Supervised Injection Sites Are Prime Venues for Hep C Treatment Services

A recent survey of such sites found high rates of hepatitis C among patrons, but treatment for the virus was rarely offered on-site.

July 30, 2018 By Benjamin Ryan

Supervised injection sites for people who inject drugs (PWID) are opportune places for clinicians to offer treatment for hepatitis C virus (HCV), aidsmap reports. However, a recent survey of such sites in various nations found that they did not often provide such services on site.

In 2016, researchers conducted a survey of 49 supervised drug consumption sites, including eight in the Netherlands, 17 in Germany, nine in Spain and seven in Switzerland as well as sites in Denmark, France, Australia, Canada, Luxembourg and Norway.

Findings were presented at the International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam (AIDS 2018).

Each site received an average of 80 visits daily. On a typical day, the sites had seven paid staff and one unpaid or volunteer staff member. Eighty percent of the sites had nurses, 78 percent had social workers, 44 percent had medical doctors on-site, 28 percent had health educators and 22 had peer counselors.

Sixty-six percent of the sites offered testing for HCV on-site as well as pre- and post-test counseling. About 80 percent of the clients received such screening; 60 of them had the virus.

Only two sites, or 4 percent of the sample, offered testing for hep C on-site. One more site had plans to do so. Sites were more likely to offer HCV treatment if they had nurses or doctors on staff and if they offered opioid substitution therapy on-site.

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