

Universal HIV testing for drug users in methadone clinics by urine antibody test - 4-year experience

WL Mak¹, KH Wong¹, Tina Mok², WL Lim³, Francis Wong¹

¹Special Preventive Programme, Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health, Hong Kong, ²Narcotics and Drug Administration Unit, Department of Health, Hong Kong, ³Public Health Laboratory Services, Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health, Hong Kong

Issues:

To increase HIV testing coverage in injecting drug users is an increasing concern. Twenty methadone clinics (MC) in Hong Kong with a daily attendance over 6000 implemented a universal HIV testing programme in 2004. This abstract summaries the 4-year experience.

Project:

The testing programme was conducted in a rota. Four to six MCs conducted the programme in each quarter and staffs collected urine for HIV testing in an opt-out manner during the period. Newly attendees and re-admitted attendees could also test outside the period. Urine samples were sent for GACPAT and Western Blot.

Results:

From 2004 to 2007, over 7000 HIV tests were done under this programme each year, with coverage over 80%. The coverage was higher in smaller clinics. The number of tests greatly increased after rolling out this programme, from 318 tests done in 2002. The HIV prevalence ranged from 0.2% in 2004 to 0.36% in 2007. 79 tests were positive out of 36189 tests in 4 years, including those done outside the programme period. 37 individuals were newly diagnosed in methadone clinics. 62% were successfully referred for specialist follow up.

Lesson Learned:

Methadone clinic can serve as a hub for high coverage HIV testing programme, drug treatment and case referral for injecting drug users.