

Undiagnosed HIV and Hepatitis C infection among people who inject drugs

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Introduction

Drug-related infectious diseases such as HIV and hepatitis C (HCV) are among the most serious health consequences of injecting drug use.

Many drug users are not aware of their HIV serostatus and this figure is likely to be higher for other infections such as HCV.

Early diagnosis improves treatment prognosis and allows interventions for behavior change.

Objective

To describe the proportion of persons who inject drugs (PWID) who are not aware of their HIV and HCV infection.

To assess factors associated with undiagnosed HIV/HCV infections among them.

Methodology

Bio-behavioural surveys among PWID as part of the Integrated HIV/STI Surveillance System in Catalonia (SIVES).

Cross-sectional study in 2012-2013.

Recruitment in harm reduction centers.

Inclusion criteria: Injected drugs in the last 6 months; older than 18 years old; informed consent.

Anonymous questionnaires and oral fluid samples to estimate HIV/HCV prevalence.

Those that report "unknown" or "negative" status but test positive on the oral fluid test represent the **HIV and HCV undiagnosed groups**.

Poisson regression models were applied to assess factors associated with undiagnosed HIV/HCV infection.

Results

Figure 1. Classification of PWID according to knowledge of HIV and HCV status

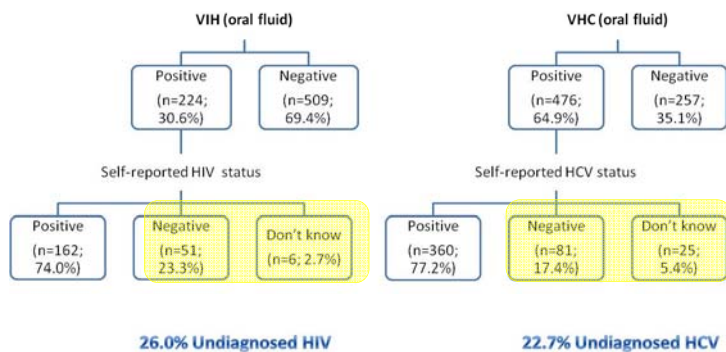


Figure 2. Injection risk behaviors and undiagnosed HIV/HCV infection

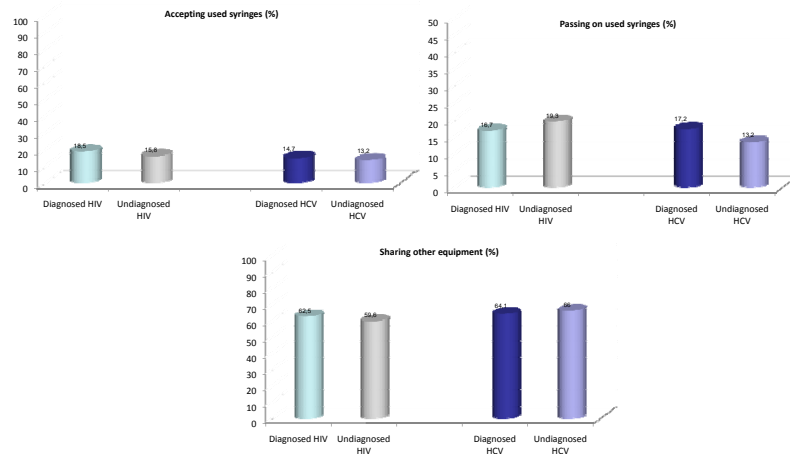


Table 3. Factors associated with undiagnosed HIV and HCV infection

		Undiagnosed HIV infection			Undiagnosed HCV infection		
		APR	IC95%	p	APR	IC95%	p
Sex	Female	1,00			1,00		
	Male	1,26	1,13-1,41	<0,0001	0,99	0,92-1,07	ns
Age	30 or more	1,00			1,00		
	Less than 30	1,18	1,03-1,34	0,014	1,11	1,02-1,21	0,015
Ever sharing syringes	No	1,00			1,00		
	Yes	0,80	0,72-0,89	<0,0001	0,88	0,83-0,94	<0,0001
Migrant	No				1,00		
	Yes				1,09	1,01-1,16	0,019
Ever in prison	Yes	1,00					
	No	1,22	1,10-1,36	<0,0001			
Ever in treatment for drug use	Yes	1,00			1,00		
	No	1,25	1,03-1,50	0,021	1,12	1,01-1,23	0,026
Used a Primary Health Center*	Yes	1,00					
	No	1,11	1,02-1,20	0,018			
Use of drug consumption rooms*	Half the days or more	1,00					
	< half the days/never	1,13	1,04-1,22	0,002			

*Last 6 months; APR: Adjusted Prevalence Ratio

Conclusions

A significant proportion of PWID in Catalonia who attended harm reduction services are unaware of their HIV and/or HCV infection.

Risky injection practices persist among PWID aware of their HIV and/or HCV infection.

Counseling and testing programs are specially needed for young injectors and migrants.

Rapid HIV and HCV tests can play an important role in order to increase the rate of early diagnosis, especially in populations who do not seek conventional medical care.