

[C11170] Evaluation of a universal HIV urine testing programme (MUT) in methadone clinics (MC) in Hong Kong

W.Y. Wan, S.S. Lee, K.H. Wong. Red Ribbon Centre, Hong Kong, China

Background: Methadone clinic (MC) is the most extensive contact point for drug users in Hong Kong in context of public health intervention. The methadone clinic universal HIV urine testing programme (MUT) was designed, to offer HIV tests to all MC attendees in a yearly cycle, with an opt-out mechanism. The objectives were to step up HIV surveillance, promote HIV testing, and enhance HIV awareness among drug users. A pilot programme was conducted in three MCs from July to September 2003, before the full implementation of the territory-wide programme in 2004. **Methods for evaluation:** (1) Programme statistics submitted by the MCs and laboratory and (2) Questionnaire survey on the drug users for their main reason for opt-out.

Results: The total number of MC attendees during the testing period was 2456. All (100%) were offered HIV tests, and 74% (1817/2456) had the tests performed. Nine patients were tested positive, corresponding to a seroprevalence rate of 0.50% (95% confidence interval, 0.23% - 0.94%). One was a previously known HIV positive person, and there was no epidemiological linkage in the eight newly-diagnosed cases. One-third (28%, 179/639) of the opt-out drug users had given their main reason for refusal in a survey, and "inconvenience and/or lack of time" (68%) was quoted as the commonest reason followed by "physical barrier" (5%). A quarter (24%) refused to participate in the survey. The HIV positive cases had a high default rate for treatment (5 out of the 8 patients defaulted clinical referral one-month after diagnosis).

Conclusions: Universal HIV testing is acceptable to a majority of methadone users. Coverage was limited by a poor motivation of drug users of the methadone clinics. The high defaulter rate is a cause for concern when the programme is rolled out.

Presentation: CD publication only: Epidemiology and Prevention