Targeting HIV in Drug Injectors Can Lower AIDS in Heterosexuals

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HIV testing and counseling as well as needle exchange and drug programs for injection drug users (IDUs) appear to lower AIDS rates in heterosexuals. Publishing their findings in the Annals of Epidemiology, researchers analyzed HIV and AIDS prevalence data, as well as the availability of HIV counseling and testing and needle exchange and drug treatment programs, from 96 large metropolitan areas.

The researchers found that HIV counseling and testing as well as needle exchange and drug treatment programs for the IDU population were linked to a lower rate of new annual AIDS cases among heterosexuals.

The study did not find such a link between counseling and testing for MSM and AIDS rates in heterosexuals.

“Our findings are descriptive of the relationships of the measured variables in these large metropolitan areas,” Samuel R. Friedman, director of New York University’s Center for Drug Use and HIV Research Interdisciplinary Theoretical Synthesis Core and the study’s lead author, said in a release. “They do not, however, imply that these findings can necessarily be extended to smaller [metropolitan statistical areas], non-metropolitan localities, other time periods or other countries; for that, further research is clearly needed.”

To read the press release, click here.

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