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Sexual Health Awareness in Substance Misuse Population: a Cross-sectional Study

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Introduction

Individuals with substance use disorders are at increased risk for acquiring and transmitting sexually transmitted infections. High risk sexual behaviour is common in substance misuse population and hence primary, secondary or tertiary prevention against sexually transmitted infection is likely to improve outcome.

Objectives

To understand the awareness of sexual health and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in substance misuse population.

Aims

Aim of this study was to explore the awareness of sexual health in substance misuse population using the sexual health self-assessment questionnaire.

Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted of awareness of sexual health in substance misuse population. 50 patients were randomly selected from the outpatient clinics of an addiction team who completed a sexual health self-assessment questionnaire adapted from www.nhs.uk.

Results

All 50 patients took part in the study, out of which 17 (34%) patients answered all 5 questions correctly. 42 out of 50 (84%) answered question 1 correctly, 39 out of 50 (78%) answered question 2 correctly, 29 out of 50 (58%) answered question 3 correctly, 43 out of 50 (86%) answered question 4 correctly and 37 out of 50 (74%) answered question 5 correctly.

Conclusions

It is clear that routine screening and awareness of this co-morbid condition in substance misuse settings followed by appropriate management is likely to have a positive outcome of this co-morbid population. A combination of primary, secondary and tertiary interventions is needed to achieve a meaningful degree of prevention and protection against sexually transmitted infections in substance misuse population.