SCIENTIFIC ABSTRATCS

Study on Prevalence of Alcohol Abuse among Injecting Drug Users in Tehran and 5 Major Cities of Iran

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Background: Alcohol use could be a risk factor for high risk sexual behaviors and injection especially among injecting drug users (IDUs). Data presented in this abstract extracted from the "Study on situation of HIV, Latent Tuberculosis (TB) and Active TB Infection among IDUs Receiving Harm Reduction Services in Tehran and 5 large cities in Iran" which had been conducted from June to December 2013 by support from United Nation Office on Drug and Crime in Iran (UNODC), Drug Control Head Quarter (DCHQ) and the US Center for Disease Control at Ministry of Health (CDC).

Methods: This was a cross-sectional study on 420 IDUs, recruited by convenient sampling. After taking consent forms, questionnaire completed and participants tested for HIV by rapid test and tuberculin skin test performed for all of them.

Results: Life-time alcohol use had prevalence from 27.1% to 82.7% in different cities and in average 55.7%. Past month alcohol use was 8.5% among those who had history for alcohol use; an average day for using alcohol in recent groups was 8.2 days. Mean age for starting alcohol use was 17.5 ± 4.7 years. There was no statistical relationship between HIV with those who had alcohol use in life-time and past month with those who had not. There was a significant difference for cumulative years of using crystal heroin (crack), methadone, tramadol / diphenoxylate / codeine, methamphetamine, average age for starting methadone and tramadol based on independent factor of life-time alcohol use. Dysuria and inguinal bubo as well as used syringe use had significant correlation with independent factor of past month alcohol use. Those who had life-time alcohol use also started cigarette smoking sooner than those who had not positive history for alcohol use in their life-time (P=0.03).

Conclusion: After cigarette, alcohol is the first substance that IDUs started to use. Past month alcohol users were at higher risk for sexually transmitted disease and high risk injection which are strong risk factors for HIV. This study was designed for exploring alcohol use but based on findings, further studies are highly recommended.

Keywords: Alcohol Drinking; Drug Users; HIV; Iran

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