Expanding access to harm reduction services in Asia - closing the gap by 2015

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People who inject drugs are among the population groups most severely affected by the HIV epidemic. In 2011 an estimated 370,000 people became newly infected with HIV in Asia, a region where an estimated 3-4 million people inject drugs (PWID) and where drug use-related transmission has and continues to be a significant driving factor of the HIV epidemic. HIV prevalence among PWID remains high in number of countries in the region (India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam).

The 2012 revision of the WHO, UNODC and UNAIDS Technical Guide for countries to set targets for universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care for people who inject drugs, recommends that countries make available a comprehensive package of HIV services to PWID. However the reported coverage of opioid substitution treatment, and needle and syringe programmes are still below the recommended coverage of 40 and 60 percent respectively.

While many countries are making efforts to expanding access to the recommended HIV interventions, there are still number of challenges that need to be addressed in order to ensure countries in Asia will achieve 50% reduction of new infections among PWID by 2015.

Co-Chairs

Mr Pradeep Kakkatil, Deputy Regional Director, UNAIDS Regional Support Team, Bangkok
Dr Monica Beg, Chief, HIV/AIDS Section, UNODC, Austria, Vienna

Presentations

1. Harm reduction in Asia- we can do more and better by Dr. Alex Wodak, Australia

2. Viet Nam experience in scaling up access to harm reduction services by Dr Nguyen Minh Tam, Head of Harm Reduction Department, Viet Nam Authority for HIV/AIDS Control (VAAC)

3. Pakistan experience in scaling up access to harm reduction services by Mr Tariq Zafar, Director, Nai Zindagi, Islamabad, Pakistan

4. The role of people who inject drugs in the HIV response in Asia, by Sam Nugraha, Regional Coordinator, Asian Network of People Who Use Drugs (ANPUD)

Discussion, questions & answers