ROME, November 25-26, 2014
AUDITORIUM, MINISTRY OF HEALTH

EACS European AIDS Clinical Society MEETING

“STANDARD of CARE for HIV and COINFECTIONS in EUROPE”

Chairs: A. Antinori, A. d’Arminio Monforte, C. Mussini
Barriers to HIV Testing in Western Europe

Nikos Dedes
Positive Voice, Greece & EATG
EUROPEAN
HIV TESTING
WEEK
21–28
NOVEMBER
2014
www.hivtestingweek.eu
• 1983 Discovery of HIV
Discovery of HIV
• 1983 Discovery of HIV
• 1985 Use of serological tests - Elisa
  FDA approved
HIV exceptionalism

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This article is written like a personal reflection or opinion essay that states the Wikipedia editor's particular feelings about a topic, rather than the opinions of experts. Please help improve it by rewriting it in an encyclopedic style. (August 2012)

This article needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (November 2008)

HIV exceptionalism is the term given to the trend to treat AIDS differently from other diseases, including other sexually transmitted, infectious, lethal diseases in law and policy.

HIV exceptionalists emphasize the human rights of people living with HIV and AIDS, in particular their rights to privacy, confidentiality, and autonomy. They also believe that all people seeking an HIV test always require special services, such as counseling with every HIV test, special informed consent paperwork, and guaranteed anonymity in public health reporting. In many places, it is illegal to disclose HIV test results over the phone or over the internet.
AIDS Exceptionalism

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The 80s....
## Estimated proportion of HIV-infected persons unaware of their infection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Estimated % HIV-infected persons unaware of their infection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>20-25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>15-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>25-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherland</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>&gt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>20-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>12-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total EU</td>
<td>About 30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Late diagnosis is a critical issue in the EU/EEA, 2012

- Of those with a CD4 count at time of diagnosis, half (49%) are diagnosed late
- As a result, there are a large number of people that need ART but are not receiving it
- Late diagnosis leads to increased morbidity and mortality
- People diagnosed early are more likely to respond well to treatment
- Early diagnosis and treatment reduces the likelihood of onward transmission

34% of those diagnosed with HIV do not have a CD4 count reported at time of diagnosis
66% of new HIV infections get a CD4 count at time of diagnosis
49% of those with a CD4 count reported are diagnosed late
Early Diagnoses

• Reduces morbidity and mortality
• Reduces cost in Health Care
• Knowledge of HIV status reduces risk behaviour
• Treatment (VL reduction) reduces transmission
Characteristics of persons with late diagnosis

– migrant status
– being older
– being heterosexual (not in Eastern Europe)
– living in low HIV prevalence areas
– being male
– having children
Late HIV diagnosis by transmission mode
EU/EEA, 2012

49% are diagnosed late

- 61% of heterosexual cases from Sub-Saharan Africa
- 55% of IDU
- 38% of MSM
- 34% of IDU
- 20% of MSM

Data Source: EU/EEA, 2012
ECDC Testing Guidance
– Dec 2010
Scaling up HIV testing and counselling in the WHO European Region
as an essential component of efforts to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support

Policy framework
ECDC – HIV Testing Core Principles

1. Voluntary, confidential and with informed consent
2. Access to treatment, care and prevention services
3. Show political commitment – Financial investment
4. Reduce stigma
5. Remove legal and financial barriers
6. HIV testing an integral part of national strategies
7. Involvement of Stakeholders
Process of Testing

• Pre-test Counseling / Information
• Informed Consent (written in some cases)
• Delivery of Test Results (who & how)
• Post-test counseling (negative – positive)
• Referral
Barriers to HIV testing exist on three levels

- Patient level
- Healthcare provider level
- Institutional/policy level
Barriers to ask for HIV testing

Patient level

- Patient level barriers vary from country to country – but cross-cultural barriers include:
  - Low-risk perception
  - Fear of HIV infection and its health consequences
  - Fear of disclosure (worries about stigma, discrimination and rejection by significant others)
  - Denial
  - Difficulty accessing service, especially migrant populations

Barriers to offer HIV testing
Healthcare provider level

• Healthcare provider level barriers to HIV testing:
  – Insufficient time
  – Burdensome consent process
  – Lack of knowledge/training (Stereotyping – Fear of appearing to discriminate)
  – Pretest counselling requirements
  – Reimbursement issues
  – Patient not perceived to be at risk

• Leading to many **missed opportunities** for HIV testing within healthcare setting encounters

HIV Indicator Conditions: 
Guidance for Implementing HIV Testing in Adults in Health Care Settings
Barriers to HIV testing - Institutional/policy level

- Lack of **national policy/guidelines** for HIV testing
  - A recent survey revealed that only half of European countries have national guidelines on HIV testing

- **Unfriendly services** for most at risk populations
  - Need for community based services

- **Regulations** & Professional inertia
  - Counselling (psychologists, counsellors)
  - Testing (healthcare professional – Medical devices)

- **Laws and justice systems** that jeopardise HIV prevention
  - Laws that criminalise PLHIV (for not disclosing, exposing and transmitting)
  - Laws that criminalise sex workers, injecting drug users and men having sex with men
  - Laws that do not protect PLHIV against discrimination
Thank you for your attention!