WILLINGNESS TO ACCESS COMMUNITY-BASED HEPATITIS C AND HIV TESTING CENTRES AMONG INJECTING DRUG USERS IN LAGOS NIGERIA

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Background: Injecting drug use which has been on the increase recently in many Nigerian cities has been linked to increased rates of transmission of Hepatitis C and HIV infections. This study therefore sought to assess the willingness of injecting drug users to access community-based HIV and Hepatitis C counselling and testing services in Lagos Nigeria.

Methods: Self-administered questionnaires were given to persons who had been identified by peers using the rapid assessment method as injecting drug users. Version 17 of SPSS data editor was used to analyze data and Odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals (95 % CI) used to determine the correlates of willingness to participate (WTP).

Results

A total of 276 respondents took part in the survey with their ages ranging from 17 to 49 years with 186 persons (67%) indicating a willingness to participate. Decreased WTP was associated with concerns about stigmatization (OR = 0.35, 95% CI: 0.23–0.81), possibility of rejection by peers (OR = 0.63, 95% CI: 0.44–0.93) and costs implication of the tests (OR = 0.15, 95% CI: 0.13–0.71). Increased WTP was associated with involvement of the respondent in high risk sexual behaviour (OR = 1.15, 95% CI: 1.03–1.82), higher education (OR = 1.63, 95% CI: 1.22–1.83) and unemployment (OR = 1.35, 95% CI: 1.11–1.80).

Conclusion: The high level of willingness to participate in peer influenced drug policy changes indicates that such programs could be successful in the future. Such knowledge could help planners to design programs designed to reduce the incidence of HIV and Hepatitis C.

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