

COMMUNITY-BASED HIV RAPID TESTING SERVICES AND LINKAGE TO CARE AT MULTICOUNTRY TESTING INITIATIVES DURING EUROPEAN TESTING WEEKS 2014-2017

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Background

HIV testing and early detection remain a challenge in Europe. Increasing uptake of testing will require innovative and community-based approaches to ensure that HIV testing services are targeted at, accessible to and used by those people who are most at risk of infection. Different initiatives across Europe such as European Testing Week aim at increasing awareness about the need to test in different populations.

NGO Avante, Lviv, Ukraine, participating in ETW 2017



Description

During 2014-2017 European HIV Testing Week initiative AHF Europe supported 26 organisations in community settings in 10 EU (10 organizations) and 5 non-EU countries (16 organizations) to conduct HIV rapid testing using AHF Rapid Testing Model (RTP). The organisations received grants to cover essential costs and TA on AHF RTP model, unified data collection tools, and M&E for testing. The organizations increased their capacity in marketing, rapid testing, counselling and linkage.

Results

15,889 people were screened for HIV at on-site and off-site events (66% general population; 17% MSM, 14% PUD, 3% SW). 64% of those who tested had never tested for HIV before. 461 people received reactive results (2.9%). 67% of new cases were among men. Among the reactive cases, 279 (61%) reported to learn about their status for the first time. Overall, the reactive results in different populations were: MSM – 78, PUD- 152, and SW-14. All the clients with reactive results who were not previously in care were referred to care. For the years 2014-2016, the linkage was at the level of 50%. AHF Europe investment per 500 test performed was in the range of 4,000 to 15,000 USD for EU, and 2,000 to 6,500 USD for non-EU.

	Tested	Reactive results	Positivity rate
EU countries	5,094	75	1.47%
non-EU countries	10,795	386	3.58%
TOTAL	15,889	461	2.90%

Fig. 1 Results of testing in EU and non-EU countries 2014-2017

	Tested	% of total tested	Reactive results	Positivity rate
Male	10,349	65%	309	3%
Female	5,514	35%	147	2.7%
TG	26		5	19.2%
TOTAL	15,889		461	2.9%

Fig. 2 Gender distribution in the total number of tested and positivity rate in the groups 2014-2017

Conclusions

HIV service delivery in community settings during testing initiatives in both EU and not-EU countries demonstrate a potential to reach people who have never been tested or those who know their status but are not in care. Initiatives that aim at promotion and delivery of testing at the community level can support countries with achieving the first step, access to testing, in the treatment continuum.