



Falling Trend of Risk Taking Behaviour in Drug Users before Admission to a Drug Rehabilitation Service

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Background

Monitoring the pattern of risk taking behaviour in injecting drug users is an important aspect of HIV surveillance.

Methodology

A retrospective study was conducted on drug users on admission to the Shek Kwu Chau Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (SKCTRC), an inpatient drug rehabilitation service in Hong Kong. Data on demographics and risk behaviours were collected.



Results

Between 1991 and 2001, an average of 2,038 drug users were admitted per year. The ever injection rate of first-time inmates decreased from 74.3% in 1991 to 58.1% in 2001. ($\chi^2 = 30.15$, $p < 0.05$) while that for re-admitted inmates had decreased from 88.9% to 75.5%. ($\chi^2 = 177.7$, $p < 0.05$) The proportion of having ever shared needles in both groups had also fallen from 15.5% to 2.3% ($\chi^2 = 103.6$, $p < 0.05$) and 20.9% to 1.8% ($\chi^2 = 1104$, $P < 0.05$) respectively. Over the years, the median age of drug users at first admission had remained within 30 and 35 years old, and those repeatedly admitted within 37 to 43 age group.

Conclusion

There has been a falling trend of risk taking behaviour in drug users in the last decade in Hong Kong. There is no age cohort effect to account for the phenomenon.