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INTRA VENOUS DRUG USERS- SCREENING & VACCINATION PROGRAMME

J. Sharma[1]*, M. Manarkattu*[2]*, P. Ravi*[3]*, C. Naughton*[4]

[1]General Adult Psychiatry, NHS, Birmingham, [2]Emergency Medicine, NHS, Wolverhampton, [3]Addictions Psychiatry, [4]Psychiatry, NHS, Walsall, UK

Introduction: Prevalence and incidence rates of both Hepatitis B and C is on the rise in United Kingdom, and worldwide. Intravenous drug users (IVDU) are particularly at risk due to their chaotic lifestyle. Testing enables early treatment, and vaccination is an effective method of prevention.
Objectives: Assess awareness of screening and vaccination programmes (VP) amongst IVDUs, and willingness to engage in these if they were available and accessible.
Aims: Our sample population was IVDUs presenting to a Community Substance Misuse team, in central England and the criteria we assessed were: whether they admitted to needle-sharing, awareness of screening and VPs, previous screening and vaccination history, and willingness to engage in VPs.
Methods: Data was collected through a performa with related questions, after identifying and communicating to key workers; and presented in graphs. We looked at the first 100 responses.
Results: More than a third of IVDU in the population shared needles, one-third had not even been tested for Hep B/C, a half had been immunised. Most of them are aware of the risks, and would agree to the immunisation programme if available, at Lantern House.
Conclusions: Prevalence of IVDU presenting to a Substance Misuse clinic is quite high. Screening and vaccination against Hepatitis of IVDU is lacking, despite it being feasible, necessary and acceptable by patients. Screening for the disease will aid diagnosis and hence early treatment, and will create a gateway for prevention by using VPs.

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