

Quantitative Study: Condom use, VCT use, BTC TRaC Study among Male Injecting Drug Users in the 7 PEPFAR provinces

2009-2010

Background

While HIV rates in Vietnam are still relatively low in the general population, HIV prevalence is alarmingly high among injecting drug users (IDUs) in some areas of the country. As of 2009, nearly one in five male IDUs in Vietnam was reported to be HIV-positive (IBBS, 2009). In order to mitigate the spread of HIV infection in Vietnam, programs that target this high-risk population.

As part of the AIDSTAR Task Order, Population Service International (PSI) Vietnam is implementing a USAID/PEPFAR-funded program targeting male IDUs in 7 provinces. The objectives of the program are to promote of safer sexual behaviors (e.g., increased consistent condom use with sexual partners), increase uptake of VCT services, and prevent initiation of injecting drug use.

At the request of PSI, ISMS carried out a baseline survey of male IDUs from November 2009 to February 2010 in 7 PEPFAR provinces in Vietnam. As part of this survey, a pilot study was conducted in Hanoi and HCMC in November 2009.

Objectives

The baseline survey set out to achieve the following four objectives:

1. To measure the prevalence among existing IDUs of initiating non-injectors into injecting drug use, including helping someone with their first injection, injecting in the presence of non-injectors, and talking about the benefits of injecting to non-injectors;
2. To understand the determinants among existing IDUs of initiating non-injectors into injecting drug use;
3. To understand sexual behavior among IDUs with regular partners and sex workers, including correct and consistent condom use with these types of partners; and
4. To measure levels of HIV testing, including voluntary counseling and HIV testing (VCT) among IDUs.

Study Participants and Sites

The baseline survey targeted male IDUs in 7 PEPFAR provinces including Hanoi, Hai Phong, Quang Ninh, Nghe An, HCMC, Can Tho and An Giang.

Methodology

The study was a cross-sectional survey in which a total of 1,075 IDUs were recruited using RDS. These participants were interviewed by trained ISMS interviewers using structured questionnaires. Before this, a pilot study was conducted in Hanoi and HCMC with a total of 100 current IDUs to test: 1) the feasibility of Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) in recruiting IDUs, 2) the feasibility and effectiveness of managing respondents by UIC and biomarkers, 3) the length and comprehension of the questionnaire for finalization.

In collaboration with PSI, ISMS recruited participants from the 7 program provinces and managed one data collection team for each province consisting of 1 team leader, 1 research assistant, and 1 field supervisor from ISMS, as well as trained interviewers recruited from universities or institutes.

Output from ISMS

After data collection, a report of the field data collection process - including lessons learned and recommendations for future studies - was written by ISMS researchers and submitted to PSI. The data collected can be used by PSI to inform their intervention activities with male IDUs, allowing them to achieve a greater impact in this vulnerable population.

Donors and Partners

The Institute of Social and Medical Studies (ISMS) conducted the study for Population Services International (PSI) Vietnam with funding from USAID/PEPFAR. For more information about us and our donors and partners, please visit:

www.isms.org.vn

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