

HIV testing among people who inject drugs receiving addiction treatment services in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal

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Background: Despite the promotion of early initiation of antiretroviral therapy (ART) because of its association with decreased rates of HIV-associated morbidity, mortality, and HIV incidence, people who inject drugs (PWID) have high rates of HIV infection and low rates of ART coverage. As HIV testing is the gateway to treatment and care, PWID are recommended to get tested annually. However, a significant number of HIV-positive PWID remain unaware of their infection. We assessed HIV testing and linkage to care among PWID in Kathmandu, Nepal, where ART coverage was only 26.5% in 2014. **Methods:** In 2016, we conducted a cross-sectional study among 230 PWID receiving addiction treatment services from 20 centers. Measures included health, substance use, sexual behaviors, HIV testing, and history of CD4+ cell count monitoring and ART initiation. Data were analyzed using multivariable logistic regression analyses. **Results:** Of total, 57 (25%) participants had never been tested for HIV. Of the 173 participants who were ever tested, 48 (28%) were not tested in past 12 months, 9 (5%) received HIV-positive diagnosis prior to 12 months and 9 (5%) in the past 12 months. Of the 18 HIV-positive participants, 8 ever monitored CD4+ cell counts and 3 initiated ART. Single participants were less likely to test their blood for HIV than those of married (15.7% vs 29.6%; $p=0.019$). **Conclusions:** Despite being at regular contact with care providers, opportunities for HIV testing and linkage to care were missed in almost half of all PWID receiving addiction treatment services in a high-prevalence HIV setting.

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