

Session on telemedicine

- **Objective:**
 - to discuss the use of telemedicine in drug treatment
 - how telemedicine is defined in practice
 - what has changed with COVID-19
 - what are the challenges for data collection
- **Structure of the session**
 - Four presentations: overview (“the post COVID era”), research and practice, the experience during the lockdown, the actual trends and challenges for data collection
- **Breakout sessions (20’)**
 - What is the experience with telemedicine in your country and how has this changed with the COVID-19 containment measures?
 - Do you collect data on drug treatment (clients and interventions) via telemedicine and what are the challenges for data collection and monitoring



EMCDDA publications on telemedicine

- **m-Health applications for responding to drug use and associated harms – EMCDDA paper (2018)**
- **Health and social responses to drug problems. A European guide (2017)**
- **E-health and m-health. Using new technologies to respond to drug problems. Background paper to the HSRG (2017)**
- **Internet based treatment-POD (2014)**
- **Internet-based drug treatment interventions – Insight (2009)**



Best practice portal

- **Telemedicine-delivered treatment interventions for substance use disorders — evidence summary**
- Studies examined suggest this type of intervention is an effective alternative, particularly where face-to-face treatment is less available, but more research is needed on their effectiveness
- **On-going project on Co-producing a Framework for Digital Healthcare in Addictions Services DADE (Digital AdDictions sERVICES)**



TDI Protocol ver. 3.0

Temporary changes introduced on 23/3/2020

Exclusion criteria

- ▣ Sporadic interventions not included in a planned programme
- ▣ Contacts in which drug use is not the main reason for seeking help
- ▣ Contacts with general services involving requests for social assistance only
- ▣ **Contacts only by telephone or letter (to be included)**
- ▣ Contact with the family or other persons who are not the drug users him/herself only
- ▣ Imprisonment, per se
- ▣ **Treatment by Internet only (to be included)**
- ▣ Services providing needles exchange only.



Telemedicine at the time of COVID-19

https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/system/files/publications/13073/EMCDDA-Trendspotter-Covid-19_Wave-1-2.pdf

- **Telemedicine by phone or video widely embraced across European as an alternative to face to face treatment**
- **Especially beneficial for people with less severe forms of drug use**
- **Type of interventions:**
 - psychological counselling
 - first service contacts
 - long-term stable OST clients
 - phone helplines/online harm reduction forums for recreational users

Numbers of face-to-face and phone consultations in Riga - March -April 2020

