THE SEXUAL PARTNERS OF PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS IN UKRAINE IS THE NEXT TARGET OF HIV EPIDEMIC IF NO PREVENTION APPLIED

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Introduction: Ukraine is the country with one of the biggest HIV and HCV epidemics in the World primarily IDU driven. PWID is not the only population vulnerable for HIV; they have partners who are at risk of acquiring HIV through unprotected sex; as well HIV and HCV through occasional injecting. To have a better understanding of the situation we conducted the survey among sexual partners (SP) of PWID.

Methods: Study population included 769 respondents from 10 cities of Ukraine recruited through linked RDS in a period of May-August 2015. Sample included those who had sexual intercourse with PWID in the last 90 days and haven't injected drugs for the last 30 days. All participants were confidentially interviewed to assess their risk behavior. Blood samples were tested for HIV and HCV. Data were analyzed in SPSS 21.0 and RDS-Analyst.

Results: Among all the participants 87.3% were females with the medium age 32.2. 75.5% declared as never injected. 97.6% were a regular SP of their PWID-recruiters. HIV prevalence in the sample was 15.0%(12.4–17.5%); HCV 25.9%(22.8-29.0%). Among those who declared themselves as never injected HIV prevalence was 9.2%(6.8–11.6%); HCV 19.3%(16.0-22.5%). Those who never injected and were HCV-negative had an HIV rate 5.6%(4.2–6.8%). Only 4.6% of the respondents were clients of any prevention program; 3.6% received free condoms and 20.7% had HIV test in the last 12 month, 3% were ever tested for HCV, 3.4% ever received OST in their life.

Conclusion: The HIV epidemic in Ukraine is still in progress and involving people outside of traditional KP. One of the next targets is the SP of PWID who either had an experience of injecting in their past or occasionally inject now, who do not associate themselves with PWID and therefore not a focus of any of prevention/treatment interventions neither for HIV not for HCV.

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