Positive Hepatitis C Virus Antibody in Cases with History of Intravenous Drug Abuse via Community Announcement: A Useful Experience

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Abstract

Background: Injection drug use plays the most important role in transmission of hepatitis C. In Iran, surveys have been conducted on various high risk groups but this is the first announcement based study for anti-HCV prevalence among cases with history of intravenous drug using (IVDU) in the country.

Methods: The announcement-based detection and follow-up of patients with anti-HCV positive project in volunteers with history of intravenous drug using was conducted in Isfahan province. At the first step, six focus groups were conducted and 2 pilot studies were carried out in two cities to design the main study. Comprehensive community announcement was done in all of public places and for physicians. The volunteers were invited to Isfahan reference laboratories and the serum samples were sent to Infectious Diseases Research Center Laboratory in standard conditions and HCV-Ab was tested by ELISA method.

Finding: In this study, 1747 individuals that are estimated 50% of all expected intravenous drug users in the community were presented themselves. The most important reasons of success in recruiting volunteers in this study were the perfect propaganda, appropriate cooperation of lab staffs, continuous evaluation, and good cooperation in Isfahan province administrations. HCV-Ab was detected in 34% of them and the HCV-Ab positives were sent for further follow-up procedures including confirmatory test, education, and treatment.

Conclusion: In spite of some limitations to select real cases, this study considered as a successful experience. Compared to the surveys in Iran on HCV prevalence in intravenous drug users, the results of this study which was based on volunteers by announcement seems to be noteworthy.

Keywords: Hepatitis C, Community, Intravenous drug using, Announcement.