Public Health Nurses, Hepatitis C, Injection Drug Use and Heroin

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Session Objectives

• Demonstrate an increase in knowledge about hepatitis C infection and opioid/heroin overdose trends in Wisconsin.
• Demonstrate an awareness of hepatitis C and overdose prevention resources that can be brought back to local public health agencies and community partners.

Cluster Investigations in Rural Wisconsin

• North Central six rural counties (2010).
  - Five acute HCV cases reported in a short period of time
  - All young adults who reported injection drug use
  - Resulted in a CDC Notes from the Field
• Manitowoc, both HIV and HCV cases (2011).
  - Local public health agencies did extensive interviews.
  - Documented networks of injectors.
• Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR) was key.

Public Health Response

• Wisconsin DPH
  - Identified clusters
  - Coordinated investigation
  - Worked with State Laboratory of Hygiene on confirmatory testing
  - Provided training and technical assistance to local public health agencies
• AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW)
  - Provided harm reduction services
  - Provided outreach testing
  - Interviewed cases that public health agencies could not locate
• CDC Division of Viral Hepatitis
  - Provided onsite assistance with intervention
  - Conducted quasi species analysis on blood specimens
  - Assisted with preparation of Notes From the Field
• Local Public Health Agencies
  - Interviewed cases for risk
  - Provided case follow-up
  - Provided vaccination and linkage to care
Public Health Response

- Increased outreach testing to young people who inject drugs (PWIDs)
- Piloted the HCV rapid test in harm reduction and outreach settings statewide.
- Integrated HCV testing with the HIV testing program
- Provided training to local health department staff on disease intervention and case follow-up

Viral Hepatitis Program Collaborations

- Community-based organizations: testing and harm reduction services
- State Council on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse: heroin subcommittee
- Policy Development: Good Samaritan legislation
- Research: UW School of Medicine and Public Health: social networks HCV testing project

Scope of Disease in Wisconsin: Where

- There are 35,000 known HCV infections in people living in Wisconsin.
  - An estimated 1.3 percent of the Wisconsin population (74,000 people) is living with HCV.
- The majority of people with HCV live in the southeastern (52%) and southern (16%) regions of the state.
- Number reported has increased slowly since 2006.
- On average, 2,500 new infections have been detected each year.

Scope of Disease in Wisconsin: Who

- In 2013, most (57%) newly reported infections were in males and most of the known individuals living with HCV (65%) were male.
- New reports in females have increased since 2003.
- In 2013, the largest number (41%) of newly reported infections were in people aged 50 and older.
- New reports in young adults have increased five-fold since 2003.
- Median age of reported cases has decreased.
  - 2003: Median age 47 years
  - 2013: Median age 44 years

Mortality Trends

- Tend to increase over time.
- Highest mortality for age group 50-69 years old.
Hepatitis C Infection in Wisconsin

Scope of Disease in Wisconsin:
People with Injection Drug Use (PWID)

Data from HCV rapid test participation conducted at outreach sites in Wisconsin in 2011-2013. Data is limited to PWID.

HCV and HIV Co-infections

• 77% of HCV cases have co-infection.
• 88% of HCV cases have HIV.

Reported Risk Behavior

- Injection drug use in past 6 months: 61%
- Shared injection drug equipment: 67%
- Intravenous injection: 7%
- Shared equipment in past 6 months: 17%
- Tattooing: 4%

Scope of Disease in Wisconsin:
HCV Positive Persons with Injection Drug Use

Data from HCV rapid test participation conducted at outreach sites in Wisconsin in 2011-2013. Data is limited to PWID.

Rapid HCV Testing Program

• Project began in 2012.
• Four agencies serving clients statewide.
  - AIDS Network
  - AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin
  - Public Health-Madison Dane County
  - 16th Street Community Health Center
• Provided testing and harm reduction services.
• Completed enhanced risk survey.

Rapid HCV Testing Program

Location of Rapid HCV Test Sites

Surveillance System Match:
HCV and HIV Co-infections

• Approximately 900 HCV/HIV co-infections identified since 2000.
• 2.3 percent of HCV cases have HIV infection.
• 7.1 percent of HIV cases have HCV infection.
• Demographics of co-infected:
  - 77 percent male
  - 45 percent non-Hispanic black
  - 56 percent Milwaukee County residence
• Risk: 60 percent reported IDU at the time of HIV report.

Summary of Rapid Testing Project

• Injection drug users can be reached.
  - Collaboration between public health agencies and harm reduction programs enhances case finding.
  - Good correctional/jail health relationships are essential.
• Education regarding HCV is needed for providers, local health department staff and injection drug users.
• The use of rapid HCV tests can be a powerful tool for HCV screening, prevention and treatment initiation in a population with high prevalence of HCV infection.

Thank You

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Topics for Today
- Harm Reduction
  - Sterile Syringe Access
    - Preventing Fatal Opiate Overdose

Working Definition of Harm Reduction

**Harm Reduction:**
A set of practical, public health strategies designed to reduce the negative consequences of drug use and promote healthy individuals and communities.

Key Principles of Harm Reduction

- **Designs & promotes** public health interventions that minimize the harmful affects of drug use.
- **Understands** drug use as a complex, multi-faceted issue that encompasses behaviors from severe abuse to total abstinence.
- **Meets** people where they are in the course of their drug use

Harm Reduction Practice Calls For

- Non-judgmental, non-coercive provision of services
- Low-threshold program models
- Resources to people who use drugs

Sterile Syringe Access Programs

- Nearly 200 syringe exchange programs currently operate in 38 states, Puerto Rico, Washington DC.
- Wisconsin has four syringe exchange providers (ARCW, AIDS Network, 16th Street Community Health Clinic, Madison Health Department).
- Access includes: syringe exchange programs, over-the-counter pharmacy sales, syringe prescriptions, and secondary exchange (distribution informally through peer networks).
- Endorsed by American Medical Association, American Public Health Association, US Conference of Mayors, among many other legal, medical, and policy institutions.
**ARCW's LifePoint**

- Fixed site, mobile, delivery
- No enrollment
- No limits on supply's
- HIV/HCV testing offered to all
- Monday – Saturday

**ARCW's LifePoint 2013**

- Exchanged 2,508,982 syringes
- 243 drug treatment referrals
- 2,480 HIV tests (21 positives)
- 1,433 HCV tests (218 positives)
- 366,982 condoms distributed

**Materials**

- Syringes/needles
- Cookers/cotton
- Alcohol wipes
- Antibiotic ointment
- Tourniquets
- Condoms

**Preventing Fatal Opiate Overdose**

- 85% of all overdoses are witnessed
- Active drug users will respond
- Naloxone (Narcan) reverses an overdose

**How Do We Respond to an Overdose?**

- Stimulate – can they be awakened
- Call 911
- Airway
- Rescue Breathing
- Evaluate
- Muscular Injection
- Evaluate & Support

**ARCW's Impact 2013**

- 1,508 PWID’s Trained
- 1,107 Peer Rescues Reported
- 110 Facilitated Referrals to Treatment
In Wisconsin there is a close association between heroin use and the transmission of HCV
Don’t forget Integrate Viral Hepatitis into Our Work

“The criminal justice system serves as a major point of contact with young injectors, and there is a need to capitalize on its prominence as point of engagement.”

Shaking It Up
Moving communities to action through coalitions

Over 200 individuals & organizations working together to eliminate the misuse of alcohol & other drugs in Marathon County
Prevention, Enforcement, Treatment
Heroin, prescriptions & other illicit drugs are a threat to public health & safety.

Heroin: Old Drug, New Killer Epidemic

How do we move on?

• A strong mission/vision
• Agreed upon “rules”
• Diverse membership

Who do we need?

• Youth
• Parents
• Schools
• Law Enforcement
• Government
• Media
• Youth-Serving
• Community/Civic
• Faith-based
• Health Care
• Business
• Any one else?

Parts of the Whole

Short Term Action Teams

consist of people who are passionate about the topic, & are interested in helping with specific tasks over a short period of time.
Take time for things that re-energize you.

Achieving Health Equity

Health equity is when everyone has the opportunity to “attain their full health potential” and no one is “disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of their social position or other socially determined circumstances.”

Contact

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Thank you

Questions?