

EVALUATION OF AN HCV AWARENESS-RAISING AND TESTING INTERVENTION IN PWID

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Background:

Catalonia has a comprehensive harm-reduction network, comprising 11 different Supervised Injection Sites (SIS) located in open drug scenes, caring for over 5000 PWID per year. Over 1900 PWID per year attend *El Local*, with an HCV seroprevalence of 81.3% and a prevalence of HCV viremic infection of 59.2%.

Approach

Our intervention consisted of a 2-hour educational session based on the Social Action Theory given to 31 PWID at *El Local*.

The intervention was evaluated through a 23 item questionnaire adapted by REDUCE, consisting of three subscales (treatment, transmission routes and risk behaviours) administered pre-intervention, post-intervention and a one month after the session. Participants were offered HCV screening (antibody rapid test and RNA testing from dried-blood spots) once the session finished and their participation was monetarily incentivized.

Outcome:

A Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test indicated that the median post-test ranks $M=7.37$ were statistically significantly higher than the pre-test ranks $M=6.45$, $Z = -2.37$, $p < .017$ on transmission routes; $M= 7.58$ post-test higher than the pre-test $M= 6.86$, $Z = -2.36$, $p < .018$ on risk behaviours; $M=3.41$ post-test higher than the pre-test $M= 2.51$, $Z = -2.89$, $p < .004$ on treatment. The knowledge improvement was also retained one month after the intervention. All participants accepted to be screened for HCV after the educational session.

Conclusion:

Participative awareness-raising interventions coupled with testing have proven useful for improving knowledge on HCV treatment, transmission routes and risk behaviours. Accordingly, this intervention will be expanded to the harm-reduction network.

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