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Risk factors of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections in China: A systematic review of reviews

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China is challenged with rising rates of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV. Reliable and comprehensive mapping of HIV/STIs risk factors would guide the development of effective prevention and control strategies. The objective of this systemic review of reviews was to map HIV/STIs risk factors in the Chinese population. Search terms related to “risk factors”, “HIV”, “STI” and “Chinese” were used in English databases (PubMed, PsycINFO, and the Cochrane Library) and Chinese databases (Wanfang data, CNKI, VIP and SINOMED) for reviews (1991-2014). 210 and 215 reviews were identified in English and Chinese databases respectively. 30 reviews were included, from which, the risk factors were identified into individual, social, and structural levels based on HIV Social Epidemiology Model. The papers were focused on risk factors within key populations e.g. Female Sex Workers (FSW), and individual level (e.g. age, income, and sexual practices), while those on social (e.g. physical environment) and structural levels (migration, urbanization, and legal structures) were limited. However social and structural factors can have serious impact. At social level, FSW at low-tier workplace were four times likely to be syphilis infected than those at medium and high tier workplaces. In structural level, migrant workers recruited from urban areas had about seven times HIV prevalence than the overall Chinese population. Reviews covering HIV/STIs in China are one-sided centering “at-risk” groups and individual factors. The identified three levels of risk factors can hopefully feed into a holistic intervention strategy to effectively curtail HIV/STIs in China.

Biography

Yanping Zhao has completed her MA from the University of Bochum and is now a PhD candidate at the University of Hong Kong. By working with different NGOs, including Doctors without Borders, she has extensive experience in HIV prevention and control.

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