

THE PARTICIPATION OF PEER EDUCATORS WHO USE INJECTION DRUGS IN HIV, HCV AND HARM REDUCTION SERVICES IN CAMEROON (CASE OF ALCONDOMS CAMEROON).

Author:

WADJO NOUPA Moise¹

¹ALCONDOMS CAMEROON

Background:

The involvement of peer educators who use drugs in HIV and harm reduction services is widely encouraged but underused. Alongside political and financial barriers, there is limited understanding of the roles, impacts, contexts and mechanisms of peer participation, particularly in Cameroon.

Methods:

Within the framework of the CHAMP project which is a continuous project of prevention, care and treatment of HIV/AIDS among at-risk populations which is financed by USAID and implemented by CARE CAMEROUN and CHP and implemented by community based organisations with identity. In order to contribute to the achievement of the results targeted by this project which is in line with the National Strategic Plan and the UNAIDS objectives, namely the 95-95-95 or ALCONDOMS CAMEROUN, we have used peer educators who use drugs for sensitisation services, prevention, HIV/AIDS testing and human rights education for harm reduction in Cameroon.

Results:

During the fiscal year 2022 of the CHAMP project which was held between October 2021 and September 2022; ALCONDOMS Cameroon thanks to the support of peer educators and online mobilisers who use drugs we were able to sensitise 285 IDUs and we were able to screen 78 IDUs and we had 15 positive IDUs and we put 14 positive IDUs on ART and diagnosed 50 STIs of which 30 were viral hepatitis. And we had a good adherence retention of 95% and out of 10 IDUs tested for viral load only 01 IDU had a high viral load and 09 IDUs had a suppressed viral load.

Conclusion:

The involvement of peer educators who use drugs for HIV and harm reduction services in Cameroon is linked to positive health outcomes, shaped by contexts of criminalisation, stigma and resource scarcity. However, the involvement of peer educators is under-theorised, particularly in terms of how contexts shape mechanisms and ultimately outcomes. There is a need to broaden the range of peer educator roles to encompass the capacities and expertise of people who use drugs.