



INJECTING DRUG USE, UNSAFE PRACTICES AND HEALTH RISK

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ABSTRACT

Drug injecting method is one of the fastest growing drug consumption methods in the world. According to the records of the treatment admissions for drug dependency, injecting drug use has increased in recent past in the country. Objective of the study was to identify the unsafe practices and health risk related to drug injection. The survey carried out on a non-probable sample of Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) and 721 were represented in the sample. Structured questionnaire, In-depth interviews and observations were used to identify the behaviour of IDUs. IDUs were categorized into two groups -as daily users (69%) and occasional users (31%). Most of the IDUs followed unsafe injecting practices, which are reusing (50%) and sharing (44%) the injecting equipment. Drug injection is the context of dealing with the inside of the body and it should be done under safe conditions. The group injecting behavior is another major risk. It frequently occurs with drug using peers who share common behavioural traits, mutual economic ties and social bonds and often develops into drug related partnerships. Most of the IDUs involved in group injections because of the lack of resource and peer pressure. IDUs were guided to sharing practices by the group norms and lack of resources within the group. The other risk factor of injecting drug use is that not cleaning the skin adequately before injecting. If someone injects drug without cleaning the skin, it can cause some of the bacterial infections. The other risk factors are drugs leak out of the veins during the injection and injection of drugs into the fatty layer under the skin. Repeated injection at the same sites of the body can cause damage to skin and veins. When examining the IDUs, some persons had injuries and patches on the skin due to the drug injection to the same site. Unsafe injecting setting, sharing practices and misperception were the risk factors related to drug injection.

Keyword: Injecting drug use, sharing, reuse, risk