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ASSESSMENT OF THE POPULATION'S AWARENESS REGARDING THEIR HIV STATUS AND HEPATITIS B AND C, THE RISKS OF THEIR OCCURRENCE IN UKRAINE

Ukraine occupies the first place in Europe in the prevalence of HIV infection and viral hepatitis B and C. According to the World Health Organization and the European Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of new cases of HIV infection and deaths from AIDS continues to grow in Ukraine. At the beginning of 2019, there were 237 thousand people with HIV infection in Ukraine, more than 40% of whom don't know about their HIV status. That is, almost every second HIV-infected Ukrainian doesn't know about his status. Statistics on the prevalence of viral hepatitis are not encouraging. According to UN statistics, only every 20 people know about their hepatitis disease. In general, 5% of the country's population infected with viral hepatitis C and 1.5% - with viral hepatitis B. As indicated above, the majority are unaware of their diagnosis and, as a result, do not receive treatment, which increases the risks of complications, spread and mortality. Only 6.2% of people with hepatitis C are under medical supervision, and only 3% with hepatitis B [1,2].

According to the Center for Public Health, as of January 01, 2023, about 257 thousand HIV-positive people live in Ukraine. Of these, only 79% know their status, and only 77% receive antiretroviral therapy. Almost half of people living with HIV (43%) learn about their status at late stages [2]. In November 2023, 948 new cases of HIV infection were officially registered in Ukraine, 297 patients were diagnosed with AIDS, and 141 people died of AIDS.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the situation with viral hepatitis and HIV has worsened. Firstly, this is due to population migration. People were forced to leave their homes, move to other regions of the country, and some left Ukraine altogether. Those patients who knew their status, were registered and receiving antiretroviral therapy, were forced to interrupt their treatment for some time because they didn't have enough drugs. This is especially true in the south-eastern regions. Due to complications in access to medical care in some regions of the country, as a result of injuries and sexual violence, the risk of contracting viral hepatitis and HIV has significantly increased [3]. The information space shouldn't be neglected. The war makes the population pay less attention to prevention and awareness of the disease, and this is understandable, but the forecasts are extremely disappointing. Also should take into account the popularity and growth of the anti-vaccination movement, which in turn increases the risk of hepatitis B.

It is necessary to pay attention to such a category of patients as military personnel. These are the people who defend our country every day, looking into the eyes of death every second, and, of course, have all kinds of injuries and damages. And here several problems arise: firstly, a large number of people who have been drafted from the armed forces have never been tested and are unaware of their HIV status and infection with hepatitis B and C. Secondly, providing primary health care, people are permanently in contact with blood, which leads to an increase in the number of infected people. Thirdly, a large number of people need immediate blood transfusions to save their lives on the battlefield, which is not always tested for viral hepatitis and HIV infection.

Awareness of dangerous viral infections, their transmission routes, risks of occurrence, and knowledge of the status makes it possible to start early treatment and reduce the risk of contamination others if a positive result is detected.

The purpose of the study. To assess the degree of awareness of their HIV status and hepatitis B and C, the risks of occurrence these diseases among the survey participants.

Materials and methods. A survey was conducted among 100 participants with an average age is 22 years old. Among the respondents, 80% were women and 20% were men. Awareness of HIV status, hepatitis B and C, and hepatitis B vaccination were assessed. Risk factors for HIV and hepatitis B and C infection were also assessed using the following questions: whether there was contact with blood, unprotected sexual intercourse, dental visits, manicure/pedicure with a non-personal tool, tattoos, and use of injecting drugs.

Results. The analysis of the survey results revealed that 41.7% of participants don't know their HIV status, and 48.3% of respondents haven't been tested for hepatitis B and C. 65% of respondents have been vaccinated against hepatitis B. Assessing the risks of infection among the respondents, it was found that 23.3% had contact with blood, 21.7% had unprotected sexual intercourse, 33.3% used manicure and pedicure services with non-personal tools, 21.7% had tattoos, and one person among the respondents used injecting drugs. However, when asked: "Would you agree to be tested for HIV and hepatitis B and C now?" - the majority answered "Yes" (85% of respondents), while the rest answered "No" because they knew the result.

Conclusions. More than a third of the survey participants don't know their HIV status and whether they have hepatitis B and C. Also, more than half of the respondents have or had a risk of infection. These results are disappointing and confirm the above statistics on awareness of HIV status and hepatitis B and C.

Therefore, it is necessary to inform people more about diseases such as HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis B and C. It is necessary to inform the population, first of all, about the prevention of these diseases. In Ukraine there are many preventive measures to prevent HIV and viral hepatitis B and C infection [4]. The main ones are: the possibility of annual HIV testing and detection of infection with viral hepatitis B and C; use of condoms; sex education; medical pre-contact prevention and post-contact prevention; a syringe exchange program and a methadone program for people who inject drugs; avoidance of contact with blood and biological fluids of other people; use sterile

instruments during cosmetic procedures; availability of individual personal hygiene products [5]. In addition, there should be a high coverage of hepatitis B vaccination (each person should receive three doses of the vaccine in the first year of life) [6]. But shouldn't forget that vaccination is available at any age.

HIV and viral hepatitis are a global problem for humanity, so many programs and tools have been developed to help treat them successfully. Ukraine is an active participant in these programs. Given the prevalence of these diseases, therefore, it is very important to make information about treatment and prevention programs available to all segments of the population [7, 8].

It is also necessary to inform people that HIV diagnosis and treatment in Ukraine is absolutely free and anonymous. A doctor is personally liable for disclosing information about a patient's condition. There are a variety of rapid tests that can detect the presence of infection in a person within 10-15 minutes. And it is not necessary to go to AIDS centers, it is enough to visit a family doctor or any doctor in a primary care clinic [9].

HIV infection and viral hepatitis B and C, like most other diseases, affect the quality of life, lead to severe complications, disability and premature death. Therefore, counteracting the spread of these diseases is an important public health task, and everyone should be interested in the prevention these diseases.

HIV infection is a serious disease which requires permanent monitoring and daily tireless intake of antiretroviral drugs, which the state guarantees to provide patients [1]. It is also very important to remember that HIV is a disease, not a judgment.

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