

INNOVATIONS FOR CONTINUUM OF CARE FOR ON PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS DURING COVID-19 LOCK DOWN

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Background

People who inject drugs were at increased vulnerability to health risks due to consequences and restrictions put in place to halt the spread of the Corona Virus infections. Harm reduction services, which aim to reduce the negative effects of drug use on PWID health were challenged. Considerable efforts into identifying and protecting those at risk required, innovative ways of delivering HR services.

Methods

A rapid strategy review with the aim of exploring HR interventions needs, that included NSP distribution, condom and Opioid Substitution therapy, dispensation and messaging was done during the Covid restrictions. Three sites for Methadone dispensation were opened. Messaging were done through van Public Address system at the various drug hotspots within the county on the containment measures such keeping social distance, hand washing and wearing face masks. Mobile dispensing using wellness van. Lobbying for inclusion in Covid 19 response Team, staffs were issued travel passes which enabled them to access and work in lockdown areas.

Results

70 PWID pathfinders were identified and used to distribute harm reduction service, condoms and Needle and syringes where 2802(210female &2592male) were provided with HR services. 56(15female&41male) MAT clients were dispensed methadone at Mombasa Dice, 56(46male &10female) Clients were dispensed methadone at Likoni satellite while 200(165male &35female) PWID were dispensed through wellness van. 2802(710female&2092male) PWID were reached with containment measures messages. Over 10,000 Masks and Sanitizers were distributed.

Conclusions

A person-centered rather than disease-centered approach to HR and tailored Harm Reduction messaging was effective in intervening for this vulnerable group during lockdown period. Human right based approach is recommended and policies and guidelines need to be formulated and be in place to curb future crisis.

‘Disclosure on interest: None’