

Epidemiological Analysis of Acute Hepatitis C in Taipei Region, 2015–2016

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Abstract

During 2015 and 2016, 251 cases of acute hepatitis C were reported from six counties in Taipei Region, 169 were confirmed, 125 (74%) were male and 61 (36%) were HIV-infected. The median age of confirmed cases was 44 years-old (range: 20 – 90 years-old). Nearly 73% of these cases were residing in Taipei City and New Taipei City. However, the age-adjusted standardized incidence per 100,000 populations in 2015 and 2016 revealed that Yilan County (3.18) and Keelung City (2.66) were the highest. Forty-five percent of infected cases co-infected with HIV were residing in the large metropolitan areas such as Taipei City and New Taipei City. Among them, one-third had unsafe sexual behavior in men having sex with men (MSM). Compared with Keelung and Yilan, the cases in Metropolitan area had a relatively high proportion of unsafe sexual behavior within 3 months, but a relatively low proportion of using intravenous drugs, needle/diluent sharing, or contacting blood through either wound or mucosa by accident. The analysis shows that unsafe MSM sexual behavior among HIV-infected people in large metropolitan areas poses high risk of hepatitis C infections, presumably due to anal mucous membrane damage caused by sexual behavior, which increases the risk of infection. Therefore, the public health department should arrange the appropriate prevention and control strategies as early as possible according to the demographic characteristics of different regions and the risk factors of the cases, in order to enhance the effectiveness of prevention and control.

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