

Compliance with AIDS prevention measures among intravenous drug users: health beliefs or social/environmental factors?

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OBJECTIVE: To examine the relative influence of health beliefs and social/environmental factors as they affect compliance with AIDS prevention behaviors (needle hygiene and condom use) among intravenous drug users (IVDUs). METHODS: Subjects were 578 IVDUs recruited from 3 street sites and 2 drug treatment settings in San Francisco. Respondents were verbally administered self-report instruments which measured: (1) health locus of control; (2) health beliefs (perceived threat, perceived benefits of compliance, perceived barriers to compliance, and perceived self-efficacy in complying); (3) social/environmental factors associated with compliance; and (4) frequency of compliance within the previous 6 months. RESULTS: In separate stepwise multiple regression equations for men (N=356) and women (N=171), social/environmental factors predicted a statistically significant proportion of variance in needle hygiene (Adj.R²=0.06, p less than .0005). For women, internal health locus of control accounted for an additional 2% of the variance (p less than .05). Social/environmental factors also predicted the largest amount of variance in condom use for both men (Adj.R²=0.21, p less than .0001) and women (Adj.R²=0.24, p less than .0001). For men, perceived self-efficacy in using condoms and internal health locus of control each accounted for an additional 1% of the variance (p less than .01 and p less than .05, respectively). CONCLUSION: In our study of IVDUs, compliance with AIDS prevention behaviors was strongly associated with social/environmental factors, and only weakly associated with health beliefs. By implication, further research and intervention with this population should emphasize the social/environmental factors that facilitate or impede safer sex and safer needle hygiene compliance.

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome/COMPLICATIONS/*PREVENTION &
CONTROL/TRANSMISSION Attitude to Health *Behavior Contraceptive Devices, Male Female
Human Internal-External Control Male Needles *Patient Compliance Regression Analysis Risk
Factors San Francisco Sex Behavior *Substance Abuse, Intravenous ABSTRACT

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