ASSOCIATION BETWEEN HIV KNOWLEDGE AND RISK BEHAVIOR IN PERSONS WHO INJECT DRUGS IN THAI NGUYEN, VIETNAM

Travis W Lim¹, Wendy W Davis², Vu Minh Quan², Constantine Frangakis³, Tran Viet Ha⁴, Nguyen Le Minh⁵, Carl Latkin⁶, Carla Zelaya², Tran Thi Mo⁴ and Vivian F Go¹,²,⁷

¹Department of International Health, ²Department of Epidemiology, ³Department of Biostatistics, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, MD, USA; ⁴Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, Hanoi; ⁵Center for Preventive Medicine, Thai Nguyen, Vietnam; ⁶Department of Health, Behavior and Society, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, MD; ⁷Department of Health Behavior, University of North Carolina, Gillings School of Global Public Health, Chapel Hill, NC, USA

Abstract. In Vietnam HIV infection is concentrated in key populations, including persons who inject drugs (PWID). The majority of PWID can name specific transmission routes of HIV, yet risk behaviors remain high. We conducted a cross-sectional survey of 1,355 PWID in Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam, to compare their HIV knowledge with their self-reported risk behavior. Broader knowledge of HIV transmission, measured by a higher composite HIV knowledge score, was associated with a 19.5% lower adjusted odds of giving a used needle to another ($p=0.011$) and 20.4% lower adjusted odds of using a needle that another had used ($p=0.001$). A higher knowledge score was associated with 13.1% higher adjusted odds of consistent condom use ($p=0.083$). These results suggest a broader knowledge may reflect characteristics about how individuals obtain knowledge or the way that knowledge is delivered to them and may be associated with their ability to engage in risk reduction behavior.

Keywords: HIV, HIV knowledge, persons who inject drugs, injection drug users, risk behavior, needle sharing, Vietnam