A Study of Violations of Human Rights of PWUD and PLHIV in Kazakhstan Resulted from an Unethical Governmental Research

AUTHOR: Daria Matyushina-Ocheret, Mikhail Golichenko, Aleksandr Pak, Elena Bilokon

Opioid substitution treatment (OST) in Kazakhstan is under the risk of closure. This is the result of the work of a governmentally initiated commission in 2017, which has organized an evaluation of OST effectiveness. The work of the Commission was conducted with rough violations of human rights of the participants and non-compliance with bioethical standards and should not be taken into account by the government of Kazakhstan.

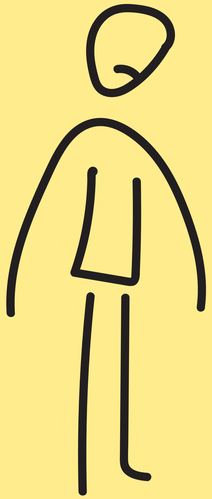
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS (PWID)
128700 PERSONS

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF OPIATE USERS
98000 PERSONS

8.2% OF PWID ARE LIVING WITH HIV

2.69% OF OPIATE USERS ACCESS OST VERSUS 20% – 40% RECOMMENDED BY UN/WHO

2010-2016: INCREASE OF NEW HIV INFECTIONS BY **39%**; INCREASE OF AIDS-RELATED DEATHS BY **32%**



METHODOLOGY

In November - December 2017 three group interviews with 30 OST patients, most of them living with in Pavlodar and Temirtau, were conducted. The study was organized by an independent international group. Local PLHIV community groups were involved as gatekeepers and in interpreting the study results.

MAIN FINDINGS

- Patients participated in the assessment on non-voluntary basis and under threat of termination of the OST program;
- Patients were not provided with full information on research objectives;
- Patients were forced to provide urine for non-anonymous drug testing;
- No single patient gave informed consent to medical doctors to disclose information about their diagnosis to any assessment group members or other government bodies;
- Assessment group members often spoke to patients in a disrespectful way, and were present when male and female patients collected urine samples without permission;
- Former patients were approached at their homes by police to provide details about the reasons they had quit OST program.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT!

Inform human rights defenders and/or bioethics committee if:

- You are forced to participate in a research
- You were not provided with full and understandable information
- Researchers show no respect
- Your personal or medical data is disclosed to the third party.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SITUATION WITH OST IN KAZAKHSTAN AT HARMREDUCTIONEURASIA.ORG

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