

Abscess, ulcer common among Indian drug users

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An increasing number of drug addicts in India are suffering from large, life-threatening abscesses and ulcer in genitals, a new health and drug survey by the UN said on Wednesday.

The study by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) found that nearly 32 percent of the drug users have reported abscesses during the past six months.

“Abscesses are really a major problem for injectible-drug users. It can lead to huge wounds and even amputation of body parts like hands and legs,” said Ashita Mittal, senior programme officer in the UNODC.

The rapid situation and response assessment (RSRA) survey of drugs and HIV in India found that half of the drug users are in the age group of 21 to 30. Officials said of the 5,800 drug users surveyed nearly 94 percent are male and 61.5 percent are employed. Only 220 (3.8 percent) are homeless.

The survey revealed that drug users are sexually very active and have at least two sex partners. The survey observed that around 13 percent of the drug users have “ulcer on and around genitalia”. Similarly, 30 percent of the drug addicts reported “pain and burning sensation during urination”.

The study revealed that drug users had their first sexual interaction at an early age of 19. A whopping 87 percent had sex at some point in their drug laced life. Nearly 55 percent of the drug users first consume drugs and then get physically intimate. The study found that eight percent of drug users are involved in commercial sex.

“To sustain their habit, some of the drug addicts get involved in commercial sex. This is a dangerous trend and increases the chance of getting sexually transmitted disease and HIV/AIDS,” said N. Suresh Kumar, lead author of the report.

Although 53 percent of addicts know that condoms can prevent HIV/AIDS, less than 25 percent use it even if they are getting involved with a commercial sex worker