

POLY-DRUG USE AND UNSAFE SEXUAL HEALTH SEEKING BEHAVIOUR AMONGST YOUNG WOMEN WHO INJECT DRUGS LIVING WITH VIRAL HEPATITIS: A CASE STUDY ACROSS FIVE (5) HIGH RISK LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS IN LAGOS, NIGERIA

Authors:

Eghaghe, J¹, Monyei, F²

Background:

Poly-drug use is linked to unintended high incidence of viral hepatitis B & C and other sexually transmitted infections. Evidence relating to increased drug –related harm amongst Young Women living with Hepatitis B & C in lieu with descriptive patterns of poly-drug use (methamphetamine /crack cocaine / synthetic cannabis / Alcohol) and associated poor health seeking behavior has been of important significance towards ensuring gender-sensitive harm reduction programming for Young Women Who Inject Drugs (WWUID).

Methods:

We used and examined data from a cross-sectional study, which we recruited 120 participants aged 18 - 30yrs across five (5) Local Government Areas in Lagos State, Nigeria between May 1,2022 to October 31,2022 who are reportedly ardent poly-drug users and living with viral hepatitis B&C.

Results:

From the 120 study participants:

52 participants (43%) use opiates;

90 participants (36%) use crack cocaine;

52 participants (43%) use methamphetamine;

49 participants (41%) use one or more drugs ;

80 participants (67%) live with Viral Hepatitis B

40 participants (33%) live with viral hepatitis C

42 participants (35%) disclosed their Viral Hepatitis/ Treatment status.

However, smoking ($p < 0.0001$), and viral hepatitis treatment non-adherence ($p < 0.0001$). Poly-drug amongst Young WWIDs use was associated with prevalence of condomless sex with viral hepatitis sero-concordant male partners (24% to 78%), condomless sex with viral hepatitis sero-discordant male partners (17% to 69%). Opiates , Methamphetamine and Crack-cocaine overdose was more strongly associated with higher-viral hepatitis B & C-risk and condomless sex than were other commonly used drugs in the research community.

Conclusion:

Poly-drug use amongst Young WWID is strongly associated with condomless sex and non adherence to viral hepatitis treatment. Specialist support services for Young WWID with Viral hepatitis B& C who use recreational drugs might be beneficial in the reduction of harm and prevention of transmission of viral hepatitis B&C infections.