

D24 - Risk behaviour, quality of life, access to care in harm reduction approaches

THPE0732 - Development and implement of a harm reduction and AIDS education program in the detention centers and prisons in Taiwan

K.C. Chang¹, C.C. Chang², C.K. Ma², K.C. Hung¹, Y.M. Chen³

¹Taiwan Society of Preventive Medicine - Living with Hope Organization, Taipei City, Taiwan, Republic of China, ²Taiwan Society of Preventive Medicine - Living with Hope Organization, Taoyuan, Taiwan, Republic of China, ³AIDS Prevention and Researcher Center, National Yang-Ming University, Taipei City, Taiwan, Republic of China

Issues: An explosive epidemic of HIV-1 among injecting drug users (IDUs) happened in Taiwan in 2004. The numbers of inmates infected with HIV-1 increased rapidly and more than 95% of them were IDUs. Since about one-third of male inmates and 90% of female inmates were drug users, we decided to develop and implement a harm reduction and AIDS education program for the inmates in Taiwan.

Description: Different group counseling programs for HIV-1 positive or negative inmates have been designed and provided to inmates. Education materials related to harm reduction were developed through the help of researchers from the AIDS Research Center of the National Yang-Ming University. New findings related to risk behavior among IDUs, e.g., sharing heroine diluents and containers were included. Clinical counseling associated with AIDS, CD4 count testing and HCV blood tests were provided to HIV-1 seropositive inmates. A knowledge, attitude and practice study was conducted.

Results: A pamphlet called "IDUs Self-protection manual" was developed. It is easy to understand and includes practical information. Since September 2004, this program has been provided to 8 jails and 2 detention/rehabilitation centers in Taiwan. More than 500 inmates have participated in this program and they were very enthusiastic to learn and discuss their problems with the counsellors. 98 questionnaires were collected from HIV-1-infected inmates and the results showed that more than half of them were either illiterate or only had primary school education level. Most of them understand what is HIV-1 infection while they worried about their family members will find out their status.

Lessons learned: Group counseling can enhance their participation in the AIDS prevention and harm reduction programs. In addition, some of the inmates will visit our office after they were released from the prison and became our volunteers for peer education in the harm reduction program.
