Strategies for Addressing Needle Debris (SANDS)
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Introduction: There is very little known about needle debris. Much of the literature, to date, focuses on the chemical clean-up of substance use waste and not the physical waste of discarded needles (Seese 2009). Needle debris has been identified by Alberta Health Services as a threat to public safety and local agencies have responded with needle debris outreach. The aim of this study is to better understand needle debris towards making policy recommendations on needle debris for better public safety.

Methods: To better understand needle debris, researchers will wear a body camera and shadow frontline workers as they do outreach or respond to public reports of discarded needles. The researcher and stakeholder will discuss the work as it proceeds and ask questions for a ‘local knowledge narrative’ (Curtis et al., 2019). The camera will record the narratives, and the urban environment. The camera provides GPS data, which allows us to connect the image of the needle to its precise geographic location and associate the narrative with a given spot. We can create 3D maps of needle debris and use the narratives to understand why there may be needle debris hot spots. This technique will allow us to gather rich data and generate an effective response. Expected results: The potential impact of this research is significant. This research will enable geographically targeted interventions. Because this is community-based and applied research, we will collaborate with our stakeholders to interpret our findings. Conclusion: These findings will help us to inform our communities about best practices around needle debris and we can co-create resource documents and intervention recommendations for preventing needle debris in our communities. References: Curtis, A., Curtis, J. W., Ajayakumar, J., Jefferis, E., & Mitchell, S. (2019). Same space–different perspectives: comparative analysis of geographic context through sketch maps and spatial video geonarratives. International Journal of Geographical Information Science, 33(6), 1224-1250. & Seese, S. A. (2009). Roles, rules, and remediation: A case study in the organization and management of methamphetamine waste cleanup Capella University].