

Increasing access for MSM to free counseling and testing for HCV and HBV based on community and linkage to care in Ukraine

Presenter name: ANDRII CHERNYSHEV, Public Organization "ALLIANCE.GLOBAL"

DESCRIPTION

Currently, MSM are one of the most vulnerable groups in Ukraine, not only for HIV but also for viral hepatitis. According data of the latest bio-behavioral study among MSM (2015-16), HCV prevalence was 4% and tends to increase, especially among HIV-positive MSM. The problematic issues in the provision of health and social services in the area of hepatitis for MSM there are that:

- Since 2015, the Global Fund aren't funding the prevention component and detection of HBV/HCV among MSM;
- Low access to HCV treatment for community and poor adherence;
- Expensive laboratory diagnosis for viral hepatitis.

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT

Objectives:
 Since April 2016 the PO "ALLIANCE.GLOBAL" supported by Gilead Science, is implementing a program, objectives of which are:

- 1). Increase access to rapid testing for HBV and HCV among MSM in Kyiv and four other cities of Ukraine.
- 2). Increase MSM awareness about viral hepatitis, the development of commitment to testing, diagnosis and treatment.
- 3). Linkage to care and support MSM who live with HCV and / or HBV.

Methods:

- Conducting of rapid testing among MSM for HBV and HCV based on the community center for MSM in Kyiv as well as Odessa, Poltava, Chernihiv and Bila Tserkva;
- Increase MSM awareness about hepatitis, "peer to peer" counseling;
- An advertising campaign on attracting at testing in social networks Facebook and V Kontakte (3 kinds of advertising banners have been developed);
- Redirect into existing programs of HCV and HBV treatment and social support, a 50% discount on laboratory diagnosis of hepatitis.

WHY IS THIS INNOVATIVE?

Results:
 From May 2016 to April 2017 in general were involved, tested for HBV and for HCV **1,932** MSM (**1672** MSM in Kyiv and **260** people in four other cities) in the equal proportions. In this case, each of them were given the social counseling "peer to peer". By results of rapid testing was found that **29** people have received a positive test result for HBV (1.5% of the total number tested) and **46** MSM have received a positive test result for HCV (2.4%). Should be noted that **two** men have received the positive results for HBV/HCV testing simultaneously. Regarding of HCV treatment: from **46** positive results, **15** people, were have been queued for treatment by sofosbuvir (sovaldi) or a new combination Harvoni (sofosbuvir + ledypasvir), supported by Alliance for Public Health. Another **19** people were queued for free treatment for public funds, and **10** people have decided to conduct the treatment at their own expense by generics (mainly sofosbuvir + daklatasvir).

95% of people living with viral hepatitis don't know about it



Get tested for hepatitis B and C
 Register at www.gettest.com.ua



Have you ever had unprotected sex?



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Remember that an untimely detection of hepatitis can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer!



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CONCLUSIONS

- 1). Thanks to implementation of rapid testing for viral hepatitis and the hosted advertising campaign have significantly increased the number of MSM who tested for HIV and has increased the level of information about viral hepatitis, increased the level of detection for HBV and HCV.
- 2). It was adjusted a redirection system for HBV and HCV diagnosis and treatment for MSM to specialized medical specialists (including infectionists).

REFERENCES

- 1). It's necessary to significantly increase the coverage of testing for viral hepatitis (including MSM who use drugs and who are involved in sex work) through the influence our information campaign and expanding the geography of providing services.
- 2). The prevention and detection component of HCV and HBV among MSM in Ukraine must necessarily enter at the mandatory service package at a new national Ukraine's application to the Global Fund 2018-20.
- 3). In further advocacy activities to increase access to the diagnosis and treatment of viral hepatitis, it is necessary to take into account the possibility of receiving free treatment and diagnosis for MSM as well.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

We hereby declare that nobody of the PO "ALLIANCE.GLOBAL" employees and the consultants of this project have not a conflicts of interest in the context of procurement, namely: the acquisition of rapid test systems for HBV and HCV, an information campaign for the benefit of MSM community and the production of the information banners.

Contact Information

NAME: ANDRII CHERNYSHEV
 TEL NO: +380635905945
 EMAIL: achernyshev@ga.net.ua