

# Associated risk factors when injecting alone, among national samples of people who regularly inject drugs, 2020-2025

The Difference is Research

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## Introduction

- ❖ Injecting drugs alone is associated with increased risk of overdose, as there is no one present to respond in the event of an emergency (1).
- ❖ A high proportion of overdoses occur in private or residential settings, where individuals are often injecting alone (2).
- ❖ Despite the known risks, a substantial percentage of people who inject drugs report doing so alone, underscoring the need to better quantify and understand this practice (3).
- ❖ Identifying factors associated with injecting alone is essential for informing targeted public health interventions and overdose prevention efforts (4).

## Aim

This research aims to examine:

- ❖ The per cent of IDRS participants who reported injecting alone the last time they injected a drug;
- ❖ The location of last injection among those who reported injecting alone; and
- ❖ The factors associated with injecting alone in 2025.

## Methods

- ❖ Data were obtained from the Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS).
- ❖ The IDRS consists of an annual survey of people who regularly inject drugs, recruited from all capital cities of Australia.
- ❖ Between 2020 and 2025, participants were asked if they were alone when they last injected a drug.
- ❖ Descriptive statistics and multivariable binary logistic regression analyses were performed to determine the sociodemographic, drug use and health factors associated with participants who reported injecting alone, the last time they injected a drug.

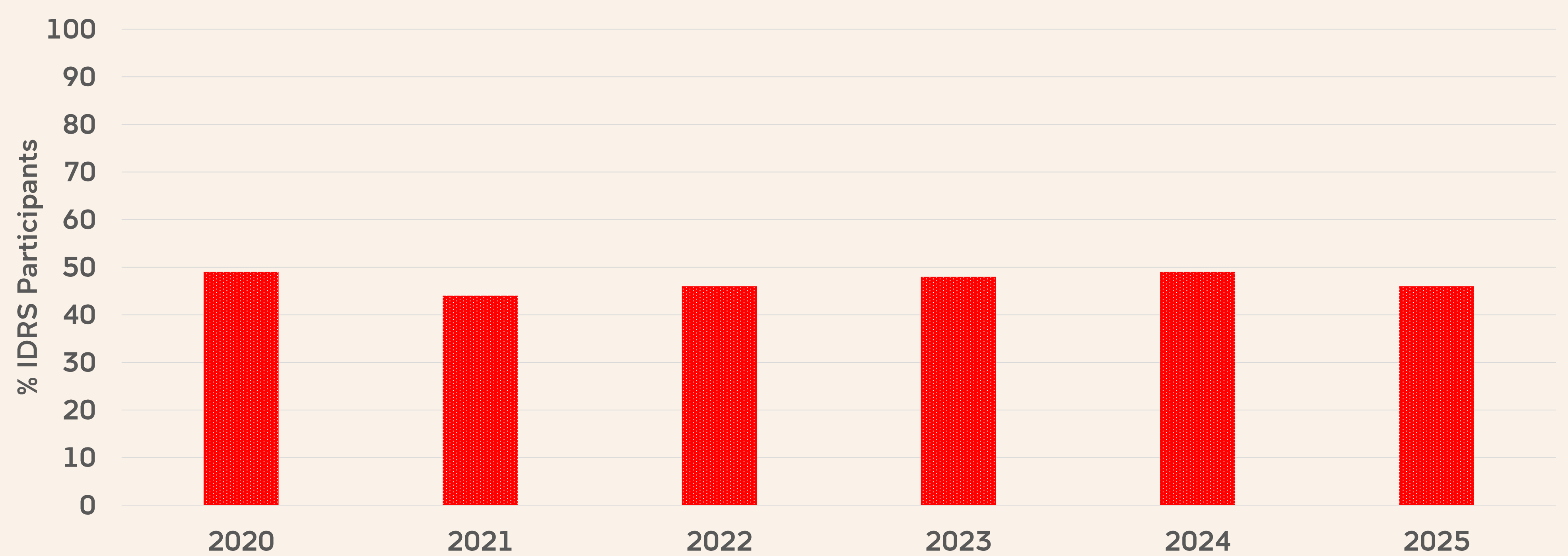
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## Results

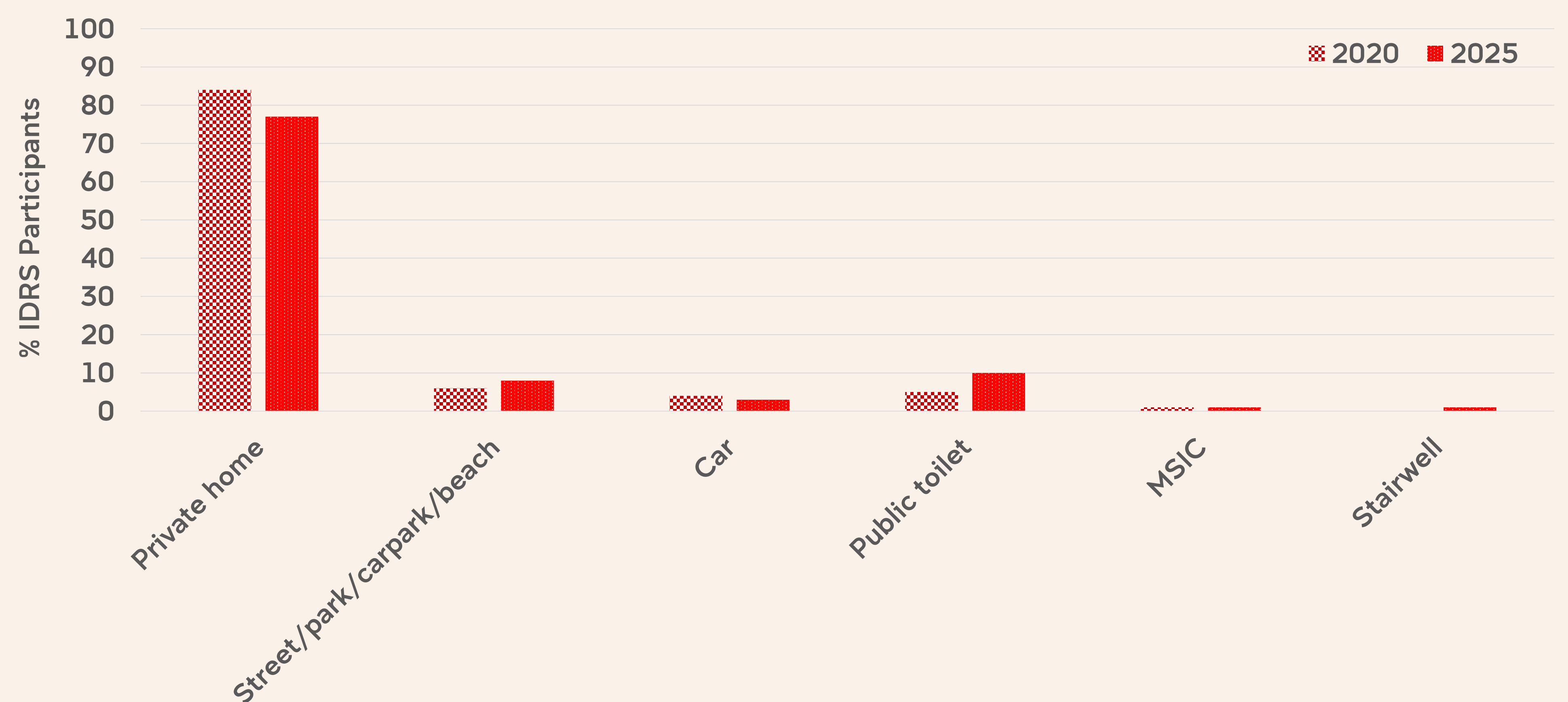
- ❖ Between 2020 and 2025, the per cent who reported that they had injected alone the last time they injected a drug remained relatively stable, ranging between 44% and 49% (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Injected a drug alone, on the last occasion of injecting, IDRS, nationally, 2020-2025

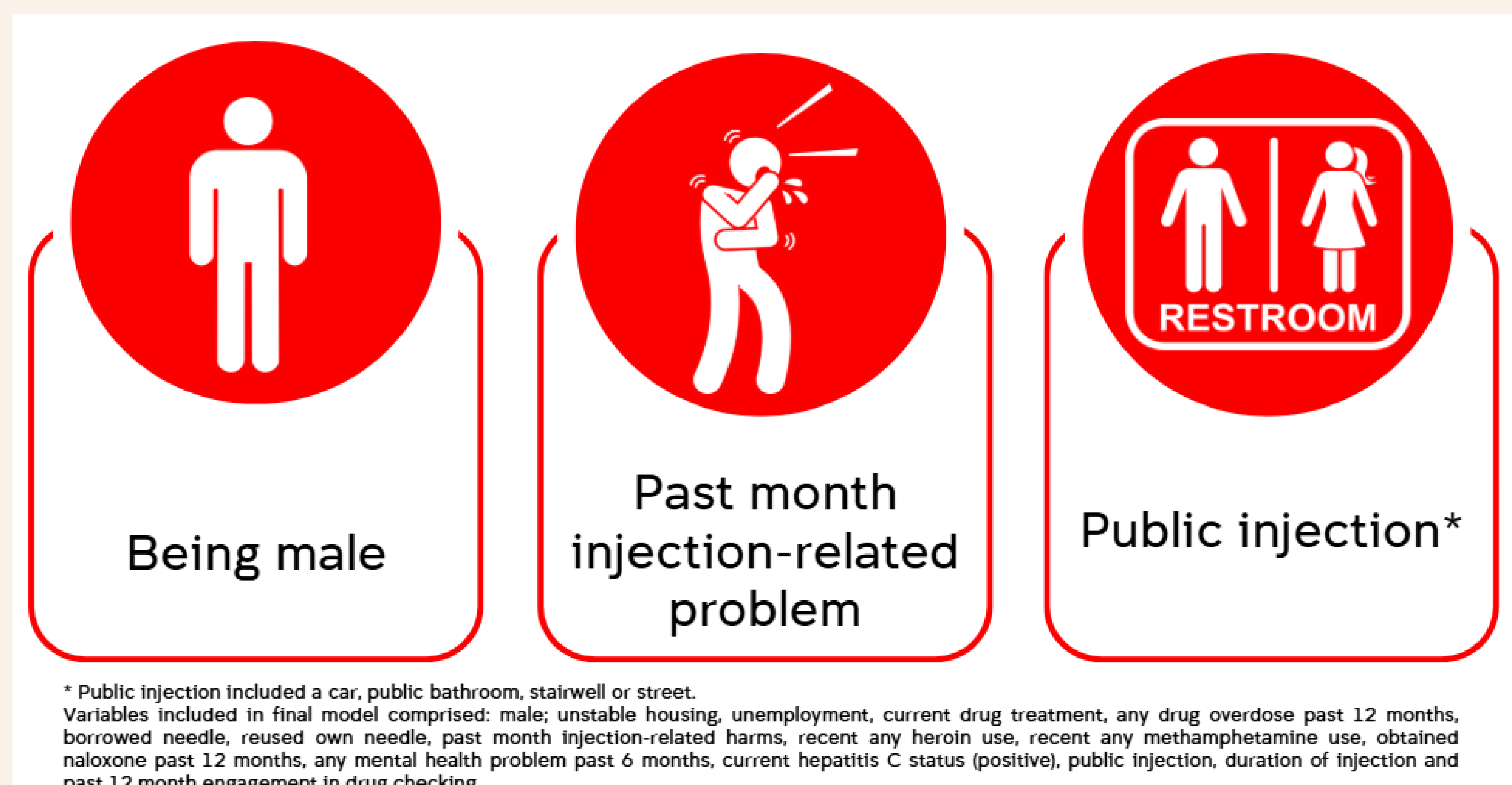


- ❖ In 2025, among participants who had last injected a drug alone (n=390), the most common location for last injection was a private home (77%), followed by a public toilet (10%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Location of last injection, among those who last injected a drug alone, IDRS, nationally, 2020 vs 2025



- ❖ The following variables were found to be significantly associated with higher odds of injecting alone, on the last occasion of injecting, in 2025:



## Implications

- ❖ Injecting alone was relatively common amongst the sentinel samples of people who inject drugs.
- ❖ Those who inject drugs alone most commonly inject in a private home, limiting the potential for intervention if an overdose were to occur.
- ❖ There is an urgent need to consider novel interventions to support those who inject alone. This may include wearable biosensors which can detect physiological biomarkers characteristic of overdose and facilitate real-time interventions (e.g., via alerts to nominated individuals and nearby first responders), or overdose hotlines which can monitor the caller during drug use and dispatch emergency services if the caller becomes unresponsive.

## Acknowledgements and more Information

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