belgium 2003. |
| 14 | www.statistics.gov.uk |
| 15 | www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk |
| 16 | National Public Health Service for Wales/Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain; data refer to number of needles. Reference period: fiscal year 2002/2003. |
| 17 | Northern Ireland Needle and Syringe Exchange Database. |
| 18 | Personal communication B Korcsova 09.03.05. |
| 19 | NSPs exist in Sofia, Burgass, Plovdiv, Pernik, Blagoevgrad, Kustendil, Pazardgik, Ruse, Varna. |
| 20 | Excluding Stérikit sales. |
| 21 | Emmanuelli, J. (2003), Siamois: Tendances en matière de réduction des risques chez les usagers de drogues par voie iv, In: Bello, J-Y., Toufik, A., Gandilhon, M., Giraudoin, I. and Bonnet, N., Phénomènes émergents liés aux drogues en 2002, quatrième rapport national du dispositif TREND, Paris, OFDT, pp 263-267. |
| 22 | Malin et al (2004) estimate that 86 % of pharmacies sell syringes. Malin, K., Holmström, P., Holopainen, A., Partanen, A., (2004), Huumeidenkäyttäjät apteekkien asiakkaina vuosina 2001 ja 2003, A-klinikkasäätiön monistesarja nro 43. Ilmestyy loppuvuonna 2004. |
| 23 | www.mainline.org |
| 24 | Data from UK refer to the fiscal year (March - February). |
| 25 | Provisional results of national audit of needle exchange, reference period fiscal year 2003/2004, e-mail communication David Best, Head of Research, National Treatment Agency, 13 July 2005. |

Table NSP-1. Number of syringe provision outlets and number of syringes (in thousands) exchanged, distributed or sold in 2003

| Country | Non-pharmacy NSPs (2) | Syringes provided (x1000) (1) | Pharmacy-based NSPs | Syringes provided (x1000) (1) | Vending machines | Syringes provided (x1000) (1) | Total NSPs + vending machines | Syringes provided (x1000) (1) | Total pharmacies (3) | Syringe sales (x1000) (4) | Total outlets (5) | Total syringes (x1000) (5) |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Belgium (Flemish com.) | (6) 28 | 237.0 | 40 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 68 | 0.0 | 5256 | | | |
| Belgium (French com.) | (6) 11 | 226.6 | 9 | 14.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 20 | 0.0 | 5256 | | | |
| Czech Republic | 166 | 1780.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 166 | 0.0 | 2480 | | | |
| Denmark | 135 | 950.0 | 108 | | 7 | | 250 | | 279 | | | |
| Germany | | | | | | | | | 21305 | | | |
| Estonia | 19 | 283.6 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 19 | 0.0 | 307 | | | |
| Greece | 4 | 43.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 0.0 | 9500 | | | |
| Spain | 297 | 4551.8 | 946 | 1680.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 1243 | 0.0 | 20098 | | | |
| France | 240 | 3000.0 | 18000 | 5598.0 | 250 | 1000.0 | 18490 | 9598.0 | 22697 | 3560.0 | 18490 | 13158.0 |
| Ireland | 20 | | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 20 | 0.0 | 1230 | | | |
| Italy | | | | | | | | | 16808 | | | |
| Cyprus | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 500 | | | |
| Latvia | 22 | 125.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 22 | 0.0 | 909 | | | |
| Lithuania | 7 | 302.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 7 | 0.0 | 675 | | | |
| Luxembourg | 10 | 330.2 | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 44.4 | 15 | 374.7 | 91 | | | |
| Hungary | 10 | 43.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 0.0 | 13 | 43.9 | 2050 | | | |
| Malta | 7 | 210.1 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 7 | 210.1 | 225 | | | |
| Netherlands | 120 | | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | | 123 | | 1707 | | | |
| Austria | 29 | 1755.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 12 | 76.1 | 41 | 1831.9 | 1162 | | | |
| Poland | 29 | 643.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 29 | 643.8 | 9693 | | | |
| Portugal | 80 | 1082.2 | 1232 | 1580.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 1312 | 2662.9 | 2767 | | | |
| Slovenia | | | | | | | | | 260 | | | |
| Slovakia | 11 | 143.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 11 | 143.3 | 1070 | | | |
| Finland | (8) 36 | 1435.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 36 | 1435.0 | 801 | 486.0 | 726 | 1921.0 |
| Sweden | (9) 2 | | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 0.0 | 870 | 0.0 | | |
| United Kingdom | 453 | | 1607 | | 0 | | 2060 | | 12112 | | | |
| Bulgaria | 24 | 400.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 24 | 400.0 | 4288 | | | |
| Norway | 21 | 3300.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 15 | | 36 | | 500 | | | |

Notes:

Where data are not available, the table entry is left empty.

See detailed data and references in Tables NSP-2 to NSP-6 (pages 10.6–10.8).

Syringe provision points or outlets: individual locations/physically distinct outlets where syringes can be obtained for free, against payment or in exchange against used ones.

(1) All syringes exchanged, sold or otherwise distributed from the stated provision points (column to the left).

(2) NSPs : Needle and Syringe Programmes. The term is used here interchangeably with the term syringe provision points. Non-pharmacy NSPs include fixed and mobile points, outreach work and peer distribution.

(3) Total number of community pharmacies according to Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (www.pgeu.org), except for Czech Republic, Greece, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Finland and Norway (ref. 2); Portugal (ref. 12) and the United Kingdom (refs. 14, 15 and 16). Further references are provided in Table NSP-6 (page 10.8).

(4) The number of syringes that are sold by the pharmacies to injecting drug users.

- (5) Total number of NSP points, community pharmacies and machines selling or distributing syringes: total figures are unavailable if any one component is at present unknown
- (6) The total overall number of community pharmacies in Belgium is reported for all communities.
- (7) The number of pharmacies involved in NSPs in France is an estimate.
- (8) Estimate of number of pharmacies selling syringes is based on study concerning drug users as clients in pharmacies (Malin et al., 2004) that found that 86 % of pharmacy outlets sell syringes.
- (9) The sale of syringes without prescription is not legal in Sweden.

Sources:

See references in Table NSP-0 (page 10.3).

Table NSP-2. Year of introduction of needle and syringe programmes. Types of programmes available in 2003

| Country | Year of introduction NSP (1) | | | | Types of NSPs available in 2003 (2) | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|----------------|------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| | Ref. | Year first NSP | Ref. | Year first publicly funded | Fixed sites | Van/bus | Outreach/peer | Vending machine | Pharmacy-based NSPs | Prison-based NSP |
| Belgium Fr | 3 | 1994 | 3 | 2000 | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Belgium Fl | 3 | 2001 | 3 | 2001 | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Czech Republic | 18 | 1986 | 18 | 1991 | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No |
| Denmark | 3 | 1986 | 3 | 1986 | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Germany | 5 | 1984 | 1 | 1992 | Yes | | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Estonia | 3 | 1997 | 3 | 2001 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Greece | 3 | 1998 | 3 | 1998 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Spain | 3 | 1985 | 3 | 1985 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| France | 3 | 1989 | 3, 9 | 1995 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Ireland | 2 | 1989 | 3 | 1989 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Italy | 3 | 1990 | 3 | 1990 | | | | | | |
| Latvia | 3 | 1997 | 3 | 1997 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Lithuania | 3 | 1997 | 10 | 1997 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | | No |
| Luxembourg | 3 | 1993 | 3 | 1993 | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No |
| Hungary | 3 | 1994 | 3 | 2000 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Malta | 3 | 1987 | 6 | 1987 | Yes | No | No | No | No | No |
| Netherlands | 7 | 1984 | 3 | 1986 | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| Austria | 3 | 1990 | 3 | 1990 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Poland | 3 | 1989 | 3 | 1989 | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No |
| Portugal | 3 | 1993 | 3 | 1993 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Slovenia | 3 | 1992 | 3 | 1996 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Slovakia | 3 | 1994 | 3 | 1994 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Finland | 3 | 1997 | 3 | 1997 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Sweden | 3 | 1986 | 3 | 1986 | Yes | No | No | No | No | No |
| United Kingdom | | | | | | | | | | |
| England | 14 | 1986 | 3 | 1987 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Wales | 16 | 1986 | 3 | 1987 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Scotland | 14 | 1987 | 1 | 1987 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| N. Ireland | 15 | 2001 | 1 | 2001 | No | No | No | No | Yes | No |
| Bulgaria | 3 | 1995 | 3 | 1999 | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No |
| Norway | 3 | 1988 | 3 | 1988 | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |

Notes:

(1) NSP = needle and syringe programme.

(2) Information in these columns comes from ST 10 2004, 2003.

Where data are not available for a country, the table entry is left empty.

In 2003, there is no NSPs in Cyprus.

Sources:

See references in Table NSP-0 (page 10.3).

Table NSP-3. Number of non-pharmacy needle and syringe programmes and number of syringes exchanged, distributed or sold in 2002 and 2003

| Country | Region | Ref. | Number NSP points 2002 | Number syringes 2002 | Ref. | Number NSP points 2003 | Number syringes 2003 |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Belgium | Flemish community | 2, 4 | 18 | 200000 | 2, 4 | 28 | 237000 |
| | French community | 2, 4 | 10 | 322000 | 2, 4 | 11 | 226646 |
| Czech Republic | National | 2, 4, 18 | 90 | 1500000 | 2, 4, 18 | 166 | 1780000 |
| Denmark | National | | | | 2, 4 | 135 | 950000 |
| Estonia | National | | | | 2 | 19 | 283574 |
| Greece | National | 2 | 3 | 48526 | 2 | 4 | 43836 |
| Spain | National | | | | 2 | 297 | 4551848 |
| France | National | 4, 21 | | 3000000 | 2, 4 | 240 | 3000000 |
| Ireland | National | 2 | 17 | | 2 | 20 | |
| Latvia | National | 2 | 11 | 94146 | 2 | 22 | 125696 |
| Lithuania | National | 2 | 7 | 372676 | 2 | 7 | 301968 |
| Luxembourg | National | 2 | 10 | 254596 | 2 | 10 | 330213 |
| Hungary | Budapest, Pécs, Miskolc, Veszprém | | | | 2 | 10 | 43885 |
| Malta | National | 2 | 7 | 193242 | 2 | 7 | 210149 |
| Netherlands | National | | | | 23 | 120 | |
| Austria | National | | | | 2 | 29 | 1755788 |
| Poland | National | 2 | 31 | 455338 | 2 | 29 | 643836 |
| Portugal | National | 2 | 30 | 722000 | 2 | 80 | 1082168 |
| Slovenia | Ilirska Bistrica | 2 | 1 | 1818 | 2 | 1 | 255 |
| | Coast-Koper-BUS | | | | 2 | 5 | 33052 |
| | North-East/Celje | | | | 2 | 2 | |
| | Ljubljana-NGO Robert | 2 | 13 | 268079 | 2 | 16 | 184278 |
| | Ljubljana-Stigma | | | | 2, 4 | 2 | 1100 |
| Slovakia | National | | | | 2 | 11 | 143269 |
| Finland | National | 2 | 29 | 1130000 | 2 | 36 | 1435000 |
| Sweden | National | 2 | 2 | 110000 | 2 | 2 | |
| United Kingdom | England | | | | 25 | 344 | |
| | Scotland | 2, 24 | 52 | 1207496 | 25 | 79 | |
| | Wales | | | | 25 | 30 | |
| | N. Ireland | 1 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Bulgaria | National | | | | 2, 4, 19 | 24 | 400000 |
| Norway | National | | | | 2, 4 | 21 | 3300000 |

Notes:

The table includes fixed and mobile needle and syringe programme points, outreach work and peer-distribution. Does not include vending machines.

The table shows only those countries that reported data.

Where data have not been available, the table entry is left empty.

Includes fixed and mobile needle and syringe programme points, outreach work and peer-distribution. Does not include vending machines.

Sources:

See references in Table NSP-0 (page 10.3).

Table NSP-4. Total number of pharmacy-based needle and syringe programmes and number of syringes exchanged or distributed in 2002 and 2003

| Country | Region | Ref. | 2002 pharmacy-NSPs | 2002 syringes | Ref. | 2003 pharmacy-NSPs | 2003 syringes |
|----------------|-------------------|-------|--------------------|---------------|------|--------------------|---------------|
| Belgium | Flemish community | | | | 13 | 40 | |
| | French community | 2 | | 28000 | 2 | 9 | 14300 |
| Denmark | National | | | | 2 | 108 | |
| Spain | National | | | | 2 | 946 | 1680881 |
| France | National | 2, 4 | | 5200000 | 21 | 18000 | 5598000 |
| Cyprus | National | | | | 2 | 500 | |
| Portugal | National | 2 | 1.238 | 1950000 | 2 | 1232 | 1580720 |
| Slovenia | North-East/Celje | | | | 2 | 2 | 9818 |
| United Kingdom | Wales | 16 | 172 | 1441171 | 25 | 162 | |
| | Scotland | 2, 24 | 111 | 1471350 | 25 | 134 | |
| | Northern Ireland | 17 | 8 | 67516 | 17 | 9 | 82731 |

Notes: The table shows only those countries that reported data.

Where data have not been available, the table entry is left empty.

Sources:

See references in Table NSP-0 (page 10.3).

Table NSP-5. Number of syringe vending machines and number of syringes distributed or sold in 2002 and 2003

| Country | Region | Ref. | 2002 machines | 2002 syringes | Ref. | 2003 machines | 2003 syringes |
|-------------|------------------|------|---------------|---------------|------|---------------|---------------|
| Denmark | National | | | | 2 | 7 | |
| France | National | | | | 2, 4 | 250 | 1000000 |
| Luxembourg | National | 2 | 5 | 36881 | 2 | 5 | 44442 |
| Hungary | National | | | | 2 | 3 | |
| Netherlands | National | | | | 2 | 3 | |
| Austria | National | | | | 2 | 12 | 76127 |
| Slovenia | Ljubljana/Robert | | | | 2 | 2 | 23239 |
| Norway | National | | | | 2 | 15 | |

Notes:

The table shows only those countries that reported data.

Where data have not been available, the table entry is left empty.

Sources:

See references in Table NSP-0 (page 10.3).

Table NSP-6. Number of syringes sold to injecting drug users at community pharmacies

| Country | Region | Ref. | 2002 pharmacies | 2002 syringes | Ref. | 2003 pharmacies | 2003 syringes |
|----------|------------------|----------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|
| France | National | 2, 4, 20 | 18000 | 3700000 | 2, 4, 20, 21 | 18000 | 3560000 |
| Slovenia | Ilirska Bistrica | 2 | 1 | 8550 | 2 | 1 | 10355 |
| | North-East/Celje | | | | 2 | 16 | 40034 |
| Finland | National | | | | 2, 4, 22 | 690 | 486000 |

Notes:

The table excludes hospital pharmacies.

The table shows only those countries that reported numbers or estimates of syringe sales.

Where data are not available for a country, the table entry is left empty.

Sources:

See references in Table NSP-0 (page 10.3).

List of supplementary material

Figures

The figure listed here is available on the statistical bulletin website (<http://stats05.emcdda.eu.int>).

[Figure NSP-1](#). Introduction of needle and syringe programmes in 24 EU countries, Norway and Bulgaria