

INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

# A VISION TO END THE GLOBAL OVERDOSE CRISIS

PARTNERS' REPORT 2019



# International Overdose Awareness Day

A Pennington Institute initiative

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[twitter.com/OverdoseDay](https://twitter.com/OverdoseDay)

[instagram/OverdoseAwarenessDay](https://instagram/OverdoseAwarenessDay)

December 2019



Cover photograph: Flinders Street Railway Station, Melbourne, lit purple in honour of International Overdose Awareness Day.

Image taken by Greg Ford on the evening of August 31st, 2019.

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# FOREWORD



John Ryan  
CEO  
Penington Institute

Every year, I pore over photos of people from all walks of life marching, remembering, teaching, learning and calling for a better world on International Overdose Awareness Day.

Of the many campaigns that Penington Institute is part of, none make me as proud as this one.

Within the *2019 Partners' Report*, you will learn about our shared successes, about the people who are part of this movement, and about the work that is still left to do.

We are a collaboration of people around the world. And everyone who gives their time and energy to our cause makes a profound difference.

That is why what you're about to read is called the *Partners' Report*.

Because we are equal partners in the ongoing struggle for recognition and action.

Unfortunately – as we all know – our cause is only becoming more urgent.

We are united by a shared sense of dedication, passion and responsibility to make change in our own communities.

Penington Institute convenes International Overdose Awareness Day because it matters.

It matters to those people who have lost loved ones. To those who are frightened of what drugs do to their families and communities. And to those who want to live in a safer, healthier world.

But doing what we do is not easy.

So, as we turn the page on International Overdose Day for 2019 and look ahead to 2020 – I would like to make a personal appeal.

If you believe that what we do, and the resources and support that we provide are worth even more than the support you already give – please, consider making a small donation to our campaign.

We don't have big donors with deep pockets.

We are a small not-for-profit based in Melbourne, Australia.

The more support we have, the more we can provide to you, and the more change we can help deliver.

I am very proud to present this year's *International Overdose Awareness Day Partners' Report 2019*.

To all our extraordinary partners around the world – this is for you.

I look forward to working with you again next year.

Sincerely,

John Ryan

# IOAD 2019 AT A GLANCE



**874 EVENTS WORLDWIDE**

**39 PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES**

**60,000 ITEMS OF MERCHANDISE SOLD**

**73% OF EVENTS RECEIVED MEDIA COVERAGE**

**2,550 MEDIA STORIES** (Advertising Value  
Equivalency of AU\$9.2 million)

## IMPACTS

- Victorian Government (Australia) announcing AU\$2.2 million to increase access to Needle and Syringe Programs
- Overdose prevention/naloxone training
- Dozens of Mayoral Proclamations
- EU Drugs Agency launching new resources
- EuroNPUD producing Naloxone Saves Lives resources in 10 different languages

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This year's International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) has seen our movement continue to grow and achieve real change. The final total of 874 events held in 39 countries is a new record, surpassing the previous high of 747 set last year.

And, just as in previous years, International Overdose Awareness Day is a chance to raise awareness of overdose, remember those we have lost, and call for change.

In addition to the final tally of events, there are several headline statistics which show how much our movement has grown.

As of today, the International Overdose Awareness Day Facebook page has more than 40,000 followers, while our Twitter page has more than 4,000.

This year's campaign brought more than 273,000 visitors to the IOAD website, [www.overdoseday.com](http://www.overdoseday.com). Visitors to the website downloaded our online resources – posters, fact sheets, and event support kits – more than 20,000 times.

And our supporters bought and distributed close to 60,000 individual pieces of merchandise (in the form of wristbands, badges, and lanyards) – 30 per cent more than in 2018.

The other findings of the 2019 Partners' Report are based primarily on a survey conducted by Penington Institute, the convenor of IOAD, which asked participants about their events and their experiences. Key findings gathered from responses to the survey include:

- **Knowledge about the IOAD community:** our movement is made up of people who use drugs, loved ones of people who have been affected by drugs, harm reduction and health workers, advocates, and activists. Often, these communities overlap.
- **Motivations:** raising awareness of overdose, reducing stigma, and commemoration or memorial of those we've lost were the most popular responses.
- **Events:** almost 95 per cent of respondents had held an IOAD event before. Close to two-thirds of respondents said their event was attended by the general public, while 80 per cent said their event was attended by family and friends of people affected by overdose, and health or community workers.
- **Satisfaction:** 95 per cent of respondents believed their event was successful or very successful, while 96 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied with the resources on offer.
- **Media coverage:** 75 per cent of respondents said their event received media coverage, and the campaign overall generated 2,550 news stories.
- **Outputs and Outcomes:** increased awareness, naloxone training, the creation of shareable resources, Mayoral Proclamations, and politicians promising to do more to end overdose.

The Partners' Report concludes by reflecting on this year's campaign and setting some ambitious targets for next year, which will be the 20th International Overdose Awareness Day.

These targets include 1,000 registered events held in 50 countries, a greater number of real-world policy outcomes, and continued growth in key target areas such as the United Kingdom, South-East Asia, South America and Africa.

# IOAD EVENTS 2019



1



2



3



4



5



6

1. Ballarat Community Health, Ballarat, Victoria, Australia. Photo: Ballarat Courier.
2. Manitoba Harm Education Network event, Flin Flon MB, Canada.
3. Small Performance Adventures pop-up performance in Brighton, England.
- 4 Proclamation by the Mayor of Naperville, Illinois USA.
5. Memorial event in Lockport, Illinois.
6. Southern Metro Harm Reduction Coalition event at Federation Square, Melbourne, Australia.

# INTRODUCTION

On International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD), people from around the world unite to prevent overdose, remember those who have been lost, acknowledge the grief of those left behind, and end the stigma of drug use and addiction.

Founded in Melbourne in 2001, this year was the 19th International Overdose Awareness Day. Since 2012, IOAD has been convened by Penington Institute, an independent Australian organisation which connects lived experience and research to improve community safety in relation to drugs.

The Partners' Report is an evaluation of the success of International Overdose Awareness Day. However, it is also about celebrating the collaboration and partnership that enables IOAD to grow and succeed.

Every person involved with International Overdose Awareness Day – every event holder, every loved one, every fundraiser – should be extremely proud of the difference they are helping to make.

The Partners' Report is about celebrating that partnership while also striving to learn lessons and continue to grow the impact of International Overdose Awareness Day.

As the scale of overdose continues to grow around the world, so must our response.

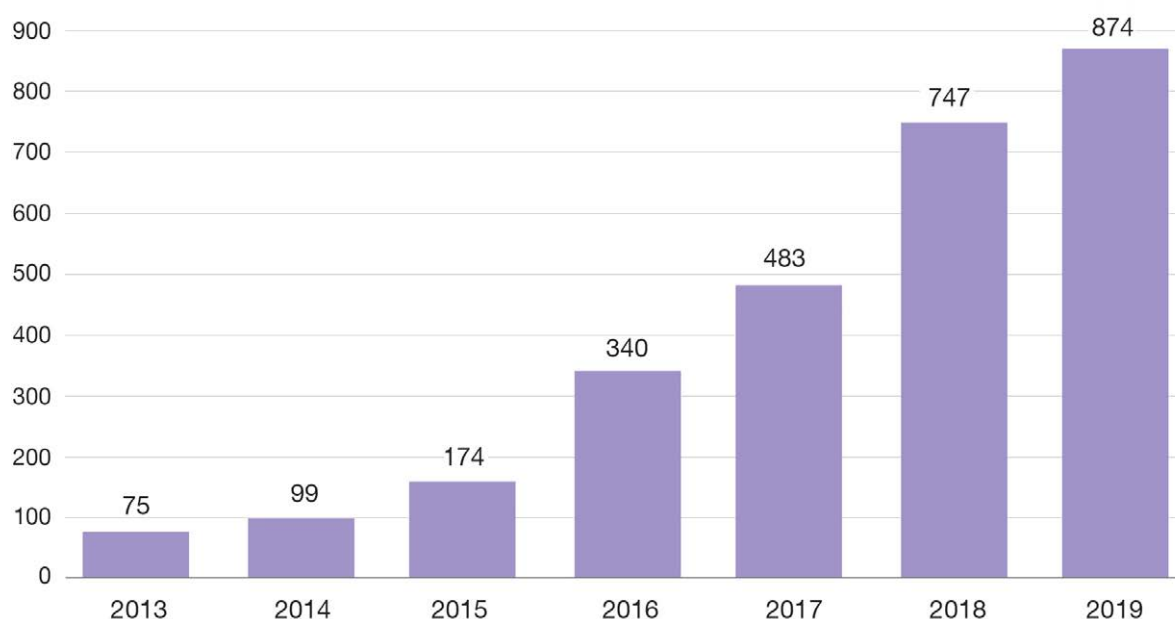
We are proud to announce that International Overdose Awareness Day 2019 was the largest to date.

Our final total of 874 events formally registered on the IOAD website ([overdoseday.com](http://overdoseday.com)) is a new record, surpassing the previous high of 747 set in 2018 by 17 per cent.

Remarkably, the number of registered events has increased by more than eight-and-a-half times in the last five years.

## Number of registered events

Figure 1.





This success is a credit to the extraordinary passion and commitment of IOAD supporters and partners the world over – many of whom have been holding events and showing their commitment to the cause of overdose awareness prevention and awareness for many years.

Crucially, IOAD continues to grow in geographic reach and engagement within individual countries.

This year, events were held in 39 nations – also a new record. It is especially impressive given that, in 2018, the number of countries participating in IOAD doubled from the year before. Consolidating that number provides a solid foundation for future success.

Breaking down the data about participating countries reveals some important differences between the 2018 and 2019 campaigns.

In 2019, there were 14 countries which hosted registered IOAD events where events were not held in 2018: Austria, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Kenya, Lebanon, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand and Ukraine.

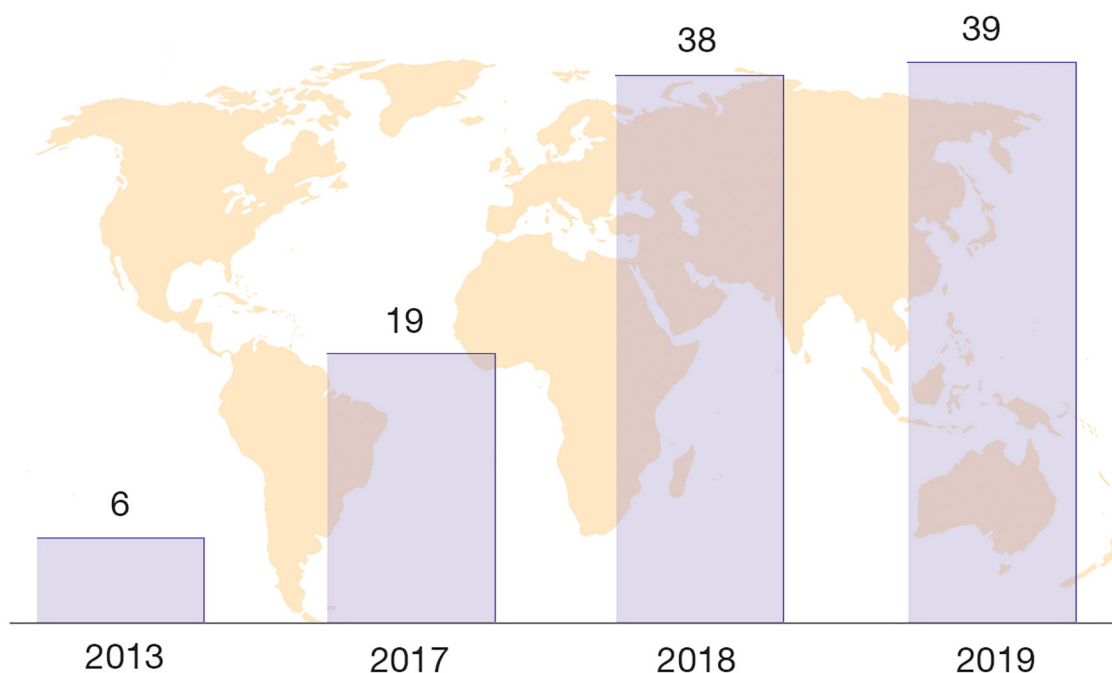
We would like to thank the dedicated IOAD communities in those nations.

We would also like to acknowledge the IOAD communities in Italy, Ireland, and Norway, where there were 7, 15 and 21 events held respectively.

Among the nations which hosted registered events, the United States was the best-represented, with 552 events (a 25 per cent increase from the 2018 total of 442). There were 124 registered events held in Canada, a near-doubling of the 2018 total of 68 and illustrative of the fact that the overdose crisis in North America is an ongoing source of concern.

### Total number of IOAD participating countries

Figure 2.



There were 82 events held in Australia, the original home of International Overdose Awareness Day, an increase on the 2018 total of 74.

This is a testament to the commitment of the IOAD communities in these nations, as well as a reminder that each faces devastating overdose crises that are claiming thousands of lives.

Despite the high levels of participation by communities in the USA, Canada, and Australia, we should also keep thinking of how to expand the geographical reach of International Overdose Awareness Day.

It is especially important for us to think about how to activate the communities in the world's low-resource settings, given these communities are often fighting against restrictive legal regimes, resourcing shortfalls, and incomplete or inadequate data.



IOAD event in Powell River, British Columbia, Canada. Signs display some of the numerous reasons for holding an IOAD event, see Figure 13, page 19.

## List of Countries with Registered Events

Countries	2019 Events	2018 Events	Countries	2019 Events	2018 Events
Afghanistan	1	1	Montenegro	1	1
Australia	82	74	Myanmar	3	4
Austria	1	-	Nepal	-	1
Bulgaria	1	-	New Zealand	-	3
Cameroon	1	-	Nigeria	1	2
Canada	124	68	Norway	21	34
China	-	1	Online	-	12
Colombia	-	1	Pakistan	1	1
Costa Rica	2	2	Portugal	1	-
Cote D'Ivoire	2	1	Puerto Rico	2	1
Cyprus	1	1	Romania	-	1
Denmark	2	2	Russia	1	1
Estonia	1	-	Serbia	-	1
France	2	2	Sierra Leone	-	1
Georgia	2	1	Slovenia	1	-
Germany	2	-	South Africa	1	-
Ghana	-	1	Spain	2	1
Greece	2	-	Sweden	1	-
India	6	10	Switzerland	1	1
Indonesia	1	1	Tanzania	-	2
Ireland	15	9	Thailand	1	-
Italy	7	19	Togo	-	1
Kenya	1	-	Ukraine	1	-
Lebanon	2	-	United Kingdom	25	38
Lithuania	-	2	United States of America	552	442
Macedonia	-	1	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>747</b>
Mexico	-	2			

# INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY PARTNERS' SURVEY

The findings in the Partners' Report are based largely on data gathered from the IOAD 2019 Partners' Survey.

Penington Institute shared the survey with our IOAD Partners between the 8th of September and the 4th of October. It asked respondents about themselves, their motivations for holding their event, and about their events. Respondents were also invited to provide further feedback about their experience.

The 204 people who completed the Partners' Survey represent the most passionate of an already extremely committed group of people. Therefore, they are likely to have had experiences and possess insights that can help us understand how International Overdose Awareness Day can become even better.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the survey and provide us with their honest thoughts on how we can continue to grow and improve.

## Outcomes and Impact

One of the ways we measure the success of International Overdose Awareness Day is by the number of registered events that take place every year.

Every event, whether to raise awareness, or to create political or social change, is important.

However, with overdose continuing to affect more people and communities around the world, it is vital that International Overdose Awareness Day prompts the kind of changes to attitudes and policies that save lives.

This year, as in previous years, there were several meaningful outcomes that are a credit to those people who helped to make them happen. They include, but were not limited to:

- Awareness raising.
- Overdose prevention and response training and the distribution of naloxone.
- Dozens of Mayoral Proclamations in US and Canada.
- The Michigan State Legislature being trained in overdose prevention (on October 23rd, 2019).
- The Victorian Minister for Mental Health, Martin Foley, announcing \$2.2 million of funding to strengthen essential harm reduction services by increasing access to naloxone and Needle Syringe Programs (NSPs) across Victoria (Australia).
- The BC-Yukon Association of Drug War Survivors (in Canada) calling on the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions of British Columbia, Judy Darcy, to enact an order that provides a legal framework for drug buyers' clubs.
- The EU drugs agency (EMCDDA) launching three new resources looking at overdoses in Europe and interventions:  
[http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2019/7/overdose-awareness-day\\_en](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2019/7/overdose-awareness-day_en)

*This was Brantford, Ontario's first overdose awareness day and we had anywhere from 100-150 people throughout the day – and distributed 80 Naloxone kits. Allie, Canada.*

- The European Network of People who use Drugs (EuroNPUD) supported International Overdose Awareness Day by producing a video campaign and *Naloxone Saves Lives* resources in 10 different languages. EuroNPUD also distributed small grants to support country-based advocacy for the rights of people who use drugs.

As part of the Partners' Survey, participants were asked if they had seen, or expected to see, public action or meaningful change occur as a result of the event they held.

At the time of the survey, 17 per cent of respondents (33 of 193) had responded positively. 41 per cent (79 of 193) said that no public action had taken place, while 42 per cent (81 of 193) said they were unsure.

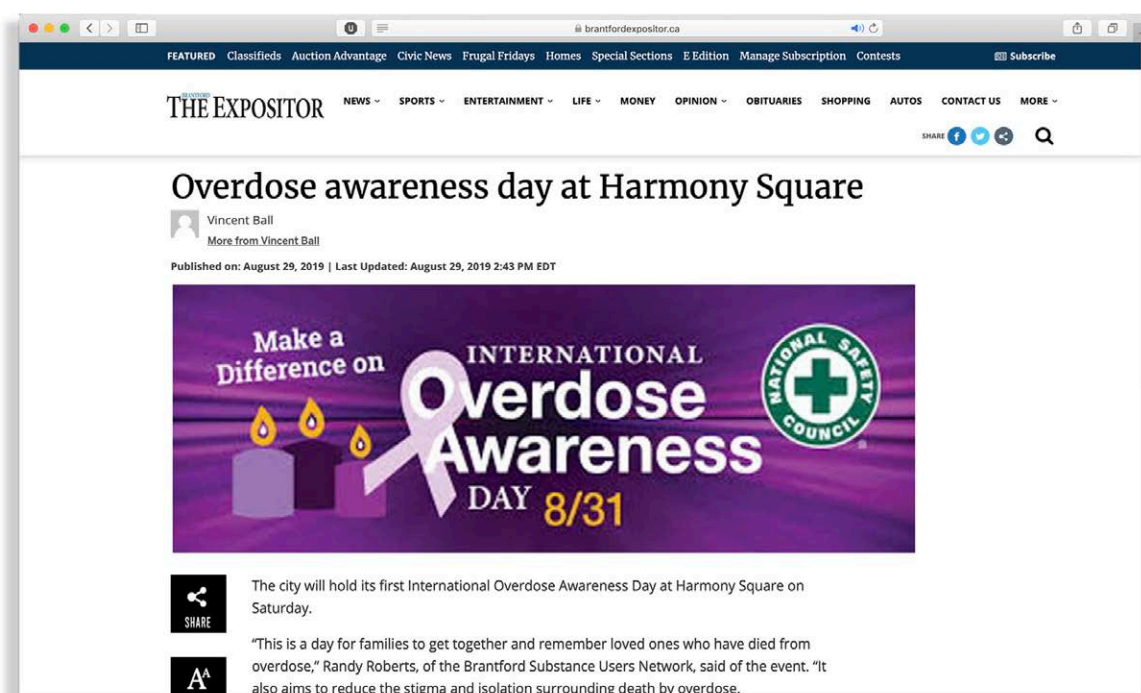
This is partly explained by the fact that, as indicated by Figure 6, not every IOAD Partner intended their event to create broad change. Many people used their event to commemorate a lost loved one, raise awareness, or contribute to ending stigma.

However, these results still indicate substantial room for growth when it comes to harnessing the extraordinary energy, passion and dedication of our IOAD Partners into tangible outcomes.

Globally, the risk profile of drugs is changing and becoming more dynamic. Unfortunately, attitudes, laws, and even a full understanding of the scale of the problem and the required solutions are often lacking.

As we look ahead to the 20th International Overdose Awareness Day in 2020, we must increase our focus on changing minds and changing laws.

Ultimately, we must judge the success of the International Overdose Awareness Day campaign by how it creates real-world change that saves lives. As the toll of overdose continues to climb around the world, we must focus our energies on righting the wrongs of the past and creating societies that are better at reducing the harms of drug use.



Hundreds of events, including this one in Brantford, Ontario (Canada), generated local media coverage.

Survey participants were asked about what outcomes (if any) had taken place as a direct result of the event or activity they held.

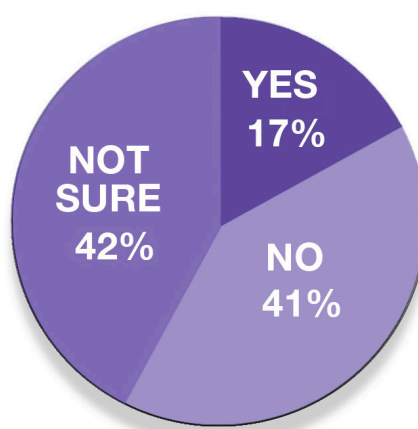
38 per cent (77 of 202) of respondents indicated an event had raised awareness. 28 per cent of respondents (56 of 202) said that their event had improved education, while 26 per cent (53 of 202) of respondents said their event reduced stigma.

However, only 2.5 per cent of respondents – 5 of 202 – indicated that their event has so far led to a political announcement.

Improving on this is a high priority for International Overdose Awareness Day in future years.

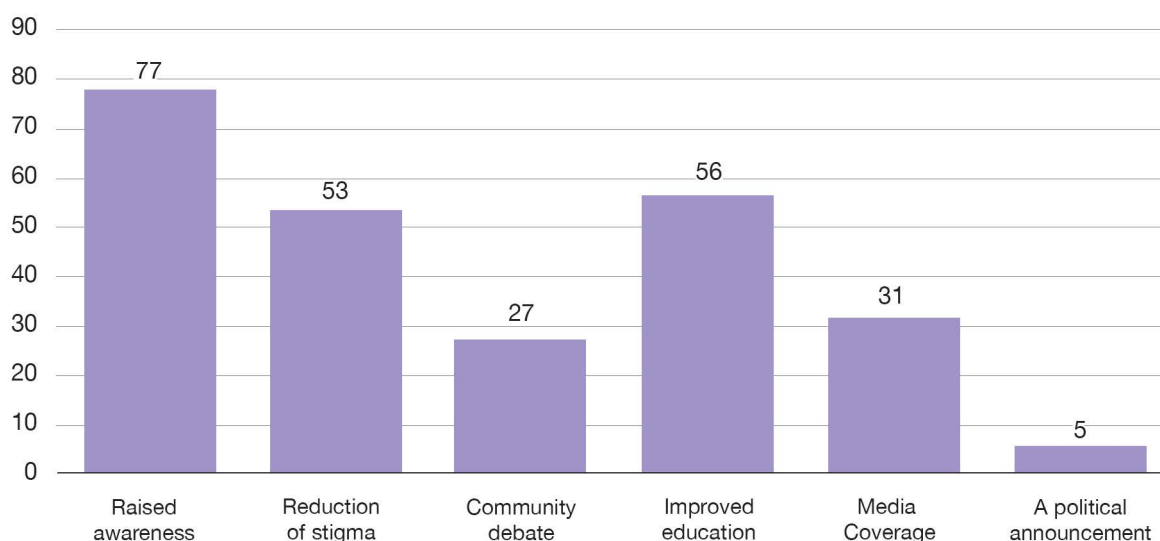
Has there been, or do expect there to be, any public action taken as a result of your activity or event?

Figure 3.



### Outcomes of events and activities

Figure 4. (80 responses, multiple choices allowed)



# IOAD EVENTS 2019



Every 7.3 minutes

1



2



3



4



5

1. Narcosis demonstration, Courthouse Square, Denton, Texas USA.
2. Sri Guru Das University of Health Sciences, Amritsar, India.
3. Masters of Hope IOAD event, Campbell River, British Columbia, Canada.
4. Medicos Do Mundo event, Lisbon, Portugal.
5. Memorial plaque and tree, Credo Community Center, Watertown NY, USA.

## Event promotion and media coverage

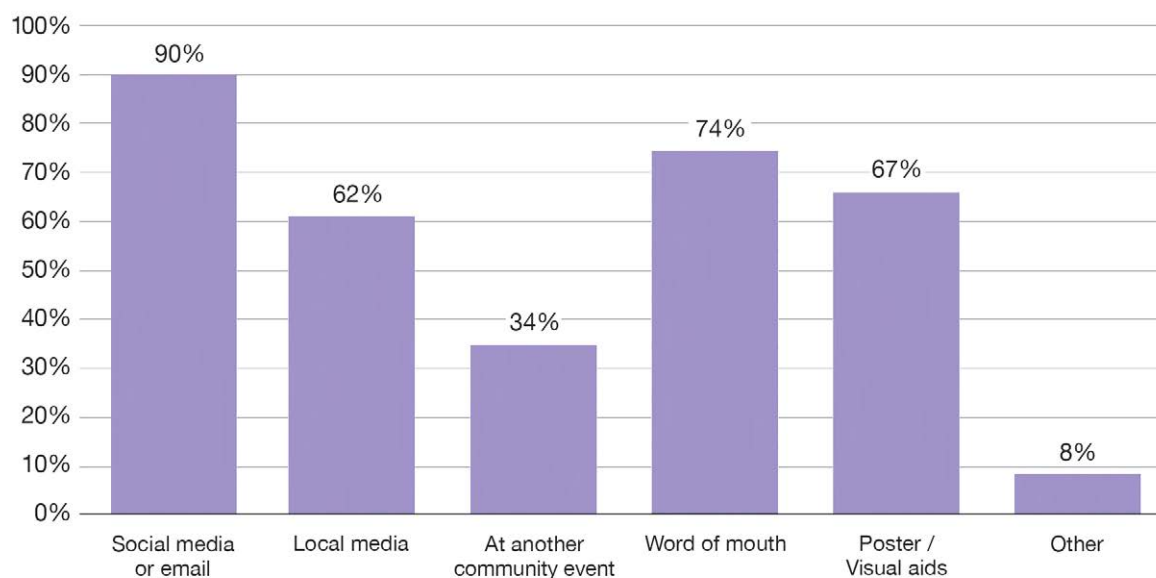
Survey participants were asked how they chose to promote their event in 2019.

90 per cent of respondents promoted their event on social media, or via email. 74 per cent promoted their event via word of mouth. 67 per cent used posters and visual aids, most commonly the resources that are available for download from the International Overdose Awareness Day website.

At the same time, 62 per cent of respondents chose to promote their event via the local media. This indicates that our event partners are aware of the importance of publicising their event beyond their immediate circles (be it family, friends, or their sector) and broadening the appeal within their local communities.

### Event/activity promotion

Figure 5. (193 responses, multiple choices allowed)



When asked if their event received media coverage (regardless of whether coverage was sought or not), three-quarters of respondents (141 of 193) said that it had. This number indicates a high level of media interest in IOAD events, particularly when they have a local angle.

Asked about the sort of media coverage their events received, more than 53 per cent of respondents (103 of 193) said their event was covered on social media. 40 per cent said it was covered in print media, 24 per cent on radio, 21 per cent on television, and 20 per cent online.

Because of the global presence of International Overdose Awareness Day, it can be difficult to derive a precise tally of the media coverage our campaign generated. However, Penington Institute has worked closely with a media agency to understand how wide-ranging our coverage was this year.

According to them, coverage of International Overdose Awareness Day 2019 produced 2,550 news stories between the middle of July and the middle of September. This result is a great credit to our global network of supporters.

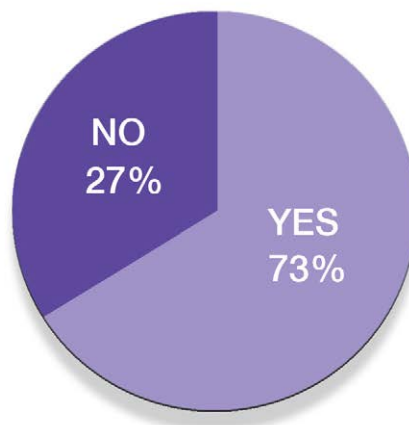


*My first IOAD was 2011, after  
the loss of my beautiful  
30-year-old son.  
Liz, USA*

This amount of overall coverage translated to a total Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) of AU\$9.2 million. AVE is a monetary value based on the media coverage generated and the cumulative impact these stories achieved.

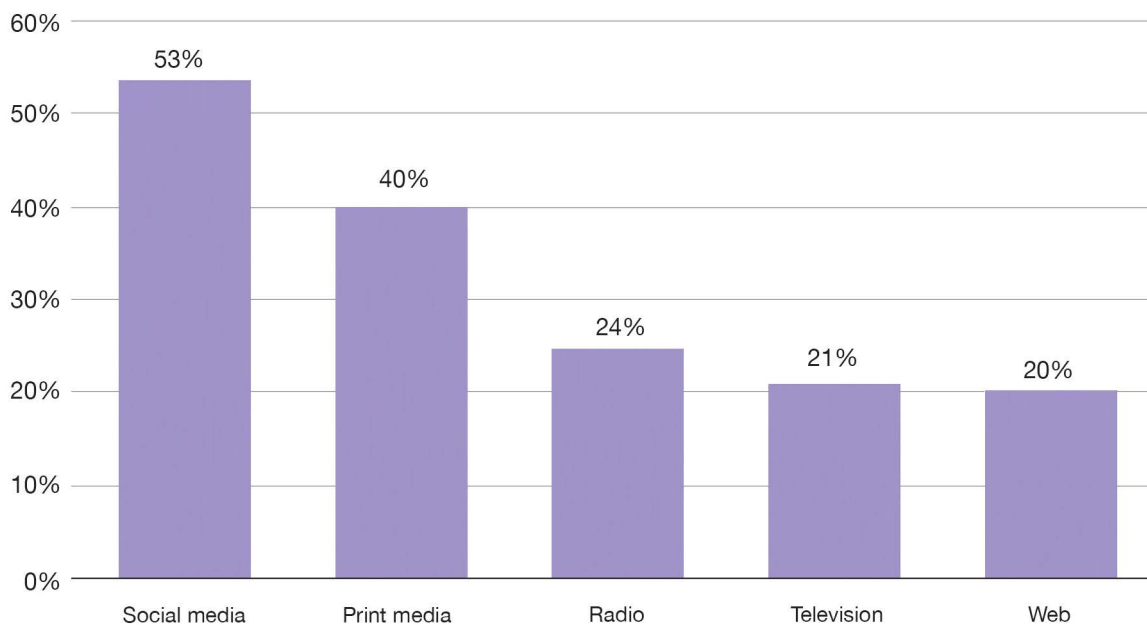
### Did your activity or event receive media coverage?

Figure 6.



### If so, what media coverage did you receive?

Figure 7. (193 responses, multiple choices allowed)



*The website is a great resource and it makes it feel like you are doing something small as part of part of a bigger international movement.*  
Claire, Ireland

## Social Media and website traffic

Aside from the number of registered events and traditional media coverage, social media activity is also an illustration of the success of our efforts to grow International Overdose Awareness Day.

As can be seen in the graph below, the three major International Overdose Awareness Day social media accounts all experienced steady growth from 2018 to 2019.

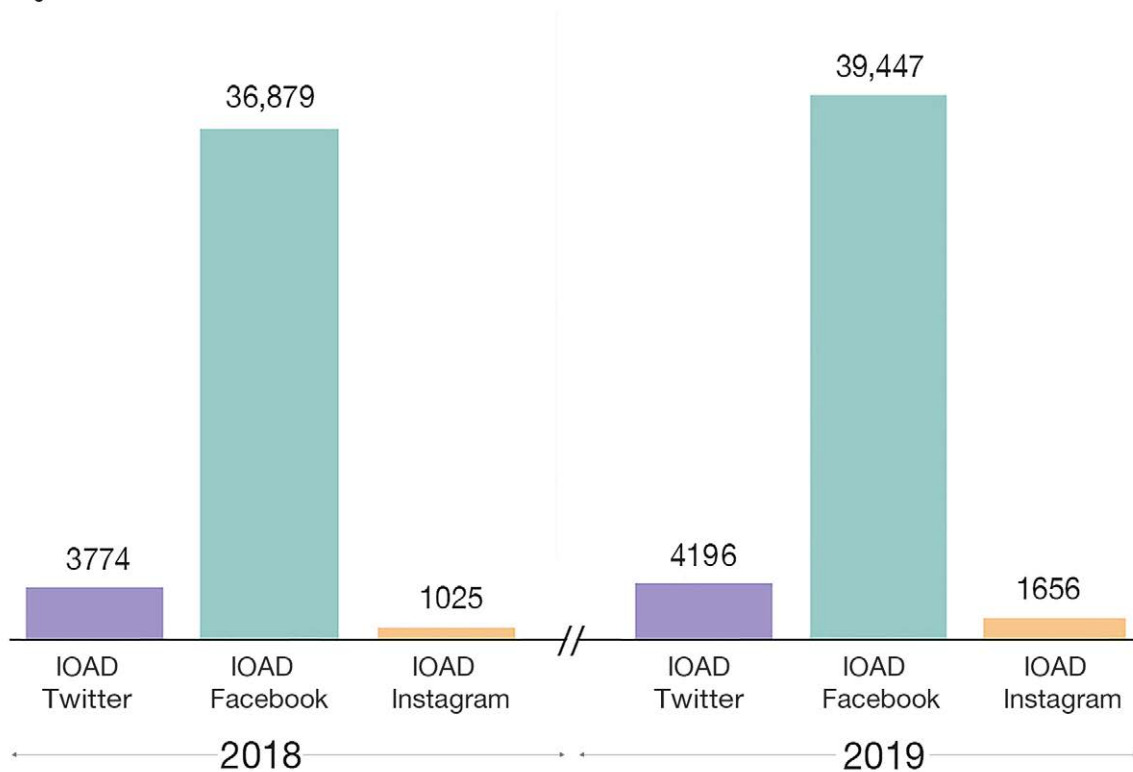
The number of followers on the IOAD Facebook page, which is the most active and successful of our social media accounts, increased by 7 per cent in the year to IOAD 2019. Over the same time, our number of Twitter followers grew by 11 per cent and our number of Instagram followers grew by 62 per cent, from 1,025 to 1,656.

Visits, pageviews, and average time on the IOAD website were all steady in 2019 compared to last year.

There were 273,265 total visitors to [overdoseday.com](http://overdoseday.com) during this year's campaign. While there, these visitors viewed pages on the site 473,984 times.

### IOAD Social Media followers

Figure 8.



*Thank you so much for all the resources offered to make our first event a success.*  
Cathy, USA

## Website resources and merchandise

One of the most prominent ways Penington Institute supports International Overdose Awareness Day is by providing online resources for download and merchandise for distribution at events.

Survey participants were asked what resources they used in their activities.

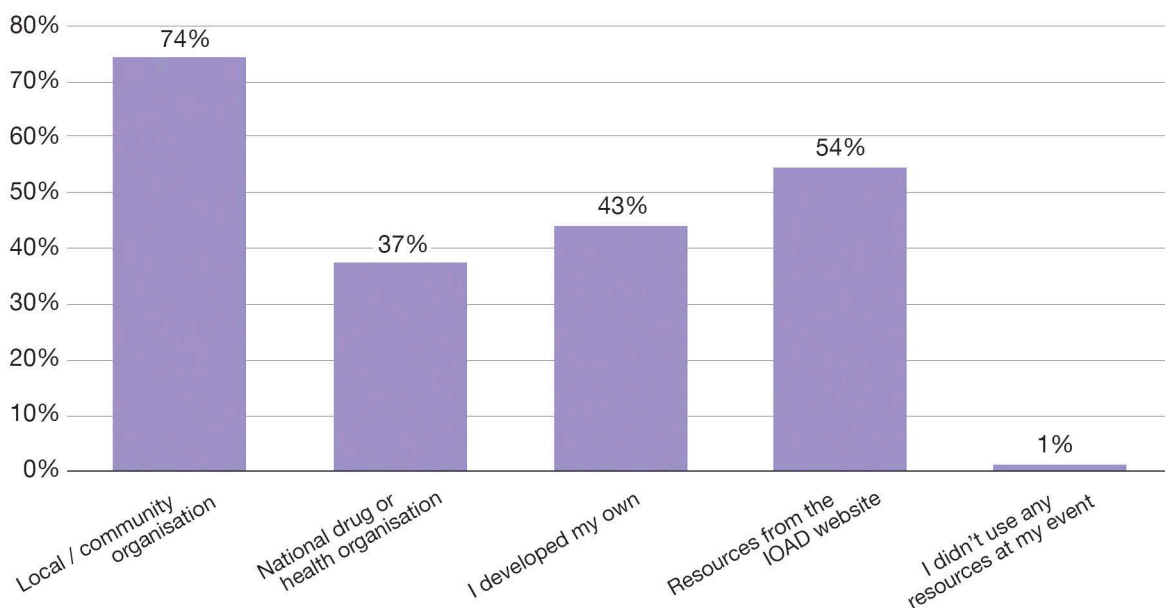
Of the 193 respondents, more than half said they used downloadable resources from [overdoseday.com](http://overdoseday.com).

Website statistics show that IOAD posters – including face posters, graphic posters, and fact sheets – were downloaded more than 20,000 times during this year’s International Overdose Awareness Day campaign. At the same time, the event partners’ support kit, a step-by-step guide to organising an International Overdose Awareness Day activity, was downloaded 1,799 times.

Almost three-quarters of our event partners used resources from a local or community organisation, including their own, while 43 per cent of respondents (83 of 193) developed their own.

### What resources did you use to help plan, promote or run your activity or event?

Figure 9. (193 responses, multiple choices allowed)

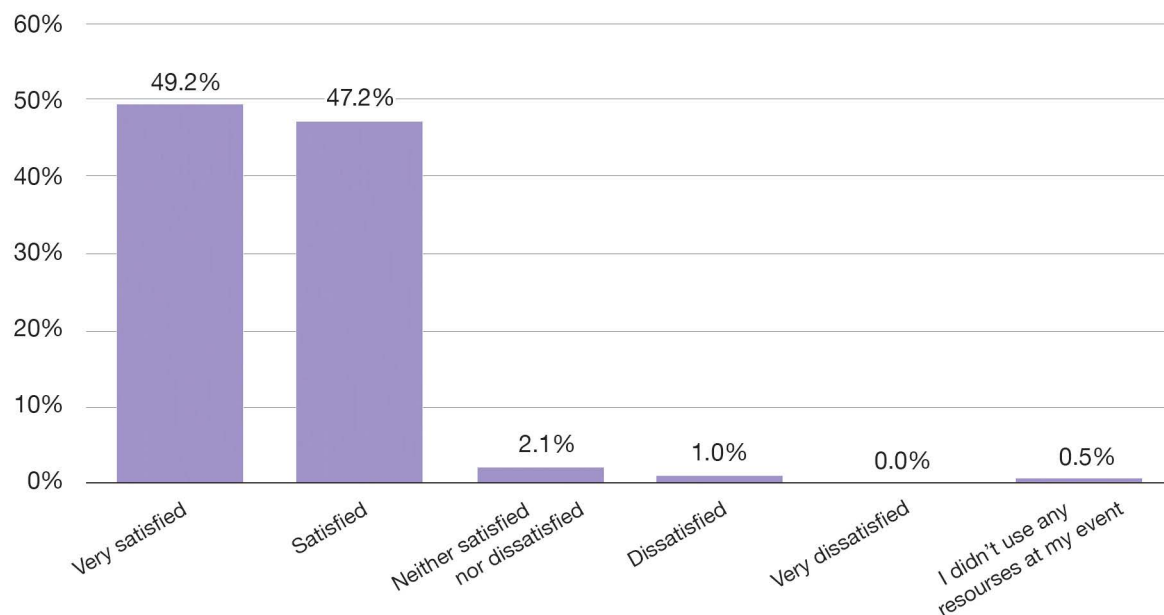


The results (seen in Figure 13) indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the resources. More than 96 per cent of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their resources. Although not all participants used the resources offered on the IOAD website, these results show that continuing to maintain and even improve and update these resources is a valuable use of time for the International Overdose Awareness Day campaign.

Event holders can also purchase merchandise from the IOAD website. The available merchandise options are wristbands, badges, and lanyards (the latter being available for the first time in 2019). Sales figures for merchandise grew substantially overall.

### Level of satisfaction with resources

Figure 10. (193 responses)



The number of wristbands sold jumped from 12,650 last year to 25,410 in 2019 – meaning that 59,789 total units of merchandise were sold throughout this year's IOAD campaign, compared to 45,910 in 2018 (a 30 per cent increase overall).



## Motivations for holding an event

Growing the IOAD community begins by understanding who we are and what inspires us.

Of the 204 responses to this question, 114 (56 per cent) indicated that they are employed in the not-for-profit and/or community services sector. At the same time, 46 per cent of respondents were the friends or family members of someone affected by drugs – a sign of the continuing commemorative profile of IOAD.

Harm reduction or drug treatment service providers (80 of 204) and advocates and activists (76 of 204) were also well-represented. (In recognition of the overlapping identities of the International Overdose Awareness Day community, participants were able to enter more than one response to this question.)

Participants were then asked how many times they had previously held an International Overdose Awareness Day event.

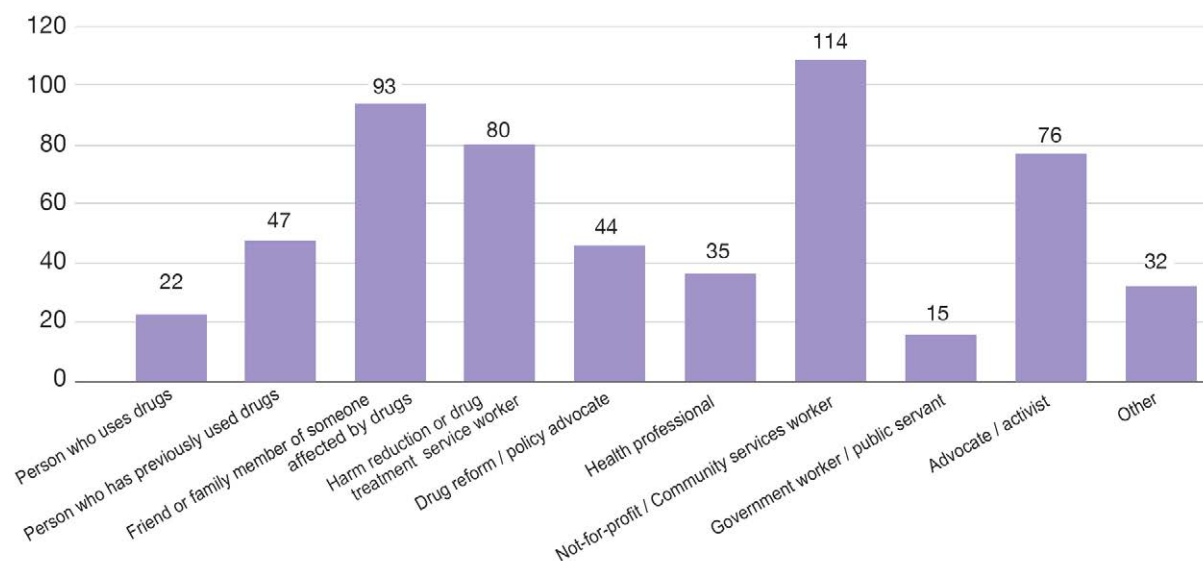
Interestingly, only four of the 121 respondents to this question (which was optional, hence the lower number of responses) hosted an event for the first time in 2019. Close to 35 per cent of respondents were holding their second IOAD event in 2018, while almost 39 per cent of respondents – more than any other category – have now held an IOAD event three or more times.

These results are suggestive of two things:

- The ongoing support and dedication of a core IOAD community, which has been advocating to end overdose, remember loved ones, acknowledge grief and reduce stigma for many years.
- Room for improvement when it comes to growing the size of this community. Seeing an increase in the share of IOAD participants holding an event for the first time will demonstrate that we have been successful in growing the movement around the world.

## Background of 2019 event partners

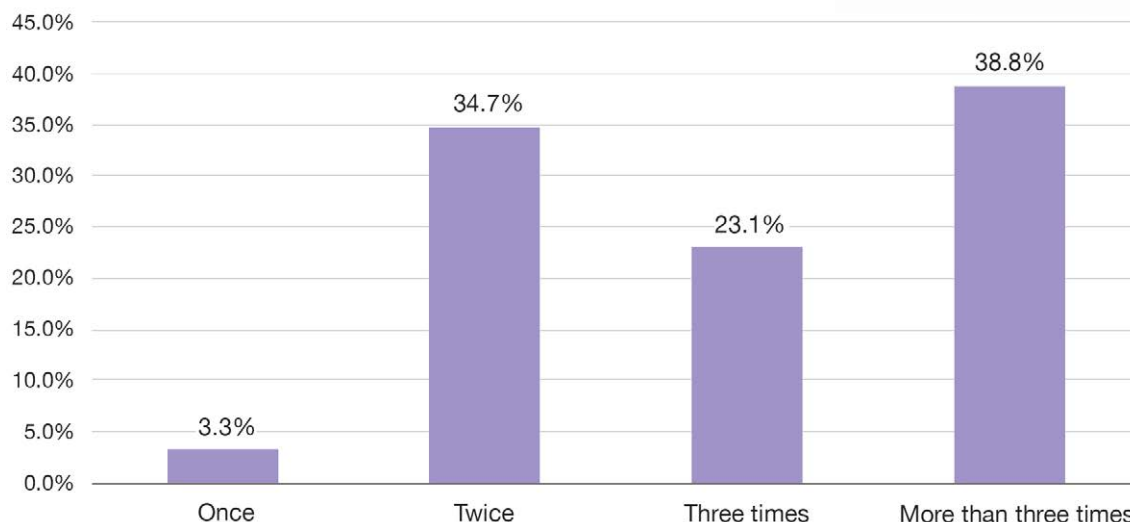
Figure 11.



*This was the first public event for our community regarding overdose and stigma and it won't be the last.*  
Christine, Canada.

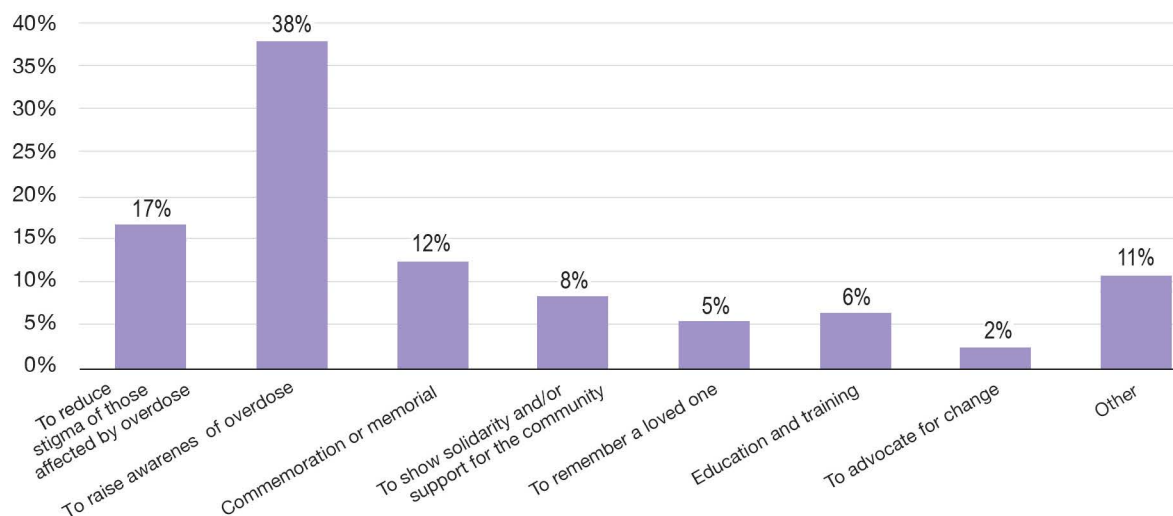
### How many times have you held an IOAD activity or event?

Figure 12. (121 responses)



### Main reason for holding an event

Figure 13. (204 responses)



Participants were asked about their primary reason for holding their event in 2019.

Raising awareness of overdose was by far the most-selected option. Reducing stigma was the next most popular, while commemoration or memorial was selected as the main reason for holding an event by 12 per cent of respondents.

Also worth noting in the responses to this question are the 'Other' category, which consisted mostly of respondents indicating that they were motivated by all of the reasons listed, and advocacy for change, which was selected as the main reason by just 2 per cent of respondents.

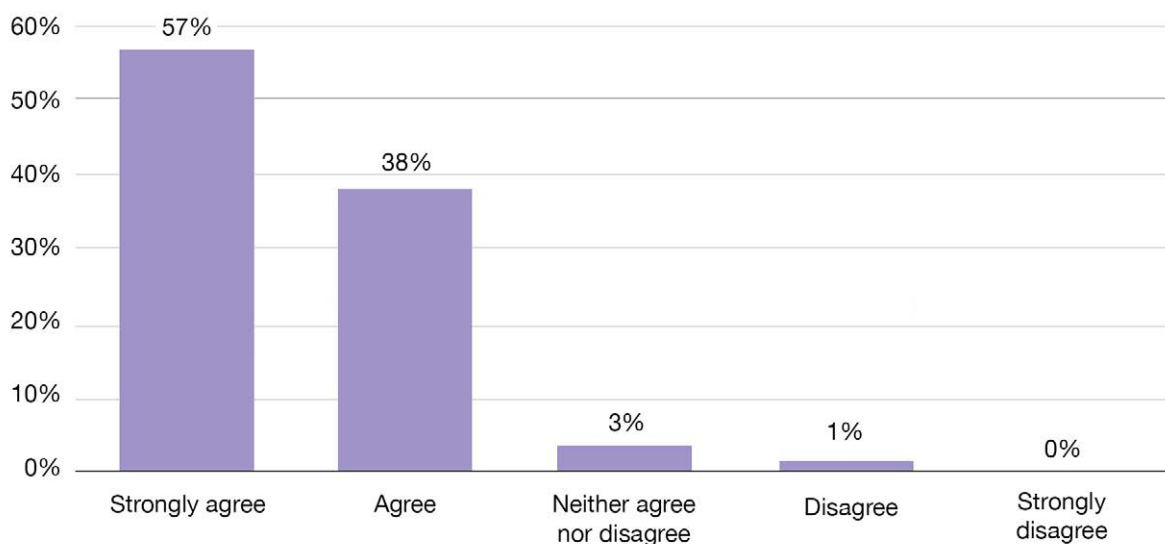
## Event holder satisfaction

We are committed to making the process of participating in International Overdose Awareness Day as simple and meaningful as possible. As part of that, we asked survey respondents about how satisfied they were with their events.

95 per cent of respondents (194 of 204) considered their event to be either 'successful' or 'very successful' in 2019. Seven respondents said that their event was neither successful or unsuccessful, while just three respondents considered their 2019 to not be a success. Nevertheless, despite these strong results, we are determined to better understand what factors contributed to IOAD Partners not being satisfied with their events.

### Based on the reason you had for holding your event or activity would you say it was a success?

Figure 14. (204 responses)



## Event Attendance

As can be seen in Figure 13, there are many different types of International Overdose Awareness Day events. But in addition to understanding the motivations of people who hold events, we want to understand who attends IOAD events, and in what numbers.

To that end, our survey asked participants to estimate the number of people who attended their event, and about the backgrounds and occupations of event attendees.

When asked how many people attended their event, 41 per cent of respondents answered that their event had between 11 and 50 attendees. This is reflective of the fact that International Overdose Awareness Day is a grassroots movement and that many events are held in local communities.

Asking who participated in an event or activity is an important way of understanding what kinds of events people hold. This also helps us understand how successful, broadly speaking, we are in raising awareness of overdose and reaching our other goals (similar to Figure 5).

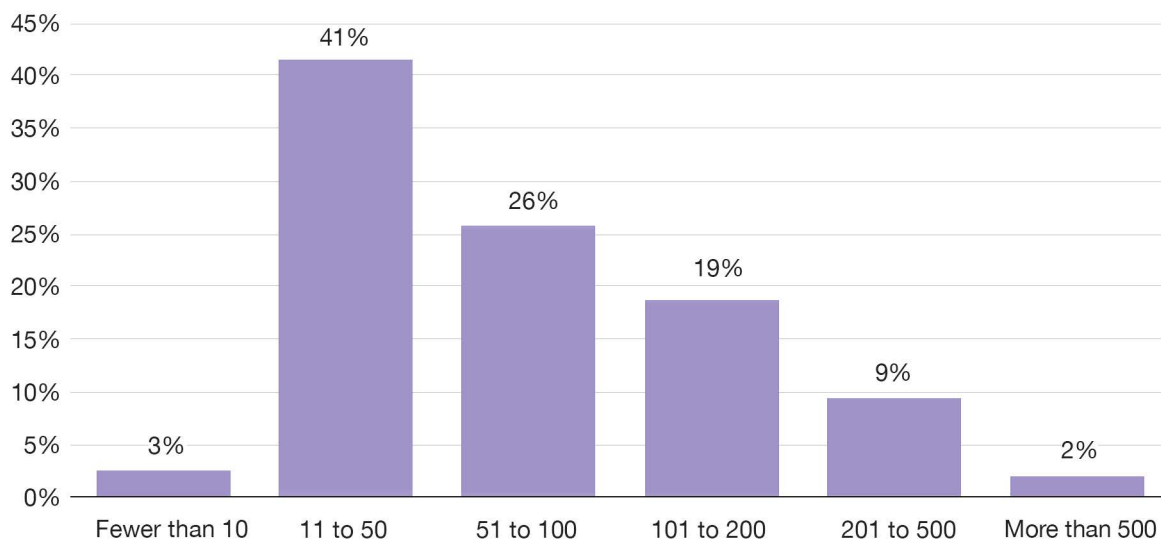
*Thank you for your work – it is what inspired me to hold a small event 2 years ago with 12 people, to my event this year with 50+ people. Already planning for next year.*  
 Kim, USA

It is heartening to see the continued high attendance of health workers, loved ones, advocates, and people who use drugs. However, it is also encouraging to see that 64 per cent of respondents held events attended by members of the general public, almost 40 per cent held events attended by politicians or government staff, and more than a quarter held events attended by members of law enforcement and/or emergency services workers (e.g. paramedics).

Increasing the profile of International Overdose Awareness Day among these three cohorts is integral to creating broader support for our movement, as well as translating that awareness of IOAD to tangible outcomes that will help to save lives.

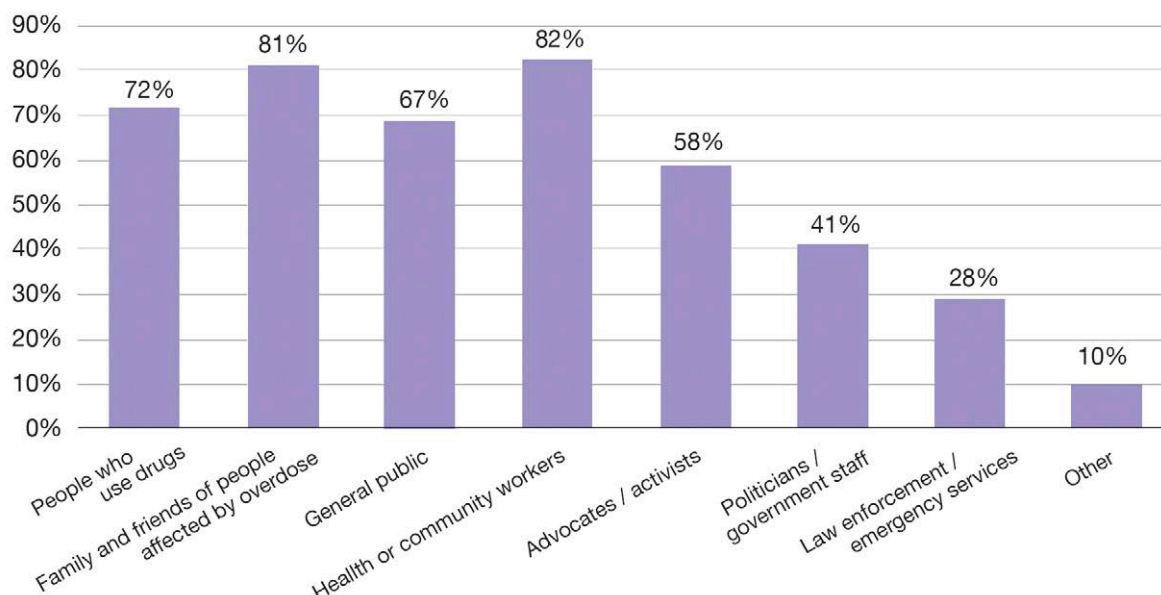
### Estimated number of people attending an event/activity

Figure 15. (193 responses)



### Who participated in events or activities?

Figure 16. (193 responses)





## Event Budget

Event participants were asked they spent on their event, and how those budgets were sourced.

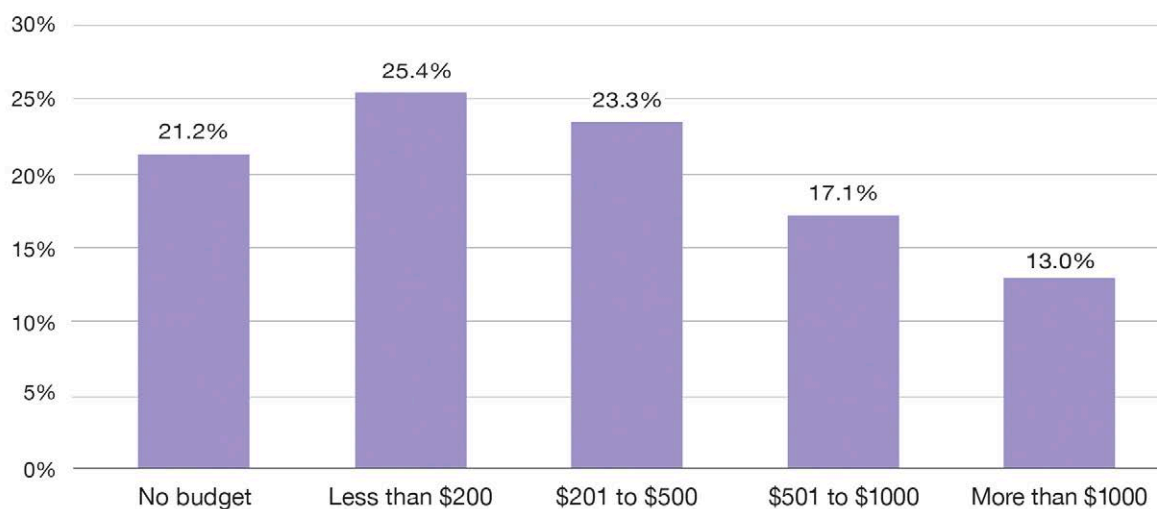
As can be seen from the responses, there were similar numbers of events with either no budget, a budget of less than USD\$200, or a budget between US\$201 and US\$500. Together, these three categories accounted for 70 per cent of total responses.

13 per cent of survey respondents said that their event had a budget of more than USD\$1,000.

When asked how the budget for their event was sourced, 57 per cent of respondents (111 of 193) received part or all of the funding for their event from their organisation. Half of that number (55 of 193) had an event funded by volunteer contributions, while 34 respondents received some or all funding for their event from a private sector sponsor.

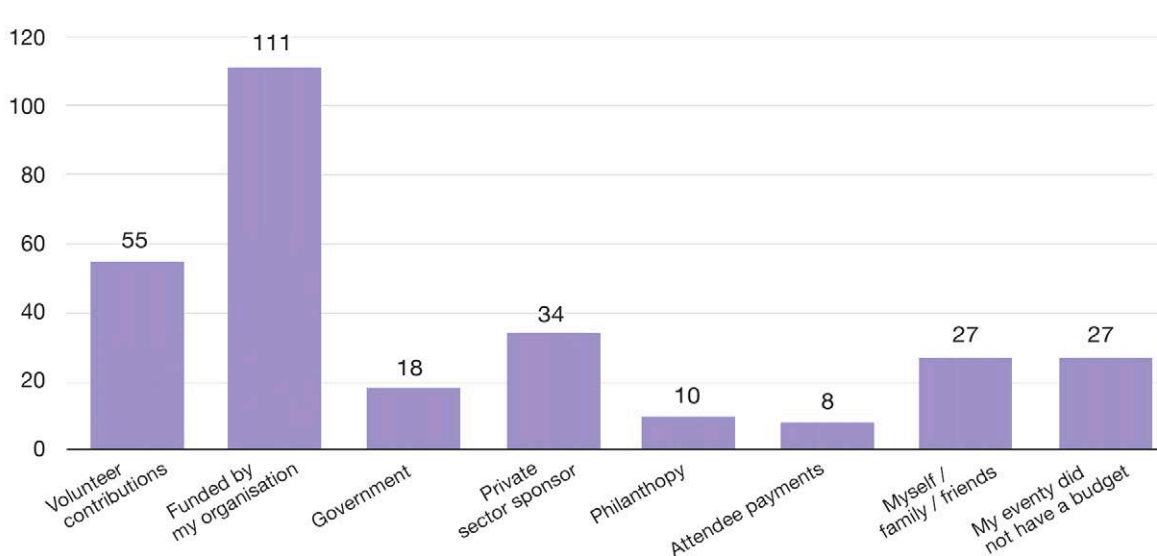
### What was the budget for your event or activity? (USD)

Figure 17. (193 responses)



### How was the budget for your event sourced?

Figure 18. (193 responses, multiple choices allowed)



## 2020 and beyond

96 per cent of survey respondents are currently considering holding an International Overdose Awareness Day event in 2020.

Although there are good reasons to believe that the Partners' Survey respondents rank as the most enthusiastic of all IOAD participants, such a high rate of expected retention suggests both a high level of overall satisfaction, as well as a dedicated core cohort of International Overdose Awareness Day supporters who will remain active and engaged in the years to come.

Achieving the goals of International Overdose Awareness Day will require taking our awareness-raising to the next level by moving from a yearly campaign to a year-round campaign, with overdose prevention and response at the heart of our efforts.

We urgently need to escalate our work to activate communities, share insights and find local solutions to the overdose crisis that is taking such a toll on communities around the world.

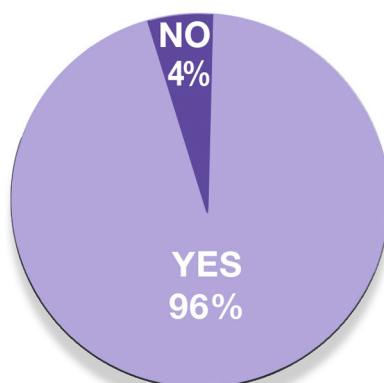
That is why Penington Institute, convener of International Overdose Awareness Day, has developed the End Overdose Initiative, a bold international campaign to tackle the global overdose crisis by:

- Connecting individuals and communities that care.
- Sharing and supporting well-informed responses across communities world-wide.
- Addressing stigma, secrecy and discrimination associated with overdose and drug use, including providing opportunities for families and friends to openly acknowledge the loss of loved ones.
- Improving the evidence base for overdose prevention interventions, including data generation and analysis.

We will not succeed on our own. Only by supporting each other and working together can we achieve success. If you are interested in being involved with the End Overdose Initiative, please contact us via email ([info@overdoseday.com](mailto:info@overdoseday.com)) or via any of our social media accounts.

Do you think you will hold an activity or event for International Overdose Awareness Day 2020?

Figure 19.



## Conclusion and recommendations

The Partners' Report represents the end of one International Overdose Awareness Day and the commencement of the following year's campaign.

2020 will mark the 20th International Overdose Awareness Day.

We at Penington Institute believe that this milestone, combined with the steady progress shown in 2019, makes the realisation of even more ambitious targets and real-world outcomes possible.

Therefore, we're aiming to reach the following targets in 2020:

- 1,000 registered events in at least 50 participating nations
- More real-world policy outcomes – e.g. 2 participating countries to announce system reform in conjunction with IOAD 2020
- Make the day more accessible for participants
- Greater use of emotive video and written material to tell the human story of overdose

For International Overdose Awareness Day to be successful, it must retain the passion and commitment that has helped it come so far, while also bridging the gap between evidence and action.

The more successful we are, the more we will spread awareness, reduce stigma, and contribute to the types of policy outcomes that will save lives around the world.



IOAD Event hosted by SIDC on September 19, 2019 at Off Record in Monot Achrafieh in Beirut, Lebanon

# IOAD EVENTS 2019



1. Social Awareness Service Organisation, Imphal East, Manipur, India.
2. "Flags of Hope" Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
3. "Tree of remembrance", San Diego, California, USA.
4. "Trail of Truth" rally, Binghamton, New York.
5. Bridge International Overdose Awareness Day event, Kabul, Afghanistan.

# IOAD EVENTS 2019

JOHN TORY  
MAYOR

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## *Proclamation*

### **Overdose Awareness Day**

**August 31, 2019**

WHEREAS Toronto joins communities worldwide in recognizing August 31<sup>st</sup> as Overdose Awareness Day, to honour loved ones and community members lost to drug poisoning and overdose.

The opioid poisoning crisis continues in Toronto and across our country. Progress in life expectancy in Canada has slowed down for the first time in four decades because an increasing number of young people are dying from overdoses, mostly related to opioid poisoning.

In Toronto, preliminary data shows that there were 294 opioid overdose deaths in 2018, more than double the number of deaths in 2015. Around 60 per cent of people who died were under the age of 45. Toronto paramedics responded to 3,265 opioid overdose calls including 146 fatal suspected opioid overdoses in 2018. The number of people being treated in hospitals has been rising.

Local supervised consumption and overdose prevention services have treated nearly 2,000 overdoses since 2017. Many more overdoses have been reversed, and lives have been saved at other services in and around our community.

The City of Toronto remains dedicated to addressing the opioid poisoning crisis through implementation of the *Toronto Overdose Action Plan*, and supports prevention, harm reduction and treatment services to save lives and improve the health and well-being of people who use drugs in our community.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Mayor John Tory, on behalf of Toronto City Council, do hereby proclaim **August 31, 2019** as "**Overdose Awareness Day**" in the City of Toronto.

  
John Tory  
Mayor of Toronto  


# IOAD EVENTS 2019



1. Bolte Bridge, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Photo: Grey Ford
2. 30th Street Mens Shelter, New York, USA.
3. Association Le Foyer Du Bonheur, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.
- 4 International Overdose Awareness Day event in Carmarthen, Wales.
5. Stockholm Drug Users Union IOAD event in Örebro, Sweden.

**Thank you to our collaborators, partners, event and activity holders, event attendees and activity participants, sponsors of local events and activities, organisations and individuals.**

**Thank you, one and all.**



31 AUGUST

—  
INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE  
AWARENESS DAY

TIME TO  
REMEMBER.  
TIME TO ACT.

A Penington Institute Initiative

Penington Institute: <http://www.penington.org.au>