HIGH SARS-COV-2 ANTIBODY PREVALENCE BUT NO SEVERE COURSE OF COVID-19 DISEASE AMONG PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS IN OPIOID AGONIST TREATMENT

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Background:
Somatic comorbidities are highly prevalent among people who inject drugs (PWID) and thus this population is considered a high-risk group for severe COVID-19 disease. In addition, social factors like living conditions put people who inject drugs (PWID) to an increased risk of infection with SARS-CoV-2. The aim of this study was to analyze the SARS-CoV-2 seroprevalence, disease course among antibody positive testes and associated factors among patients in an outpatient addiction unit in Switzerland.

Methods:
The Swiss nationwide Corona-Immunitas study assessed Sars-CoV-2 antibody prevalence, participants' characteristics as well as behavioural data in the general population and among patients in opioid agonist treatment (OAT) after the first wave of the corona pandemic. Additional information from patient charts were evaluated for the OAT group.

Results:
The Sars-CoV antibody prevalence in the general population of the canton of Zurich (age mean ± SD = 44.7 ± 11.7 years, 50.9% female) was 3.4% (n=868) vs 9.8% (12 out of 122) in the OAT population (age mean ± SD = 44.3 ± 9.4 y.; 30.3% female) in late summer 2020. In the OAT group, there was no significant differences between seropositive and seronegative individuals regarding socio-economic status, risk behaviour, COVID-19-related symptoms or number of comorbidities? None of the positive tested OAT-patients had a severe course of COVID-19.

Conclusion:
The 3-fold higher seroprevalence suggests a higher-than-average viral exposure in the OAT group. Nevertheless, no severe COVID-19 courses were detected in this high-risk population. One possible reason for this could be possible cross-immunity to SARS-CoV-2 due to frequent viral contacts in OAT patients.

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