

LOW RETENTION OF FEMALE PATIENTS ON OAT TREATMENT, UKRAINE'S EXPERIENCE DURING THE WAR.

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Background:

In Ukraine there are an estimated 317 000 people who inject drugs (PWID), IBBS 2020, of them 19% were women. As of December 2024, only 12.5% of the all patients (N=22,098) of the state opioid agonist treatment (OAT) program were women (N=2,762), compared 15.6% (N=2,658) before the War (February 2022).

The percentage of women in the OAT program is rapidly decreasing. Stigma, lack of gender tailored services, and childcare are major barriers to treatment.

Description of model of care/intervention/program:

We opened 5 "Mother and Child" rooms at the largest OAT sites in Ukraine, a safe space where women receive comprehensive services: psychosocial, legal, medical and humanitarian help, aimed to support psychological and reproductive health, considering age-related changes during menopause. Providing linkage to friendly doctors (gynecologist, dermatovenereologist, surgeon, etc.), testing for HIV, STIs, screen for TB and human papillomavirus (HPV), and vaccinate against HPV.

Effectiveness:

Over the 11 months of the project, we see a significantly higher retention in the OAT for more than 6+ months from the start of treatment among project clients - 89.19%, compared to retention among patients at the same OAT sites without additional services - 50.0%, and the overall retention on OAT among women in Ukraine - 78.03%. Retention on ART among HIV+ clients of the project - 100% (N=179), compared to the overall rate in Ukraine among HIV+ women - 98.36% (N=1198).

Conclusion and next steps:

Provision of comprehensive gender-sensitive services significantly increases retention on OAT and adherence to treatment, it is advisable to expand this practice.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: See example below:

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