Original article

Prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS infections in Zamboanga City, Western Mindanao, Philippines

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Abstract. The Philippines has one of the fastest growing HIV epidemics in the world. This paper sought to determine the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS infections in Zamboanga City, Western Mindanao. Secondary data were used in this study. The data were obtained from the City Health Office, Region 9, Zamboanga City, Philippines. Records showed that the first HIV/AIDS case in Zamboanga City was in 1995. A total of 468 HIV/AIDS cases were recorded from 1995-2018. HIV prevalence is much higher in males with 437 cases and females with 31 cases. It was in 2017 when the highest prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS was recorded. There was a continuous increase in number of cases from 1995 to 2017 and a decline in the year 2018. The most vulnerable to these infections were those Male having sex with male (MSM) with 401 cases recorded. Among the recorded HIV cases, the age group of 25 to 34 years old were highly infected where through sexual contact was the predominant mode of transmission. This study revealed that the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS cases in Zamboanga City, Western Mindanao had a significant increase.

1. Introduction

Almost four decades since Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) set its first record in the early 1980’s and had a significant increase. Greene (2007) reported that the world up to date is still struggling to stop this from spreading. Human Immuno Virus Type 1 (HIV-1), a known retrovirus that causes AIDS is one of the world’s most serious public health problem (Gallos et al. 2011). Transmission of the HIV-1 is through sexual contact across mucosal surfaces by cutaneous inoculation and by maternal-infant exposure (Saw et al. 2012). The client group known to be vulnerable to infections were those Male having sex with male (MSM), Male sex worker (MSW), Female sex workers (FSW), child sex worker (CSW), injection drug user (IDU), and transgender (TG) women (Exler 2015). In terms of gender, globally, HIV prevalence is much higher in women across region of Sub-Saharan Africa but much higher in males across most other regions (Greig 2008).

The worldwide spread affects 36.7 million people living with HIV (PLHIV), an estimated total of 76.1 million infections, and accounts for 35 million deaths (UNAIDS 2018). In the Philippines particularly in places of the country with low prosperity, prevalence rate has been very low as 0.01% since the first recorded case in 1984 and few as 40,466 (UNAIDS 2010; National Epidemiology Center 2017) confirmed cases, but despite this HIV/AIDS is still a dilemma. However, although prevalence rate is low and there is a decline of HIV cases globally, the Philippines went opposite. In fact, Philippines has become one of the country with the fastest growing HIV epidemic in Asia-Pacific region (UNAIDS 2010; National Epidemiology Center 2016) with a 141 percent increase from 2010 to 2016. Together with China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and Vietnam, Philippines belong among the 10 countries that has for more than 95 percent of all new infections in the region in 2016 (UNAIDS 2017). There were 11,103 reported new HIV cases (DOH 2017a), a 20 percent increase from the 9,264 new cases reported in 2016 (DOH 2016b). From January to May 2018, 4,680 new cases were recorded in the Philippines (DOH 2018a).

Zamboanga City, Western Mindanao, Philippines is a highly urbanized city and has recorded an alarming increase of HIV/AIDS cases that has perplexed local health officials (Go 2018). In this paper, we sought to determine the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS cases in Zamboanga City.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Experimental Setting

Description of the study site. Zamboanga City is a first class highly urbanized city situated at the southernmost tip of the Zamboanga Peninsula, in the island of Mindanao, Philippines. Mindanao is the second largest of the archipelago of the country (Figure 1). Zamboanga is the sixth largest city in the country in terms of population reaching 3,629,783 as of June 2015 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2018).

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Collection and analysis of data. Descriptive and quantitative were used to analyse the data. Secondary data was obtained from the City Health Office, Region 9, Zamboanga City. A formal letter of request was submitted to the office of Dr. Dulce Amor D. Miravite, City Health Officer. Frequency count and percent were computed by using Microsoft Excel 2016.

In terms of age group, HIV prevalence is much higher from 25-34 years old with 244 cases reported. The age group from 15-24 years old rank second with 140 cases, 63 cases from 35-44 years old, 18 cases from 45-54 years old, 2 case less than 15 age group and 1 for 58 years old (Figure 4).

According to the Department of Health (DOH) as reported on January 2017, that the regions with the most number of reported cases were: National Capital Region (NCR) with 307 (36%) cases, Region 4A with 151 (18%) cases, Region 3 with 91 (11%) cases, Region 7 with 62 (7%) cases, and Region 11 with 50 (6%) cases. An additional 183 cases (22%) came from the rest of the country (National Epidemiology Center 2017).

Among the cumulative 468 cases of HIV/AIDS infections, ninety-three percent (93%) or 437 were male and seven percent (7%) or thirty-one (31) cases were female (Figure 3).
Figure 6 shows the cumulative number for HIV cases that were diagnosed from January 1995 to December 2018. The predominant mode of transmission is through sexual contact with 466 cases reported and two (2) diagnosed cases for mother to child transmission (Figure 6).

![Figure 6. Cumulative HIV cases by mode of transmission.](image)

Conclusion and Recommendation.

This study revealed that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS cases in Zamboanga City has remained fairly low since its first ever reported case in 1995 however, it has an increasing rate. There was a three-fold increase in the rate of HIV diagnoses in Zamboanga City between 2010 and 2014, and this has continuously increased over the past year not until 2018 which has a drop of about 4%. Among the cumulative count of 468 cases ninety-three percent (93%) or 437 of which were among male particularly among homosexual men (MSM) with 401 cases and only seven percent (7%) or 31 for female, to which age group of young adults (25-34) were mostly affected via sexual contact as its predominant mode of transmission.

This paper recommends a monthly or yearly statistics of the HIV/AIDS cases for the different variables (gender, mode of transmission, age, and client group) to comprehensively show the prevalence rate as well as may establish the trend for this epidemic disease.

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References