ABSTRACT

**HIV outbreak among Injecting drug users in Larkana, Pakistan serious threat for generalized epidemic**

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**Background:**
Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) are at increased risk for requiring and transmitting HIV infection. Present study describes HIV outbreak among IDUs in Larkana, Pakistan and discusses its implications on future HIV epidemics in the country.

**Methods:**
IDUs registered with two NGOs providing harm reduction outreach services in different parts of Larkana were offered Voluntary HIV counselling and testing (VCT) services. Those who Volunteered for VCT services were provided pretest counselling, interviewer administered questionnaire was administered and blood samples were drawn. The results of HIV test were given to tested individuals after providing posttest counselling.

**Results:**
From January 1st to October 31st 2004, total 3154 IDUs availed VCT services out of which 63-tested HIV +ve (8.3%). All IDUs were males, aged 14-55 years and 35% were married. Almost 100% were homeless and none of IDUs had regular job at the time of interview. More than 50% of studied IDUs did not belong to Larkana, some from other provinces and other parts of Sindh province about half of the interviewed IDUs were sexually active.

**Conclusions:**
There is serious threat of HIV spread among Injecting Drug Users in Larkana and other parts of country. Since IDUs population is very mobile and frequently traveled from one city to another. As IDUs are integrated in the community they buy and sell sex donate blood for money and some are married and often visit their families therefore, HIV can easily be transmitted to general population.

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