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Abstract Title

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Improving HIV surveillance in Hong Kong through molecular characterization with a regional perspective

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Abstract (not more than 1 page with font Time New Roman size 12)

Background

Hong Kong has remained a low HIV prevalence locality since report of the first cases in mid 1980s. However, the influence of external factors, in particular those of neighbouring Mainland China and other places with different HIV prevalence cannot be underestimated.

Method

In 2006, with funding support by the RFCID, the Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health of Hong Kong (HK) embarked on a collaborative study with Shenzhen (SZ), Guangzhou (GZ) and Macau (MC) to examine the pattern of HIV-1 subtypes in Pearl River Delta region (PRDR).

Results

A total of 482 samples from patients reported in year 2006 were successfully genotyped – 333 (HK), 105 (SZ), 21 (GZ) and 23 (MC). Overall, CRF01_AE and B subtypes were the most common subtypes found – 46.5%, 38.1% (HK); 60.9%, 15.2% (SZ) 47.6%, 4.8% (GZ); 52.5%, 30.4% (MC). These were followed by CRF07_BC (4.2, 12.4, 33.3%) and CRF08_BC (4.5, 9.5, 14.3%) in HK, SZ and GZ respectively while CRF12_BF was prevalent in MC (13.0%). CRF01_AE was more common in female, heterosexuals and injecting drug users while B was commoner in men who have sex with men. One case from MC fell under a big B subtype cluster involving 42 reported patients in Hong Kong as of 2006.

Discussion

There were commonalities as well as differences in the distribution of HIV-1 subtypes in the four cities in PRDR. Clustering of infections indicating common sources was rare across cities. Impact of human mobility on the evolution of HIV epidemic in Hong Kong has to be continually monitored.