BACKGROUND & METHOD

- Most people on income assistance in BC get their money through a single monthly cheque, usually on the last Wednesday of the month. This day is known as “cheque day” or “Welfare Wednesday”.
- The study looked at whether cheque day is associated with any health or social harms related to drug use.
- Overdose and drug use data was collected at Insite, Vancouver Coastal’s supervised injection site, between March 2004 and December 2010.
- By identifying overdose incidents on or immediately after cheque day and comparing them to incidents occurring on all other days, researchers were able to see trends in the timing of non-fatal overdoses.

QUICK FACT

THE RISK OF OVERDOSE WAS OVER TWO TIMES MORE LIKELY ON OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER CHEQUE DAY AMONG PEOPLE INJECTING DRUGS AT INSITE.

FINDINGS

- The risk of non-fatal overdose among people injecting drugs at Insite was over two times more likely on or immediately after cheque day.
- This was linked to riskier injections taking place, and was not explained by a simple increase in injecting.

IMPLICATIONS

- There are clear health risks linked to cheque day.
- There is a need to explore different approaches to how income assistance is given out in BC.