

OST Centers - Substitution Therapy with Buprenorphine for Opioid Injecting Drug Users under KSAPS

Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) have emerged as an important high risk group with potential of contracting and transmitting HIV, HIV prevalence in IDUs has crossed the threshold for a 'concentrated epidemic'. IDUs are at increased risk of HIV because of both unsafe injecting and sexual practice. The unsafe injecting practices include sharing of needles, syringes and other paraphernalia.

Substitution therapy with opioids (Opioid Substitution Therapy, OST) is a well-accepted treatment strategy for harm minimisation in IDUs. In OST, an opioid (such as heroin), which is unsafe, requiring repeated administration through unsafe/ hazardous route is substituted with a medication (such as Buprenorphine) which is long acting, and safer, and administered through oral / sublingual route. The medication used in OST helps the client not to experience either withdrawal or euphoria ('high'). As OST helps in achieving a comfortable level, the client stops injecting drug, thus preventing the potential harm of contracting HIV and other diseases transmitted through injecting route (e.g. Hepatitis B, Hepatitis).

Under Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society 3 OST centres are established to look after 4 IDU Tis catering 2000 IDUs. Two in Bangalore City, i.e. Kempegowda Institute of Medical Science (KIMS) and KC General Hospital, Malleshwaram OST Center, and 1 in Kolar, i.e. S.N.R District Hospital OST Center.