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## NGOs Provide HIV/AIDS Education and Services to Key Populations in Delhi, India

Andrea Gonzalez and Morgan Heinz\*



Fig 1. Map of India with capital, New Delhi, and national capital territory, Delhi. Adapted from Maps of India.

### INTRODUCTION

New Delhi, India is the second most populous city on the planet (UN 2017). High population density, lingering effects of the caste system, and income disparities contribute to Delhi's complex public health landscape (Narain 2016). Through Child and Family Health International (CFHI), students study abroad and engage in rotations with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dedicated to developing innovative interventions in response to public health challenges. The Society for the Promotion of Youth and Masses (SPYM) is an NGO that delivers targeted education and services to key high-risk populations, including long distance truck drivers (LDT) and injecting drug users (IDU) for HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention, and counseling.

### OPIOID SUBSTITUTION THERAPY

IDUs rank the highest in HIV prevalence among all high-risk groups at 6.26% (Fig 2). This phenomenon can be explained by high-risk behaviors including the sharing of needles and syringes (CDC 2023). SPYM's Chandni Chowk opioid substitution therapy (OST) center provides IDUs with psychosocial counseling and daily orally administered buprenorphine, a long-acting opioid agonist that prevents withdrawal symptoms and cravings without a high (Armstrong et al. 2010). OST reduces HIV/AIDS risk behaviors, allows IDUs to stabilize their lives, and contribute positively to their communities (Mohapatra et al. 2017).

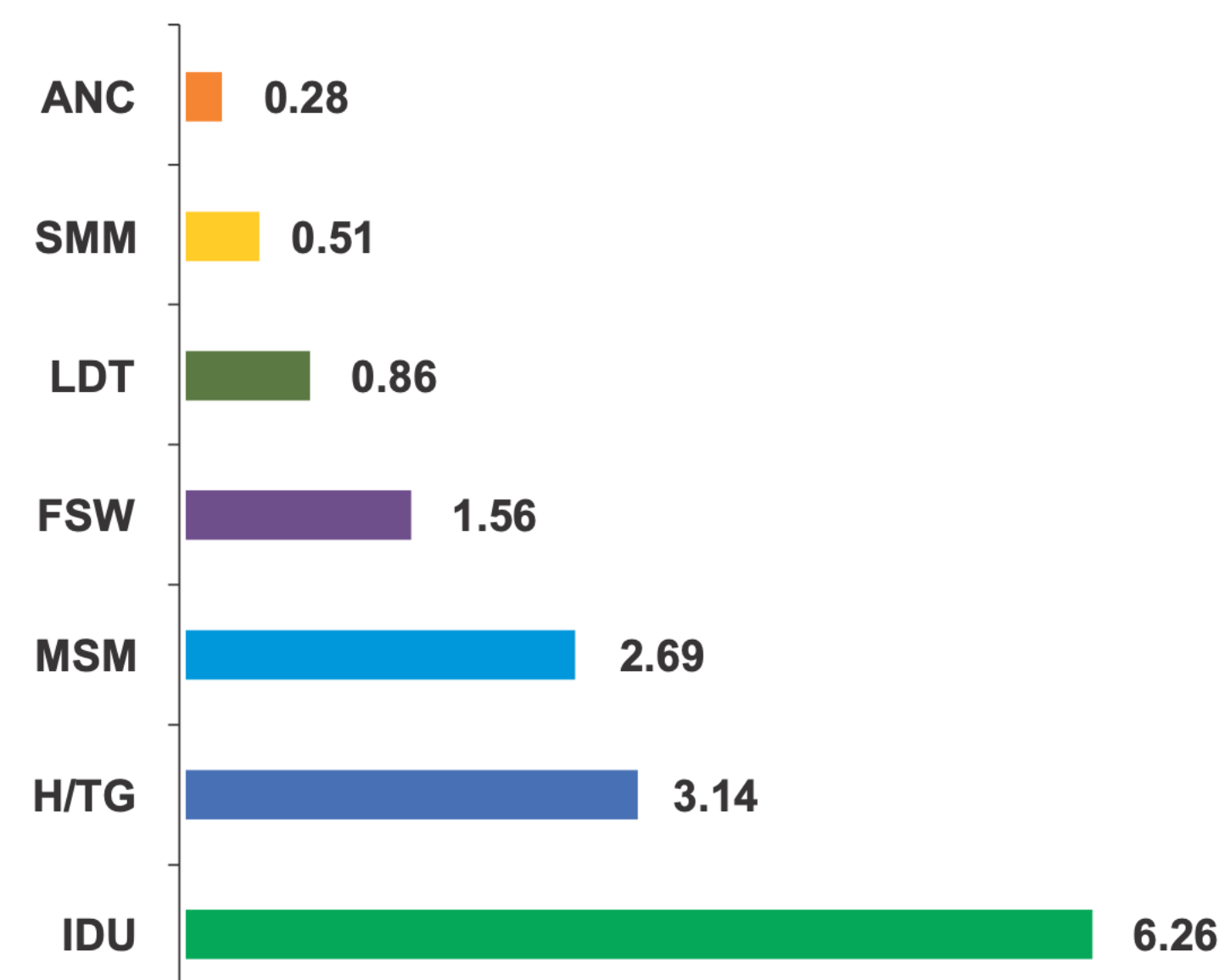


Fig 2. HIV Prevalence (%) by Population Group in India in 2017. Injecting drug users (IDU) had the highest prevalence at 6.26%. Order of most to least prevalence following IDUs were hijra/transgender (H/TG), men who have sex with men (MSM), female sex workers (FSW), long distance truck drivers (LDT), and single male migrants (SMM). Antenatal clinic attendees (ANC) represent proxy prevalence among general public. From the National AIDS Control Organization's 2017 HIV surveillance study.



Fig 3. HIV/AIDS Interventions take Place at Truckers' Workplace. (A) SPYM employees carry out an engaging theatrical play that opens dialogue around safer-sex and models condom purchase. (B) Card game debunks double-condom myth with color-coding that relates to truckers' profession (red and green correspond to stop and go).

### TRUCKER WORKPLACE INTERVENTIONS

HIV prevalence among long distance truck drivers (LDT) in India is approximately 0.86% (NACO 2017). LDTs spend months away from their homes and are more likely to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors than short distance truck drivers, increasing their risk of HIV exposure (NACO 2015). SPYM's Tuglakabad clinic is located at the heart of India's largest container depot, where truck driver workplace interventions take place in the form of humorous plays (Fig 3A), interactive demonstrations, and color-coded educational games (Fig 3B). This onsite clinic offers condoms and counseling. Enthusiastic engagement of truckers was observed.

### REFLECTIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE

NGOs and their respective leaders have deep understandings of the culture, socioeconomic dynamics, and needs of their community. They address health challenges through carefully crafted, evidence-based interventions that resonate with the target population. While rates and perception of HIV/AIDS vary worldwide, the grassroots approach can be beneficial anywhere.

Academic tourists may enter a community with a colonial mentality, undermining cultural contexts and local expertise. This approach can lead to harmful interactions and perpetuate power imbalances. As guests, we would be wise to approach our host community with cultural humility.

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### REFERENCES

