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SUBSTITUTION TREATMENT AND HCV / HIV INFECTION IN A SAMPLE OF 31 GERMAN PRISONS FOR SENTENCED INMATES

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Injection drug use (IDU) and IDU-related infectious diseases such as hepatitis C virus (HCV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infections are highly prevalent among prisoners worldwide. However, little is known about the prevalence of IDUs and HCV/HIV and the availability of respective treatment options in German prisons. Data, provided by prison physicians of 31 prisons, representing 14,187 inmates, were included in this analysis. The proportion of IDUs among all prisoners was 21.9%. Substitution treatment was available in three out of four prisons (74.2%). Overall, 1,137 substitution treatments were provided annually with a wide range of treatment aims. The prevalence rate was 14.3% for HCV and 1.2% for HIV. Around 5.5% of all HCV-infected prisoners were in antiviral treatment annually, 86.5% of all HIV-positive subjects in antiretroviral HIV treatment.

Generally, substitution treatment, HCV and HIV testing and treatment are available. However, due to abstinence-oriented treatment aims substitution treatment is rarely available as maintenance treatment, and HCV/HIV treatment is mainly provided for patients with an existing treatment before imprisonment. The inconsistent data quality necessitate changes in prison related policy are needed, to improve surveillance and to generate aggregated data in German prisons. The selection process in this analysis might lead to overestimating the provision substitution - and antiviral HCV-treatment.