

HEPATITIS C INCIDENCES AND RISK BEHAVIORS AMONG PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS ACCESSING HARM-REDUCTION SERVICES IN MOMBASA -KENYA

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BACKGROUND: People who inject drugs (PWIDs) are at Most risk population for hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection and HIV virus through the sharing of needles and any equipment used to prepare and inject drugs. In Kenya, there is limited data on HCV prevalence among people who inject drugs. We assessed the prevalence of HCV and HIV-HCV co-infection amongst PWIDs who are HIV positive and their partners after more than 10 years of Harm Reduction services in Mombasa County.

METHODS: In this retrospective study 75 Known HIV positive (KP) PWIDs were able to elicit 115(28 KP-PWIDs and 87 HIV negative PWIDs) partners who both consented and screened for HIV and HCV by serology. Detection of HCV antibody where used to determine hepatitis prevalence in this population. Those who were HCV positive underwent confirmatory HCV RNA testing.

Results: Of the 103/190 were KP- PWIDs where 28.16% KP had a co-infection of HIV/HCV .13/87 (14.94%) of the HIV negative who participated in the study were HCV Positive. 148/190(77.90%) were HCV Negative. Out of the 21/115 partners who screened for HCV antibodies tested HVC positive. 15/190(7.89%) declined for the HCV screening. Some of the reasons for the decline includes;

- They will add more of stress
- Say they had that there no drugs in the hospitals
- No help after the HCV screening
- Fear of the unknown(say they will die first)

Conclusions: Prevalence of HIV/HCV coinfection was significantly higher than those with HCV infections only. Despite of the Harm reduction services, sharing and injecting drug use is still exists amongst the PWEID population. There is need for government to start lobby and initiate the HCV treatment for the PWID population.

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