

INTEGRATING HIV, HEPATITIS B & C, AND TUBERCULOSIS SERVICES TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES AMONG PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS IN GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA

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Background:

HIV, viral hepatitis (VH), and tuberculosis (TB) are major public health concerns in Gombe State, particularly among people who inject drugs (PWID). High-risk behaviors contribute to increased infection rates among PWID, necessitating integrated health interventions. This study evaluates a community-driven approach to integrating HIV, Hepatitis, and TB services towards improving disease detection and prevention among PWID in Gombe State.

Description of model of care/intervention/program:

A community-based outreach strategy was implemented, engaging trained peer educators and community volunteers. These individuals conducted screenings, provided education on drug- and sex-related risks, and distributed harm reduction supplies, including condoms, sterilized syringes, needles, and naloxone. Individuals diagnosed with HIV, Hepatitis B & C, or TB were referred for treatment and prevention programs.

Effectiveness:

Between June 2023 and September 2024, 2,074 drug users were screened. Of the 1,986 individuals who consented to HIV testing, 51 (2.7%) tested positive. Hepatitis B was detected in 118 individuals (6%) and 32 individuals (1%) with Hepatitis C while 238 (12%) had presumptive TB. Among them, 33 (14%) were bacteriologically confirmed, with 32 (97%) initiating TB treatment. Additionally, 8 (16%) were co-infected with HIV and Hepatitis. Preventive services were provided to 1,760 individuals (85%), while 230 (12%) participated in harm reduction programs.

Conclusion and next steps:

Integrating HIV, Hepatitis, and Tuberculosis services through community outreach improves disease detection and access to care for PWID. Strengthening peer-led interventions is critical for scaling up this method, and future work should look into policy implications and long-term health effects.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

I confirm that I, a relative, or any of the co-authors have not received pharmaceutical grant or any industry in the conduct of this study which could be construed as an actual, potential, or obvious conflict of interest.