



ABSTRACTS BOOK

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ID/Title: 230 **Patterns of sexual behaviours among injection drug users in Tehran, Iran**

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Abstract: Backgrounds and objectives: Recent changes in HIV epidemics in Iran, suggests an increase in sexual transmission of HIV. Previous studies have shown that unsafe sex had been prevalent among injecting drug users (IDUs). This study carried out in order to assess patterns of sexual risk behaviors among IDUs and to discuss the effectiveness of harm reduction interventions started since 2002 in decreasing these risk behaviors. Methods: A sample of 899 IDUs (861 male and 38 female) was recruited in Tehran from treatment and harm reduction facilities and from public areas in equal proportions. A questionnaire was prepared to collect information about socio-demographic characteristics and various sexual risk behaviors. Study results: A total of 329 individuals (36.4 percent) reported extra-marriage heterosexual or homosexual relationship within the previous six months. 236 (29.1 percent) were not using condom, regularly. The most prevalent sexual relationship was extra-marriage heterosexual, followed by marital relationship. The least prevalent was homosexual relationship with a prevalence of 15.2 percent. Regular condom use was uncommon. The paper provides a detailed description of various unsafe sex behaviors in groups of IDUs and discusses the dynamics of distribution of infectious diseases among IDUs, their partners, families and to the country. Conclusions: Comparing the results of this study with previous studies, it does not seem that unsafe sex has been decreased among IDUs. The distribution of infectious diseases via sexual relationship, through chain of sex workers and within families is quite probable. It suggests that Iranian harm reduction policy should be expanded and should integrate addressing sexual risk behaviors in a more serious and comprehensive approach.

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