AMPETAMINE-TYPE-STIMULANT USE AND HIV INFECTION: FINDINGS FROM A BIO-BEHAVIORAL SURVEY OF MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN IN HANOI, VIETNAM

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Introduction: Men who have sex with men (MSM) are a key population for HIV infection in Vietnam and the use of amphetamine-type-substances (ATS) is prevalent and possibly increasing in this population. The reported analysis examines the association between ATS use and HIV infection among MSM in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Methods: The sample for this analysis, derived from a larger, community-based survey, consisted of 210 MSM recruited in Hanoi, Vietnam in late 2014. Men tested for HIV and answered questions about demographic characteristics, recent accessing of HIV prevention services, ATS and other drug use behaviours, sexual risk behaviours, depression, homosexuality-related stigma and discrimination, sexual sensation-seeking, belief in HIV prevention strategies and HIV testing history. We performed logistic regression to assess correlates of HIV infection.

Results: HIV prevalence was 6.7% and 85.7% of HIV-positive men were not aware of their HIV status. Condomless anal intercourse with male partners in the past three months was common (73.8%). Of the 210 participants, 22.9%, 7.6% and 20.0% had ever used methamphetamine, amphetamine and ecstasy, respectively and 10.5%, 2.9% and 3.8% of men had used methamphetamine, amphetamine and ecstasy during sex in the last three months. In multivariate analysis, recent sex-related methamphetamine and amphetamine use were associated with HIV infection, controlling for other independent covariates, including education and perceived homosexuality-related stigma.

Conclusion: HIV prevalence in this convenience sample of MSM from Hanoi was moderate and associated with recent sex-related methamphetamine or amphetamine use. Importantly, most HIV-positive men did not appear to be aware of being infected. Findings underscore the importance of scaling-up of gay-friendly, non-stigmatizing, trusted HIV testing and prevention interventions for MSM, especially MSM who use ATS. We recommend that bio-behavioural surveillance in Vietnam routinely assesses ATS use and the correlates of undiagnosed HIV among MSM.

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