

The Human immunodeficiency virus epidemic among substance abuse population in Thailand : a hard lesson from inadequate intervention and future threat

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ABSTRACT

The HIV epidemic poses unprecedented challenges on assessment, monitoring and intervention. The rapid widespread HIV epidemic and the continuous changes in risk behaviours, their determinants and risk associated attributes including bridge transmission left little time to respond appropriately throughout the country. Current knowledge on the situation suggested that HIV infection is still spreading among the drug user population at an unacceptable rate. It seems clear that in certain geographical areas the epidemic may be slowing down even though by natural saturation. However, in many areas the situation could still be on the increase. A definitive scenario of the current situation lacks comprehensive and reliable data to allow elucidation. Positive efficacy of preventive and treatment programmes for DU populations have been shown. Nevertheless, risk associated attributes and bridge transmission have not yet received due attention. The deleterious impact from HIV infection in the DU population remains a serious contention for the future. The unsatisfactory outcome despite intensive intervention implementations is indeed a hard lesson to learn.

Key words: Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), Epidemic, Substance abuse population, Thailand.

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