

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH OVERDOSE AMONG PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS IN UKRAINE

Kornilova M¹, Sazonova Y¹

¹Alliance for Public Health

Background: Drug overdose is one of the major causes of morbidity and mortality among people who inject drugs (PWID). According to the national statistics 26,260 events of drug overdose were registered in Ukraine in 2017 with 1% of the lethal outcome. We assessed factors associated with the drug overdose among PWID to understand what prevention intervention need to be added into the existing harm reduction program to decrease the overdose frequency.

Methods: We used a respondent-driven sampling method to recruit 10,076 PWID throughout the country (all 25 Ukrainian regions) in 2017. Participants completed behavioral questionnaires that included questions about overdose history and we used multivariable logistical regression model to assess factors associated with self-reported overdose.

Results: 28% of PWID reported to have an overdose at least once during their lifetime, 5% had an overdose in the last 12 month. The medium age of the first episode was at the age 24.5 years old. Among those who reported being overdosed the medium frequency of event was 2.7 during lifetime and 1.5 in the last 12 month. The following factors were associated with the overdose occurred in the last 12 month: the length of injecting <2 years and > 11 years, frequency of injecting.>20 days per month, mixed use of opioids and stimulants (AOR 2.7; 95% CI, 1.5 – 2.8) compared with injecting only one type of drug. Clients and non-clients of the harm reduction programs had an equal chance for overdose.

Conclusions: An overdose is the frequent harm associated with the injecting drug use. In our survey the overdose was associated with either short or very long experience of drug use, frequent almost daily injecting and mix use of stimulators and opioids. The harm reduction programs should pay more attention on overdose prevention counseling and include the naloxone in their prevention package.

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