

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**<http://dx.doi.org/10.18049/jcmad/229a19>**Impact of Targeted Intervention on HIV and Syphilis in high risk group (Transgenders)**

Sir

We have seen original article of Wanjare VS et al<sup>1</sup> about prevalence of Syphilis, Gonococcal and HIV infection in Vidarbha Region of India published in previous issue of the journal [J Cont Med A Dent 2014;2(1):18-22].<sup>1</sup> Our observations are much different from them and we have observed very low incidence of HIV prevalence among Transgenders.

Transgender (TG) is defined as “someone who lives partially or fully in a sex or gender that was not assigned to them at birth”. Transgender is an umbrella term that is used to describe a wide range of identities and experience that includes Hijras, Aravanis, Kothis, Pantis, Jogtas and Shiv-Shaktis.

Worldwide, available incidence suggests that HIV prevalence is as high as 68% in Trans communities with new case incidence from 3.4% to 7.8% per 100 person years.<sup>2</sup> There is relative little reliable information on prevalence rate of HIV within trans communities in India. So we conducted the study to estimate the prevalence of HIV and Syphilis in TGs and impact of targeted interventions. This study was conducted in the mobile ICTC in the department of microbiology, Indira Gandhi Government Medical College (IGGMC) Nagpur from the period of April 2012 to March 2014 with NGO (Sarathi Trust) under Tarang project. A total 145 samples of 63 individual TGs were tested for HIV antibodies and Syphilis.

Out of 63 individuals, 1(1.59%) was positive for HIV antibody. None of TG was positive for Syphilis. Wanjare et al<sup>1</sup> showed high

prevalence of HIV (7%) and Syphilis (15.75%) in their study. Gedam and Ahmed (2014)<sup>2</sup> showed very low prevalence of syphilis in blood donor (0.11%), in STD patient (1.07%) and in HIV positive patient (3.07%) which is high in the same region. In the present study none of TG was commercial sex worker main source of their earning were participating in badhai ceremony and marriage ceremony. National AIDS control programme in India has been recognized globally as a success story. The adult HIV prevalence at national level has been continued its steady decline. Decline have been achieved among men who have sex with men (7.41% in 2007 to 4.43% in 2011), in female sex workers (5.06% in 2007 to 2.67% in 2011).<sup>5</sup> In the present study the prevalence of HIV is very low. This may be due to regular visit of mobile ICTC counselor with NGO and education and promotion regarding use of condom and STI. From this study we concluded that the prevalence of HIV in TGs is very low in this region and this may be due to targeted intervention. TGs accepting the HIV/STI prevention programme very well. The prevalence of HIV and syphilis is declining over a period of time.

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**Table- 1:Year-wise distribution and frequency of HIV and VDRL testing in TG**

Year	No. of TG	Once	Twice	> Twice	Positive for HIV	Positive for Syphilis
2012-13	29	29	22	17	01	0
2013-14	34	34	26	17	0	0
Total	63	63	48	34	01	0

**References**

1. Wanjare VS et al. Prevalence of Syphilis, Gonococcal and HIV infection- A study in a tertiary care centre of Vidarbha Region of India. J Cont Med A Dent 2014;2(1):18-22.
2. Gedam DS, Ahmed S. Seroprevalence of Syphilis in HIV positive patients in Central India. NJIRM 2014;5(3):145-146.