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RISKY BEHAVIORS OF HIV INFECTION AMONG DRUG DEPENDENTS IN EGYPT

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Background: The objective was to study risky behaviors for HIV infection by drug dependents and assess their needs for prevention.

Methodology: This study was conducted on 188 drug addicts using a pre tested and pre designed questionnaire sheet.

Results: The majority of studied addicts were ageing 20-40 years (81.4%), males (88.8%), of urban residence (69.7%) and of single marital status (69.7%). Illiteracy represented 10.6% and 22.3% were unemployed. Practicing drug injection was found among 44.7% out of them 42.9% shared needles. Knowledge about HIV/AIDS was found among the majority of studied addicts but deeper knowledge about modes of transmission was defective. Only 11.2% were ever screened for HIV compared with 43.6% for viral hepatitis. Risk perception for HIV infection was found among 28.6% of injecting drug users and 22% of addicts with unsafe sexual relations. Nearly two thirds had extramarital sex with multiple partners while 66.9% reported never use condoms. Hepatitis B and C and sexually transmitted infections were significantly higher among dependents with unsafe sexual behaviors and drug injection.

Conclusion: Risky behaviors for HIV infection are common among studied addicts. Their risk perception and knowledge about HIV/AIDS was, however, found defective. There is urgent need for outreach programs to increase their awareness about harm reduction measures.