TARGETING LONDON’S LGBT STEROID INJECTORS

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HOW the Need to Address this Client Group Became Apparent

- Frequently listed as poly-drug-use during assessment/presentations at Antidote.
- Reports from Pharmacists in Soho area about the obvious knowledge gap among both users and pharmacy workers alike.
- Same reports from various needle exchanges and generic drug services in London.
- Outreach work to gyms.
- Increased focus on steroid use within media.
The increased focus on the Body-Beautiful within our Culture..
..and Body-Image Pressures Exacerbated by the Gay Media..
Means greater numbers of men are turning to steroid and PIED use.
Reasons for NOT approaching existing services

- Assuming steroids are illegal
- Not wanting to be associated with harder drug injectors
- Seeing their drug use in the context of health and fitness, not substance misuse
- Believing the myths obtained from word-of-mouth, dealers, and inaccurate websites
- Ignorance of body-building use of steroids from medical practitioners
- Fear of judgement/ignorance from non LGBT services
Dangers Involved

BBV’s

Particularly as many positive men are choosing to have unsafe sex with other positive men, but forgetting the communicability of Hep C.
DANGERS INVOLVED

Increased libido coupled with Poly drug-use leads to poor adherence to safer sex practices
MORE DANGERS

- Abscesses and other injuries from poor injection practices.
- Psychological effects
- Dangers associated with withdrawal
- “Bigorexia”
- Pollution of non-prescribed steroids
- Injection vs Oral
- Special danger for Teenagers
GYNECOMASTIA
SMART MUSCLE
Tuesdays 6pm - 9pm
Steroid information
Free packs
Safer injecting advice
Nutrition and supplement information
Training plans
Access to blood tests

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Previously a **COMPLETELY UN-ADDRESSED** client group.

Expanded to address other PIED’s.

More and more men in their early 20’s injecting drugs they don’t even know the names of.
CONCLUSION

• Service has been running for two and a half years
• Over 1400 clients
• Good feedback from GUM/HIV clinics, needle exchanges, drug services
• Excellent feedback from clients