

# SUBSTANCE USE

## Using data to assist in the proactive care of populations at risk

The global pandemic has overtaken coverage in the media and the attention of our healthcare system, yet **the opioid crisis in BC is killing more people every month than COVID-19 has**. According to a recent [CBC article](#), there were more than 100 “illicit drug toxicity” deaths in BC every month from March - August 2020, with **more than** 175 such deaths in May, June, and July.

The loss of jobs due to COVID-19, lockdowns, and restrictions have only exasperated mental health issues and fractured open pre-existing health vulnerabilities of people who use substances, putting them at further risk during incredibly challenging times.

The need to identify vulnerable people who have higher risk of illness and death has never been greater. Having the tools to help us understand the scale of this problem in our own practices has never been more important. Knowing where the problems are and bringing our patients at risk to our attention for action is key.

### As healthcare providers, it is useful to know the answers to questions like:

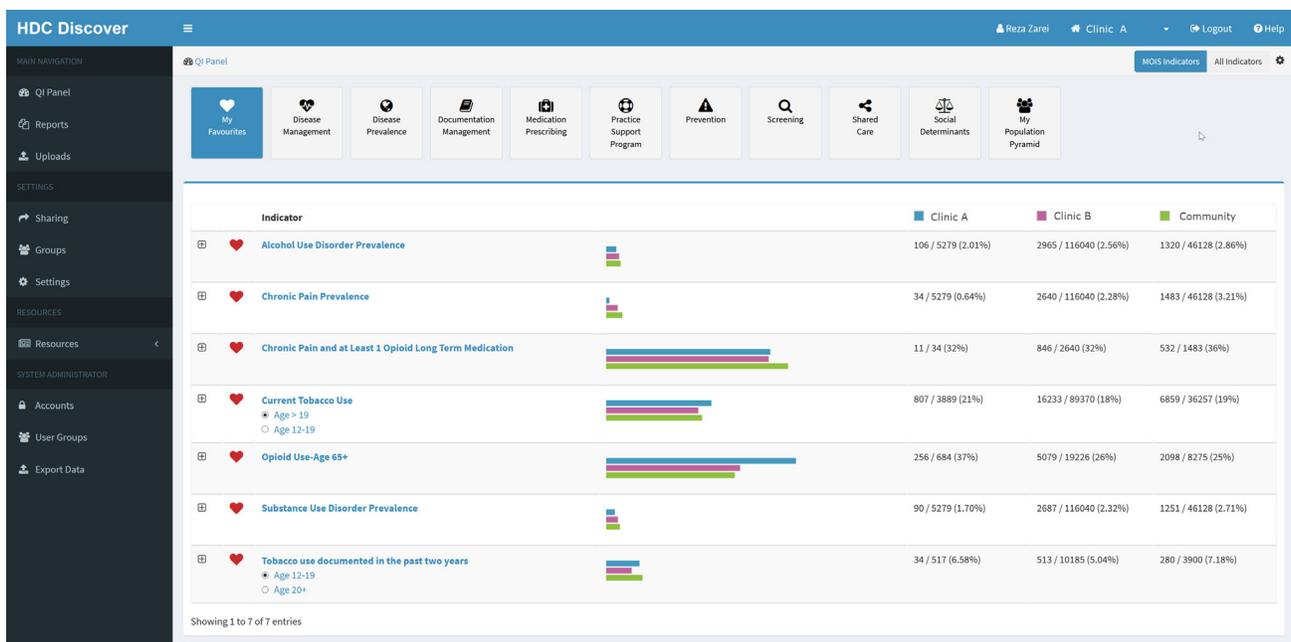
- How many of my patients have risky substance use behaviour?
- How many of my patients have chronic pain? What portion are using medications for their pain?
- How many of my patients with substance use issues are being seen in my office?
- How many of my patients are on medications for opioid use disorder?
- How does this compare with other practices in my community/region/province?
- What opportunities for practice change or clinical care improvement arise from knowing the answers to these questions?

**HDC Discover** has a number of measures **that may help you better understand substance use in your practice**, and implement practice improvements where you see fit. Measures such as:

- Substance Use Disorder Prevalence
- Alcohol Use Disorder Prevalence
- Chronic Pain Prevalence
- Chronic Pain and at Least 1 Opioid Long Term Medication
- Substance Use Disorder and visit in last year
- Alcohol Use Disorder and visit in last year
- Opioid Use-Age
- Benzodiazepine and Opioid Medication Use
- Benzodiazepine Medication Use
- Specific Opioid medication use (morphine, oxycodone, etc.)
- Tobacco Use Documented in Last Two Years
- Current Tobacco use
- Poverty Prevalence

Here's how to use **HDC Discover to better understand patient substance use in your practice**, and implement practice improvements where you see fit:

1. Open the **HDC Discover** app
2. Go to 'Disease Prevalence' or 'Disease Management' or 'Medication Prescribing' domain
3. Open any one of the Indicators you are interested in by clicking on the 'plus' icon at the left of the indicator.
  - This will show the current measurement in the horizontal bar graph, comparing to whichever other practice, communities, regions or to the province that you've set up.
  - You will also have the choice to select between a 'runtime' graph showing change over time, a vertical bar graph, or a distribution graph showing your practice data in comparison to all other anonymized practice data.



4. Click on the 'Heart' icon to the left of the Indicator name to save this indicator view to 'My Favourites'

### Questions to Consider:

- Using the insights gained from this information, can you delve more deeply in your own EMR to generate patient lists and apply changes to your practice?
- What other resources might be available in your practice/community to help you make a change in your practice identified by these new insights?