Enhancing Drug-Impaired Driving Data Across Canada: Law Enforcement Resource Use Data

The Issue

Every year, thousands of people living in Canada drive after using drugs other than alcohol, posing serious risks to themselves and other road users (Brown et al., 2015, 2021; Statistics Canada, 2021). Law enforcement agencies use substantial resources to effectively manage and respond to drug-impaired driving (DID) and save lives. However, not all law enforcement agencies in Canada track and report on investments made to manage DID. This makes it difficult to know if the appropriate investments have been made to detect, enforce and ultimately reduce serious injuries and deaths across Canada.

The Significance of the Data

Not enough data are collected to link law enforcement's investments in reducing DID to improved safety on the road. To understand the effectiveness of these investments n reducing DID and to improve resource allocation, data needs to be collected that measures the investments (e.g., funding, time, equipment) and the outcomes (e.g., number of DID incidents, rate of DID detections, use of DID-related equipment). Law enforcement agencies, policy makers and road safety practitioners will be able to use these data to better respond to DID issues.

Recommended Indicators

Four data indicators are recommended for law enforcement agencies to expand, enhance and standardize DID resource data across Canada. These were developed by and in consultation with DID experts from across Canada.

The table describes the four indicators, which are grouped by the extent to which law enforcement already collects the data. Existing indicators (e.g., certified Drug Recognition Experts) are those that law enforcement already collects. In most cases, with minor adjustments to reporting procedures, these indicators need minimal effort to collect. New indicators (e.g., demand for blood testing) are those that law enforcement agencies n Canada do not widely collect. In some cases, these indicators may need a higher degree of effort and investment to implement.

Data source	Indicator
Existing	Trained frontline[a] officers • Number and percentage of frontline officers trained in SFST • Number and percentage of frontline officers trained in the use of ADSE Certified Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) officers • Number of officers certified as a DRE reported by province and territory
New[b]	Requests for DREs • Number and percentage of requests for DREs filled out of all requests for DREs (requests filled plus not able to be filled) Demands for blood (testing) • Number and percentage of demands for blood testing conducted out of all requests for blood demands (demands conducted plus not able to be conducted)

[a]Frontline officers include uniformed police officers performing general duties, patrol or both, and whose duties include stopping motor vehicles for enforcement purposes, as well as uniformed officers assigned to full-time traffic services duties.

[b]New indicators include nonexistent or not widely used indicators (e.g., some agencies may track some of these data).

These indicators are part of a broader set of 34 national DID indicators for various agencies recommended by an expert Drug-Impaired Driving Indicators Advisory Committee, chaired by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. For a complete list of the recommended indicators, see the full report, *Measuring the Impact of Drug-Impaired Driving: Recommendations for National Indicators*. Also included in the report are suggestions for agencies to address potential challenges in implementing the recommendations (e.g., standardizing data, data sharing, financial costs) and more detailed information about the Advisory Committee.

Key Considerations for Implementation

• To achieve the full benefit of the indicators, data collection, analysis and reporting need to be standardized across all law enforcement agencies. Collaboration is needed across all agencies to ensure adherence to the standards.

• Law enforcement data are typically stored at the agency level and may not be accessible to other agencies working to reduce DID. Agencies should work together to establish a centralized body to securely store the anonymized data to improve data sharing, resource use and interagency co-operation.

For a full discussion of these and other key considerations for implementation, see the full report.

References

Brown, S. W., Vanlaar, W. G. M., & Robertson, R. D. (2015). *Alcohol and drug-crash problem in Canada: 2011 report*. Ottawa, Ont.: Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators. https://www.ccmta.ca/web/default/files/PDF/2011_Alcohol_and_Drug_Crash_Problem_Report_Eng.pdf

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