

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH HCV TESTING AMONG PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS IN AN URBAN SETTING IN VIETNAM

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Background:

HCV testing is an important first step for both treatment and prevention, especially for People Who Inject drugs (PWIDs) who are highly vulnerable to HCV infection. In settings where Direct Acting Antiretroviral are becoming more available, limited information exist about who and where to target in order to increase uptake of HCV testing among PWIDs.

Approach:

From February 2016 to April 2017, peer educators of VNPUD outreach and recruited PWIDs in Hanoi for a free HCV testing and referral-to-treatment program. A sample of 509 PWIDs completed HCV and HIV quick tests (regardless of reported testing status), quantitative HCV RNA and a questionnaire on HCV-related knowledge and risk behaviors. Multivariate logistic regression identifies factors associated with having ever tested for HCV before enrollment in the program.

Outcome:

In this sample, 32.2% reported ever tested for HCV and yet 61.7% were infected (22.6% mono-infected and 39.1% HCV/HIV co-infected). Most common sources of testing are public hospitals and general clinics (68.7%), followed by HIV clinics (18.9%). In multivariate analyses, having ever tested for HCV was positively associated with ages of 30-40 (aOR=2.76; 95%CI 1.06-7.17), using health services within past 12 months (aOR=2.44; 95%CI 1.20-4.98), currently in MMT (aOR=2.25;95%CI 1.30-3.91) or ART care (aOR=2.01; 95%CI 1.13-3.58) and higher HCV knowledge score (aOR=1.11;95%CI 1.01-1.23). Those who ever delayed seeking health care for any reasons were less likely to have been tested (aOR=0.51; 95%CI 0.33-0.8).

Conclusion:

HCV testing is low among PWIDs in Hanoi despite a very high prevalence of HCV infection. Our program scaled up HCV awareness raising in outreach and mobile testing to reach hidden PWIDs, especially younger people. Interventions to enhance integration of testing and treatment in regular and specialized services, such as MMT and HIV clinics, is much needed.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The authors declare no conflict of interests.