

Prevalence and Risk Factors of HIV/HCV Coinfection in Istanbul, Turkey

Ozlem Altuntaş Aydın, Hayat Kumbasar Karaosmanoglu, Bilgöl Mete, Alper Gunduz, Bahadır Ceylan, Mucahit Yemisen, Nuray Uzun, Fehmi Tabak

ACTHIV-IST (ACTion against HIV in Istanbul) study group, Istanbul, Turkey

BACKGROUND

Rate of coinfection with HIV and HCV differs according to countries. This may be attributable to common transmission routes, social, economic and cultural factors. HIV/HCV coinfecting patients were more likely to develop cirrhosis, had an increased risk of developing AIDS, and of overall mortality. The purpose of this study is to investigate the prevalence and risk factors of HCV infection among HIV-infected patients in Istanbul, a large cosmopolitan city in Western Turkey.

METHOD

Between January 2006 and September 2012, 567 HIV infected patients that were enrolled by ACTHIV-IST (ACTion against HIV in Istanbul) study group (four centres following-up HIV-infected patients in Istanbul) were included in this study. Demographic data (including age, sex, transmission routes), CD4 counts, Anti-HCV, HCV RNA were collected retrospectively from medical records and were transferred to an HIV data base system.

RESULTS

Of the cases 81.5% were men, mean age was 38.5 ± 11.2 (18-79) years. All cases were caucasian. Most frequent route of transmission was heterosexual intercourse (64.5%), followed by men having sex with men (34.5%). One percent of them were injecting drug user (IDU) and half of these patients were not Turkish citizens (Figure 1).

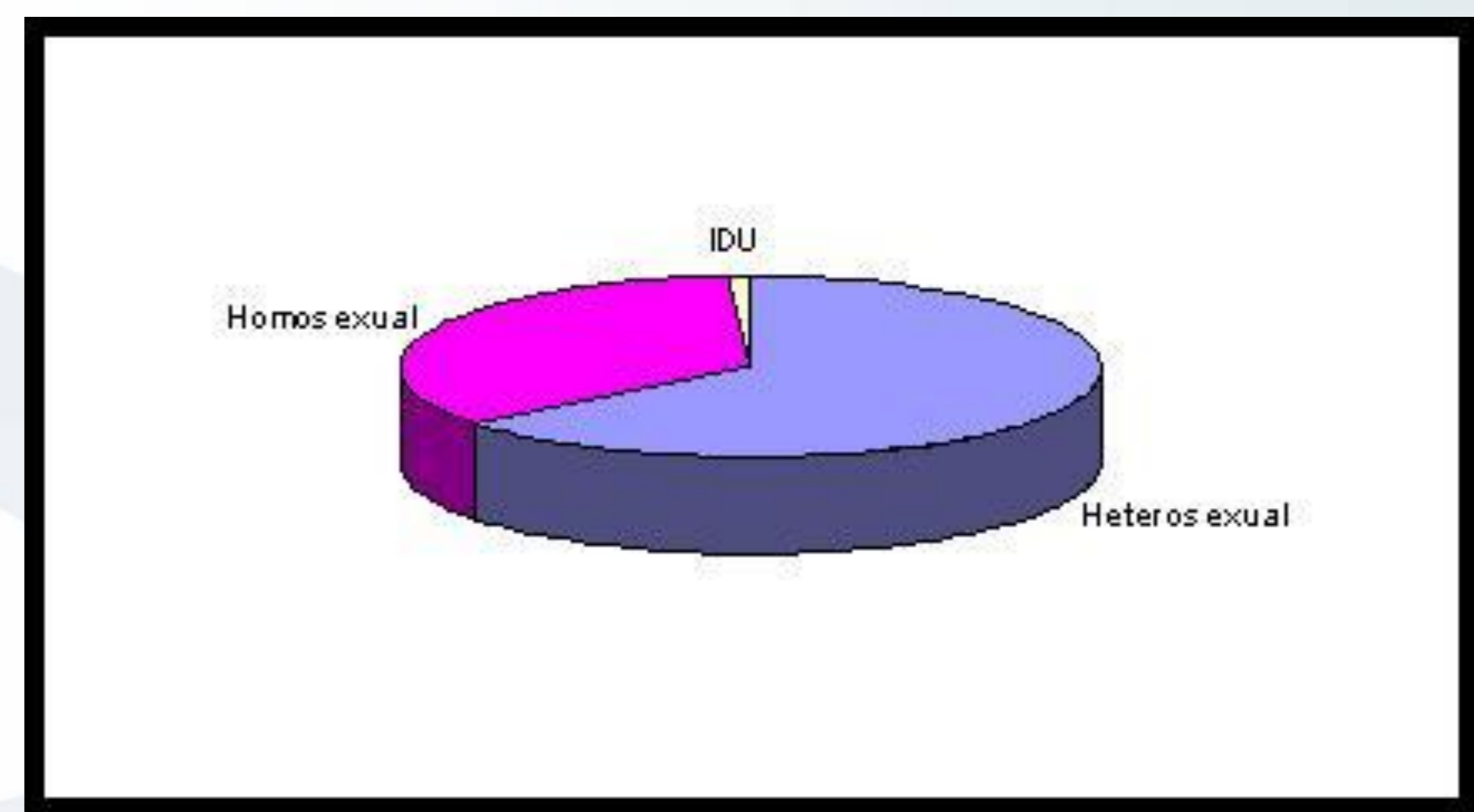


Figure 1. Transmission routes among HIV-infected patients.

The prevalence of HIV/HCV coinfection was 0.8%. The mean CD4 counts for HIV/HCV coinfecting and HIV mono-infected patients were 43.3 ± 48.4 and 359.9 ± 293.6 cells/mm³, respectively ($p = 0.016$). Significant difference was not detected in terms of HIV RNA level between same groups ($p = 0.75$). IDU rate was 75% in patients with HIV/HCV coinfection, whereas this rate was only 0.5% in HIV mono-infected patients ($p < 0.001$).

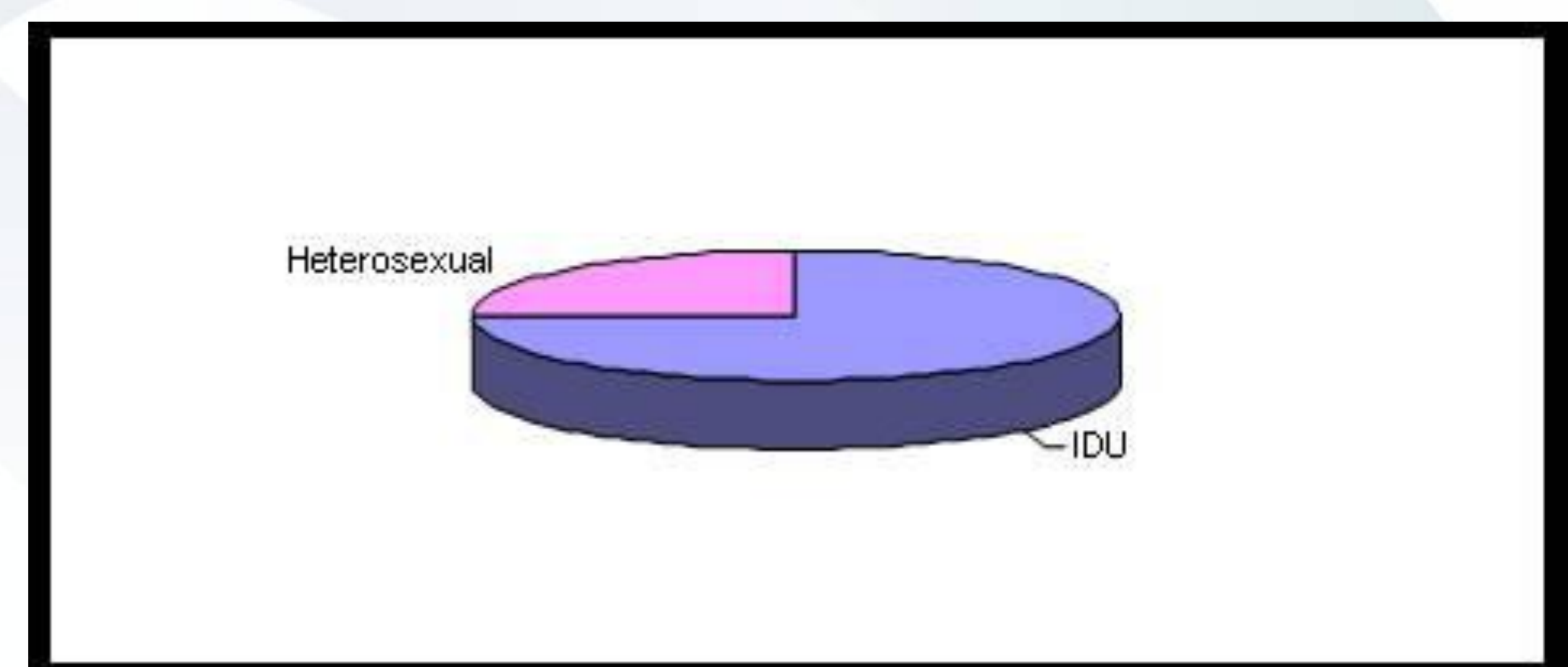


Figure 2. Transmission routes in HIV/HCV co-infected patients.

CONCLUSION

IDU is significant risk factor for HCV infection among HIV-infected patients. In some countries up to 70% of HIV-infected patients are HCV positive as a result of the high incidence of intravenous drug users. Prevalence of HIV/HCV coinfection in our country is considerably low. The extremely rare prevalence of intravenous drug addiction might have a role in this low prevalence.