



EuroTEST

Working together for integrated
testing and earlier care

Addressing Hepatitis, HIV, STIs and TB

Outcomes of the EuroTEST Initiative

Annual Report 2021

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Introduction

The EuroTEST Initiative (originally named HIV in Europe) began in 2007 as a way to bring attention to the importance of earlier diagnosis and care for people living with HIV and has played a critical role in the HIV response by uniting clinicians, community activists, policymakers and researchers to ensure that people are diagnosed early and linked to care and treatment.

In 2013, a concerted effort was made to also prioritise hepatitis, and in 2019 the disease scope was further broadened to address sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and tuberculosis (TB) as well. With this change, EuroTEST reflected parallel shifts in the field to address infectious diseases more broadly and in a less disease specific manner, mainly due to overlaps in modes of disease transmission and affected populations. The initiative's primary focus remains on integrated testing when appropriate and linkage to care for people with HIV, hepatitis B and C, TB and STIs. EuroTEST aims to utilise integrated strategies to help increase early detection and earlier entry into treatment leading to better health outcomes and preventing the risk of further transmission.

Since its initiation, EuroTEST has built a European platform where a wide range of independent experts from civil society, policy institutions, health care and European public health institutions work toward influencing policy, share knowledge and build the evidence-base to support earlier diagnosis and care.

The initiative is directed by a Steering Committee (SC), which is an independent group of HIV, viral hepatitis, STI and TB experts who represent civil society, research institutions, policy bodies, health systems and public health institutions. The SC is led by two co-chairs, one clinical and one community representative. There are also several observers who contribute to the SC, including representatives from the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

EuroTEST's Policy Secretariat is based at the European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG) in Brussels and the Secretariat, which oversees the day-to-day management of the initiative and its various projects including financial management, is based at Centre of Excellence for Health, Immunity and Infections (CHIP) at Rigshospitalet in Copenhagen, a hospital within the legal entity of the Capital Region of Denmark.

Since the beginning, the initiative has obtained support from industry sponsors to conduct its activities, including the biennial HepHIV conferences, and to support activities in the Eastern European region. In recent years, the European Commission's Health Programme has also been a major co-funder of the EuroTEST activities.

Similarly, to 2020, the year 2021 was profoundly impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, with restrictions on movement, gatherings and other social and professional activities, including restrictions related to in-person meetings, workshops and conferences. Also, the health care sector and people working in the field of infectious diseases have been under high pressure. The activities of the EuroTEST Initiative which involves many stakeholders and actors engaged in addressing hepatitis, HIV, STIs and TB and other infectious diseases have inevitably also been affected. Some activities planned for 2020-2021 have been postponed because key partners were occupied with national COVID-19 duties. Other activities have been adapted into new formats (for

example the fully virtual 2021 HepHIV conference) or been re-programmed into other projects, and new projects have been implemented directly in response to the existing situation, for example an assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on testing for HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections in the WHO European Region.

Project activities, progress and results in 2021

European Testing Week including European Test Finder

Being one of the EuroTEST flagship projects, the European Testing Week ran for its ninth consecutive year. European Testing Week (ETW) has become a well-known awareness campaign throughout Europe. The main aim of ETW is to unite partner organisations throughout Europe twice a year in Spring (May) and Autumn (November) to increase access to testing and promote awareness on the benefits of earlier hepatitis and HIV testing. The roughly 650 participants range from civil society organisations to healthcare institutions, government bodies and institutions of higher learning. Each organisation who signs up for the ETW volunteers their own time to organise local Testing Week activities and create displays of a united effort to increase testing awareness at all organisational levels.



A working group, consisting of experts within HIV and viral hepatitis, provide advice and direction for the initiative. The ETW working group conducted a review of its current membership in 2021 to identify gaps in representation by region, key population, disease area, skillset and expertise and recruit new members to fill those gaps. Nine new members were recruited, through invitations based on nominations as well as applications based on an open call for new members.

Key ETW activities in 2021 included:

- 1) **The Spring European Testing Week initiative (SETW 2021)** held 14-21 May 2020 and focusing on the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on testing services.
 - The 2021 focussed on adapting testing services and keeping up testing efforts despite the pandemic drawing attention, staff, funding and resources from other health priorities. As usual, the ETW secretariat disseminated a Theme Statement focusing on these issues.



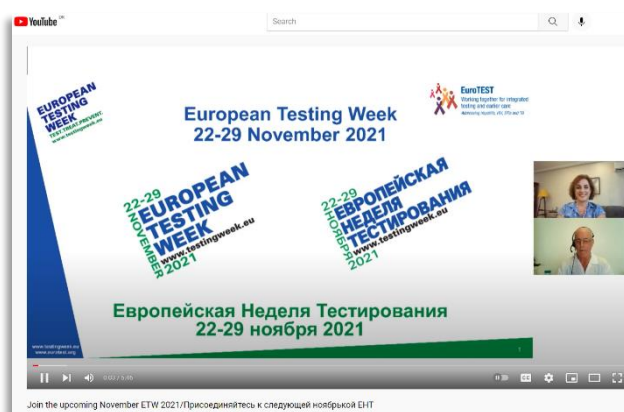
- Highlights of the SETW 2021 evaluation survey:
 - Most respondents who provided testing services reported that their services continued being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and that their testing levels were not back to normal, compared to pre-COVID. Most respondents used SETW 2021 to reach out to other target groups than those they normally cater for. They also used SETW to carry out new types of activities, to provide information about conditions other than their normal focus areas, to increase advertising of testing services, to extend their opening hours, to test in new settings and to collaborate with new partners.



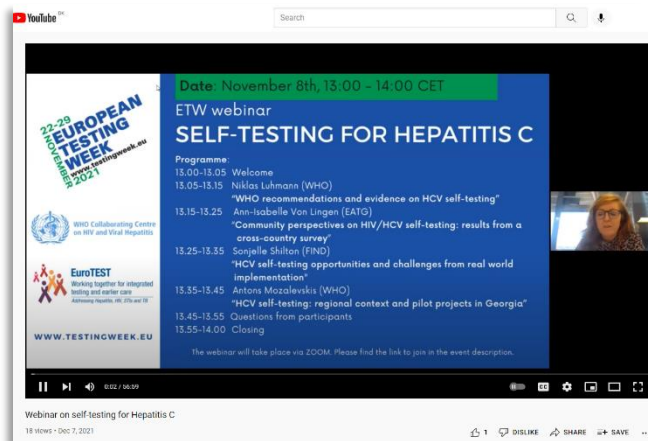
- Despite the COVID-19 pandemic severely affecting the number of participants and activities for the Spring 2021 ETW, it still served as an important reminder for communities, healthcare workers and policy makers that services for HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs are crucial, especially during a pandemic.

2) **The November European Testing Week** took place during 22-29 November 2021. The theme statement, which was published in both English and Russian, framed the November ETW by highlighting the need to catch up on testing and regain focus on HIV, viral hepatitis and STI priorities, after a long period of witnessing a series decline in testing levels across Europe.

- The ETW secretariat promoted the November ETW by publishing a video (in English and Russian) announcing the dates and planned activities of the upcoming ETW.



- The secretariat hosted a live webinar on self-testing for Hepatitis C, where WHO presented their newly published guidelines on this, European AIDS Treatment Group presented findings from a European survey on self-testing, and Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics discussed implementation and roll out.



- 3) In 2021, ETW made an effort to increase **collaboration with Coalition Plus who organise International Testing Week (ITW)**, which was first launched in November 2020. This year, ETW and ITW held a joint launch event in Lisbon and online, which also included WHO presenting a newly published report on the impact of COVID-19 on testing services. The event was covered by Portuguese TV and newspapers.



- On the last day of the November ETW, ETW and ITW published a joined press release, pointing to the critical decline in testing for HIV, hepatitis and STIs caused by the pandemic, and the urgent need to increase access to and provision of testing.



- 4) We have **expanded our Social Media activities** in 2021 and focused on broad dissemination of ETW and related activities. ETW videos and webinars are all available on our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmyMeow2Re-Bo8S8f1rfZtg>).
- ETW disseminated information about the Testing Week and its impact on different occasions. An abstract was accepted for oral presentation at the HepHIV conference in May.
 - At the EACS conference in London in October, we co-organised a special session on testing weeks, together with HIV Prevention England. The session highlighted the importance and impact of both national and regional testing campaigns. It included speakers who are ETW participants from Croatia, Georgia and Ukraine.
 - Following a process of reviewing the ETW Working Group and identifying gaps of competencies among current members, several new members were nominated and invited to join, and an open call to apply for membership was launched, resulting in the inclusion of 9 new members with different backgrounds and focus areas.

European Testing Week website renewal

The European Testing Week (ETW) website has largely remained unchanged since its first launch in 2013 and therefore, as the initiative has continued to evolve and grow, the process of developing a new and more user-friendly website has started. The new website encompasses improved incorporation of different media outputs (e.g. better display of webinars, videos, social media graphics, web banners, etc.). Further, the new website is designed to allow for translation into Russian and potentially other languages. The work and adjustments to features on the website will be further developed in the beginning of 2022, where the final website is planned to be officially launched.

European Test Finder

In 2021, European Testing Week took over the 'European Test Finder', formerly hosted by NAM Aidsmap. The Test Finder is an online tool which allows people to search for the nearest place testing for HIV, viral hepatitis or STIs. The new European Test Finder has been built from scratch and includes new features and search options. The new website which is hosted by EuroTEST/ETW was launched on the last day of the November European Testing Week 2021 (see: <https://www.testfinder.info/>).

European Test Finder

SEARCH ABOUT US TESTING LOGIN REGISTER

Info! This website is currently under development and continuously updated with new information and additional testing sites.

Currently registered
209 sites in 32 countries

We are developing a brand new European Test Finder! The European Test Finder is an easy way to search for the nearest place to get tested for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and other STIs in all countries of the wider European region.

Please include your testing site in the European Test Finder!
We need your help to make sure as many testing sites across Europe as possible are included. If you represent a testing site, please make sure to register to include your testing site on this website. For easy instructions, please watch our short video on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/UbFV1Ddq8M>

Please select a country
All

City
(Please enter the name in the local language)
City

Type of infections tested for
 HIV
 Viral Hepatitis
 STI (Sexually Transmitted Infections)

SEARCH

European Test Finder
Rigshospitalet, University of Copenhagen
CHIP, Section 2100
Blegstamvej 9, DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark

EuroTEST
Working together for integrated testing and earlier care
Improving health, life and well-being

EUROPEAN TESTING WEEK
TEST THAT PREVENT
www.testfinder.info

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The existing Test Finder had not been maintained for a number of years and hence a Task Group was established following the transfer to provide advice and guide the process of updating and re-launching the new European Test Finder. Pilot projects were implemented in 3 countries (Lithuania, Croatia and Italy) to optimize the process of identifying testing sites, encourage them to register for the new test finder and to optimize the new website that has been developed for the test finder. The existing database was supplemented with information about additional testing sites, identified through national test finders and assistance from national contacts. All information about existing and new sites was validated and updated before each of the 3000+ sites were approached and asked to re-register for the new test finder (a legal requirement following the transfer).

Both ECDC and WHO Regional Office for Europe are endorsing the Test Finder and are linking to it from their own website:

- ECDC: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/all-topics-zhiv-infection-and-aidsprevention-and-control/hiv-testing>
- WHO Regional Office for Europe: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/events/events/2021/05/spring-european-testing-week-2021>

HepHIV2021 Conference, Lisbon & Virtual

A key activity during 2021 was the planning and organisation of the HepHIV 2021 conference which took place during May 5 - 7 2021. Originally planned to be hosted in Lisbon, Portugal, the conference eventually took place online and focused on progress, challenges and implementation of early and integrated HIV, viral hepatitis, STIs and TB testing, new technologies and approaches in light of lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

An Organising Committee consisting of 25 experts from 18 European and Portuguese organisations was assembled in 2020 to oversee the conference organisation and prepare the scientific programme. The programme was structured into four plenary sessions, two abstract-driven sessions, an EU Health Project Symposium on the Joint Action 'INTEGRATE', six on-demand e-poster sessions with a live chat and four side-meetings.

A special session focused on testing and care for people who inject or use drugs (PWID/PWUD) was organised with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). Content of the abstract-driven and e-poster sessions was determined through peer-review of abstracts submitted in eight pre-defined categories. All sessions were live-streamed via a virtual platform and all sessions and e-poster presentations were subsequently made available online.



A total of 432 participants from 54 countries attended the conference – nearly twice as many as in prior HepHIV conferences – and included stakeholders from community organisations (30%) clinicians (20%), policy makers/public health experts (20%), social scientists/epidemiologists (20%) and 'others' (10%). This impressive reach can be partially attributed to the online format, allowing greater equity in access for participants who would not normally have been able to travel to the physical conference. Also, Russian simultaneous interpretation was made available for all main sessions, allowing greater participation from eastern European countries.

In addition to the 27 speakers and panellists of the opening, closing and INTEGRATE sessions, the programme included 11 plenary presentations as well as 15 abstract-driven and 39 e-poster presentations selected among 55 abstracts submitted from 16 countries.

The three open site meetings were: 1) EATG stakeholder meeting regarding diagnostics, 2) Lisbon Fast Track City: HCV testing and treatment in the community, 3) Fast-Track Cities: Actioning HCV Elimination in European Urban Settings, organised by IAPAC.

The scientific programme showcased an abundance of research and interventions that effectively addressed prevention, testing and linkage to care for multiple infectious diseases and provided successful examples of service and system adaptations developed to mitigate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure that people were still able to access timely prevention, testing and treatment.

An overarching theme arising from the conference centred around the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on European health systems and populations, but also how we must leverage lessons learned from the pandemic to reclaim a sustained focus on testing and early treatment of HIV, viral hepatitis, STIs and TB from all relevant actors.

HepHIV2021 concluded with a conference 'Call to Action' covering eight specific areas for action addressing implications for policy and implementation agendas in the field of earlier and integrated testing for HIV, viral hepatitis, STI and TB.

EU-funded Joint Action on integrating prevention, testing and link to care strategies across HIV, viral hepatitis, TB and STIs in Europe (INTEGRATE)

The secretariat of EuroTEST (CHIP/RegionH) has coordinated the EU-funded Joint Action on integrating prevention, testing and link to care strategies across HIV, viral hepatitis, TB and STIs in Europe (INTEGRATE). INTEGRATE has implemented a number of activities focused on increasing integrated early diagnosis and linkage to care and prevention for the four disease areas in the European Union (EU) and has offered a platform for dissemination and exchange of best practices among EU Member States while facilitating discussions on innovations and creating synergies across European stakeholders, projects and initiatives.



Initially set to end in August 2020, the project was extended through May 2021 due to the impact of COVID-19. While majority of outputs were disseminated during 2020 the following main outputs were disseminated in 2021:

- A final Partnership Forum Meeting was convened online in January 2021 where all outcomes and experiences from INTEGRATE were presented and discussed.
- The final dissemination event presenting the outcomes and key lessons was held as part of the HepHIV2021 Conference in May (see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTIUjV5YCLQ>).
- A BMC Infectious Diseases journal supplement with 10 manuscripts presenting the results and outcomes of the Joint Action was published in September 2021 (see more detail here: <https://bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com/articles/supplements/volume-21-supplement-2>).
- An online training module on 'Public health perspectives: prevention, testing and linkage to care' was developed in collaboration with the EACS society and WHO Regional Office for Europe as part of the 'Management of HIV and Co-infection course. Alongside multiple other experts INTEGRATE Steering Committee members and Lead Partners contributed with presentations of the activities conducted as part of the joint action. The course is available at the online learning platform Iversity. (see more detail here: <https://iversity.org/en/courses/management-of-hiv-and-co-infections>)
- Fundraising efforts for continued EU funding have been pursued under the EU4Health call.

Section 3. Public Health Perspectives: Prevention, Testing and Linkage to care



Testing and linkage to care:

Different approaches to HIV testing and the role of integrated testing and linkage to care.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Monitoring of the HIV epidemic.
Evaluation of public health interventions to decrease transmission HIV and other BBV.

Combination Prevention:

Principles of combination prevention.
Planning and implementing combination prevention programmes.

Assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on testing for HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections in the WHO European Region

In 2020, in order to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on testing efforts for HIV, HBV, HCV and STI in the WHO European Region, a consortium of partners, led by EuroTEST and representing community organisations, health care and public health institutions, developed and conducted a comprehensive baseline assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on testing services for HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs in the WHO European Region. The results were published in Eurosurveillance and presented at various regional conferences and meetings throughout 2021.

At the end of 2021, a shorter follow-up assessment was launched in English, Russian and Spanish, aiming to document the quantitative and structural impact of COVID on testing for HIV, HBV, HCV, chlamydia, syphilis and gonorrhoea in different settings (laboratories, specialist clinical services and community organisations providing testing for one or more of these infections) as well as how testing services have continued to adapt to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 during 2021.

The specific survey objectives are to:

- Assess the quantitative and structural impact of COVID on testing and linkage to care for HIV, HBV, HCV, chlamydia, syphilis and gonorrhoea in 2021
- Identify potential factors associated with this impact
- Collect information on measures and service adaptations implemented to mitigate impact and identify areas where guidance or support are needed.

Working groups to review the definitions of HIV and viral hepatitis late presentation

Other related impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are increased risks of being diagnosed late with HIV and/or viral hepatitis but also countries' ability to sustain routine non-COVID surveillance, monitoring and reporting activities have been affected. According to a survey conducted by ECDC and WHO/Europe in 2021, a third of European countries reported that limited surveillance capacity led to reduced reporting of HIV surveillance data for 2020, including data on late diagnosis. This is similar to the situation for hepatitis late presentation for which the reduction in data availability was even greater for 2021 compared with 2018.

Two new expert working groups have been established under EuroTEST, aiming to review the existing consensus definitions of HIV and viral hepatitis late presentation, respectively, each developed by previous expert groups under the (then) HIV in Europe Initiative and published in 2010 (HIV) and 2017 (viral hepatitis).

The hepatitis group also aims to implement activities that can help facilitate data generation and improved use of the updated definition, e.g. by sharing existing research examples, planning new relevant studies, convening webinars and workshops etc.

Working group to support roll-out of HIV and HCV self-testing

Another newly established working group will support roll-out of self-testing in a broader range of disease areas than HIV, including hepatitis C and other sexually transmitted infections, based on lessons learned from implementation of existing HIV self-testing activities. The group aims to initiate and implement activities that can guide both policy work and practice related to self-testing implementation across Europe.

Further, EuroTEST collaborated with EATG in the implementation of a project on HIV and HCV self-testing (<https://www.eatg.org/projects/co-lead/>) supported by FIND (the global alliance for diagnostics) to map policies, regulations, and practical factors that are enabling and/or hindering community level access to RDTs for self-testing in Europe and Central Asia. An interactive online workshop was also held with community members involved in HIV and HCV related services delivery to provide up-to-date information about rapid diagnostic tests, regulatory issues and

good/promising practices to inform planning of testing at community level. Participants will learn from each other's programming, practical solutions to strengthen their services offer and delivery, as well as advocacy efforts to overcome policy and financial barriers.

Collaboration with diagnostic companies

As part of the November 2021 European Testing Week Cepheid provided free GeneXpert testing systems for 12 selected ETW partners across Europe and provided training and quick guide to the providers. Especially ETW organisations with mobile outreach were among the testing sites in the pilot who experienced this point-of-care service.



During the HepHIV2021 a stakeholder site meeting was held, organised by EATG, regarding diagnostics on 5 May 2021. The purpose was to provide a community-level perspective on self-testing/sampling diagnostic tools and testing service delivery, to examine diagnostic companies' plans and commitment to community, and to provide a platform for dialogue between CBOs and Diagnostic developers, and potentially identify collaborative opportunities.

Literature review to assess the HIV seroprevalence in key populations in the EU/EEA

The EuroTEST secretariat in partnership with a number of independent experts, were contracted by ECDC to gather, review and synthesise all relevant peer-reviewed published literature on HIV seroprevalence in 31 EU/EEA countries among men who have sex with men (MSM), people who inject drugs (PWID), sex workers, prisoners, migrants and pregnant women. The work took place in 2019 and 2020 while the collated results were only finally published in 2021 in a peer-reviewed journal article entitled '*HIV seroprevalence in five key populations in Europe: a systematic literature review*' (<https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2021.26.47.2100044>).

Policy and advocacy activities

EuroTEST aims to inform policy processes, share knowledge and improve the evidence base related to earlier testing and care. As part of its role as secretariat for policy and advocacy, the European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG) advocates for optimal testing and care for the EuroTEST initiative and promotes its project findings to stakeholders.

Sustained advocacy of EuroTEST and partners for EU health funding to address communicable diseases (beyond COVID-19) and health inequalities bore fruits. In October, the European Commission launched a call for funding (€ 5 million/3 years) for community-based integrated and person-centred health services for the prevention, testing and linkage to care for HIV, TB, viral hepatitis and STIs focused on key populations.

The results from the 2021 spring European Testing Week and plans for the November Testing Week were presented at the March 2021 meeting of the EU Civil Society Forum on HIV, TB and

Hep (CSF). EuroTEST also shared the results of the 2021 EuroTEST assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on HIV, viral hepatitis and STI testing as well as the plans to perform a follow-up assessment in 2022.

Workplan 2022

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic some of the activities planned for 2021 have had to be cancelled (e.g. F2F meetings and travel) while others have been postponed until 2022 because our partners in the infectious disease field have been fully occupied with COVID-19 duties. The proposed activities and plans for 2022 (and 2023) are describe below.

Expand on knowledge from HIV self-testing implementation

As the use of self-tests continue to expand, especially with the current limitations related to in-person testing and recommendations from international organizations like WHO, the EuroTEST working group on self-testing will work on:

- Assess the need for updating the European situational analysis on HIV self-testing (HIVST) and self-sampling (SS) developed under the EU-funded joint action 'INTEGRATE' that focused on availability, acceptability and legal/policy environment in Europe, and explore the need for expanding it to cover also SS/ST for HCV and STIs.
- Identify case studies or best-practice examples from existing self-testing/self-sampling strategies, focusing for example on how to tackle issues such as pricing, access, referral, linkage to care, remote counselling etc.
- Initiate the development of a "lessons-learned" catalogue based on good practice experience from implementation of HIV self-testing implementation as a support to actors planning to roll out hepatitis C SS in Europe.
- Consider organizing multi-stakeholder exchange events (webinars, meetings etc.) to facilitate discussion of the issues listed above, including ways to help bridge disease silos (HIV, HCV, STIs) and sectors.

Covid-19 assessment follow-up

Data collection for the 2021 COVID-19 impact assessment will continue through March 2022, followed by data cleaning and analysis and publication of the findings in a peer-reviewed journal article later in 2022. The results are expected to bring further attention to the many service gaps related to testing, to facilitate knowledge sharing and help inform advocacy efforts and next steps in the regional and national testing responses across Europe.

Review and update existing viral hepatitis late presentation consensus definition

The current definition of chronic viral hepatitis late presentation is not able to adequately distinguish patients who are diagnosed at a late stage of infection from patients who have lived with viral hepatitis for many years but are presenting late for treatment initiation, with advanced decompensated cirrhosis. To generate valid data on late presentation for both patient groups, the

existing definition of late presentation needs to be revisited and updated. Specifically, the expert group aims to generate the following outputs:

- A revised updated definition of viral hepatitis late presentation, reflecting the difference between patients diagnosed late and patients previously diagnosed but presenting late for treatment initiation.
- Implementation of activities that can help push for greater use of the revised definition, e.g. by sharing existing research examples (through webinars, meetings or similar), facilitate further research or plan new relevant studies (ideally examining incidence of late presentation of chronic infection with hepatitis B and/or C virus and characteristics of late presenters in multiple European countries).

Review and update existing HIV late presentation consensus definition

Late diagnosis and linkage to care of people with HIV remains a key challenge in the response to the epidemic in Europe and elsewhere. The consensus definition of HIV late presentation from 2010 has been widely adopted, including within the joint ECDC/WHO European level HIV surveillance activities where data on late presentation are being collected from all countries in the WHO European Region and published on an annual basis.

However, a large proportion of HIV 'late presenters' (defined as persons with CD4 cell count below 350 per ml blood at diagnosis) – about a third in the UK – in fact have low CD4 cell counts because they are sero-converters, meaning that many people who are recently infected will be incorrectly categorized as late presenters using the current definition.

To facilitate collection of more accurate data, the current definition needs to be adjusted to enable distinction between people with low CD4 cell counts at diagnosis due to long-standing infection or due to an acute immune response related to a recently acquired infection.

The planned output from is to review the existing definition and propose a revised updated version, including methodology for how to apply this new definition to existing surveillance data.

Country support for prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, STIs and viral hepatitis in the EU/EEA countries.

In collaboration with the European AIDS Clinical Society (EACS) and Centre for Online and Blended Learning (COBL) at the University of Copenhagen EuroTEST, has secured a framework contract from ECDC on Country support. Together with EACS, COBL and a core team of individual scientific experts, EuroTEST will design, develop and implement trainings, workshops, country-to-country support activities and webinars in order to 1) build EU countries scientific/technical capacity to end and eliminate these diseases as public health threats and 2) to increase technical and scientific exchange among EU/EEA professionals working on these diseases to strengthen evidence-based decisions on public health policies and practice.. The contract will begin in the spring of 2022.

Follow-up on National Multi-stakeholder Meetings & Trainings

EuroTEST in collaboration with the INTEGRATE Joint Action organised National multi-stakeholder Meetings and Trainings in 2019 (Croatia, Lithuania, Poland and Italy). As a follow-up to these National Meetings and sustainability of the outcomes from INTEGRATE, EuroTEST will support efforts to further assess the implementation/adaptation of both the ECDC guidance on testing for hepatitis and HIV and meeting recommendations in the national policies and strategies. This work will be continued through the ECDC Country Support framework contract in collaboration with EACS.

European Testing Week

Besides from organising the two annual European Testing Weeks, the secretariat will launch the new ETW website in Spring 2022. One of the new features of the website is a new sign-up process for the participants to use for each particular Testing Week. The participating organisations will be able to log in to their profile, review or edit their information and indicate their participation in each particular Testing Week. Furthermore, parts of the website will be translated into Russian to encourage more participation from Eastern European Countries in the campaigns.

The newly initiated collaboration with International Testing Week (ITW) will be further explored and strengthened and ETW will continue to increase its visibility and the focus and need for testing through events such as launch and closing events.

European Test Finder (under European Testing Week)

During 2022, the new Test Finder website will be further developed with new information and new features and efforts will continue to encourage more testing sites across Europe to register. Once the website includes a higher number of testing sites, the tool will be promoted both by the secretariat and at national level, and through search optimization.

HepHIV 2023

The HepHIV 2023 will be held in Madrid, Spain in the second half of the year. Spain will at this time hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and as has been the case with previous Conferences, the EuroTEST secretariat is working on getting the conference under the auspices of the Spanish Presidency. Local Co-chairs will be Julia Del Amo, Director of the National Plan on AIDS and Arkaitz Imaz, representative from the Spanish Society of Infectious Diseases (SEIMC) and Bellvitge Hospital, Barcelona.

Collaboration with diagnostic kit companies

As a continuation of the site meeting held at HepHIV2021 by the policy secretariat EATG with community testing services providers, partners and diagnostics companies on testing technologies for use in community settings, EuroTEST will continue to collaborate with diagnostic kit companies, including Cepheid, OraSure, InTec and Owen Mumford, among others. Plans for 2022 include

expanding on the collaboration between ETW and Cepheid to explore opportunities to increase awareness of the benefits of rapid testing for multiple infections (HIV and HCV, in particular). Also, ETW will continue to reach out to other diagnostic kit companies with offers to collaborate on ETW activities. These activities will help community settings improve synergies with diagnostic manufacturers, increase access to testing and awareness of testing, especially for key populations through the partnerships with the social networking apps.

List of EuroTEST-related publications and other media in 2021

Publications

1. Stengaard AR, Combs L, Supervie V, Croxford S, Desai S, Sullivan AK, Jakobsen SF, Santos Q, Simões D, Casabona J, Lazarus JV, Wit JBF, Amort FM, Pharris A, Nerlander L*, Raben D*. HIV seroprevalence in five key populations in Europe: a systematic literature review, 2009 to 2019. *Euro Surveill.* 2021;26(47):pii=2100044. <https://doi.org/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2021.26.47.2100044>.
2. Raben D, Sullivan AK. Implementation of indicator condition guided HIV testing still lagging behind the evidence. *EClinicalMedicine.* 2021 May 29;36:100918.

INTEGRATE Joint Action BMC Infectious Diseases Supplement.

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Presentations/Posters

1. Collins B., Bom Kahama C., Raben C. *European Testing Week: Adaptation of testing services during the COVID-19- pandemic*. Oral presentation of abstract for “PLENARY SESSION 1: SPECIAL SESSION: Impact of COVID-19 on prevention and testing services for HIV, viral hepatitis, STIs and TB: Building back better”, at the HepHIV Conference, 6 May 2021.
2. Stengaard AR, Sullivan AK, Kowalska JK, Rokx C, Raben D, Simões D, The EuroTEST COVID-19 impact assessment consortium of partners. *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on testing and linkage to care for HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections in the WHO European Region*. HepHIV 2021 Conference, 6 May 2021.
3. Cosmaro L, Savarino D, Mommi M, Dominkovic Z, Simkunaite-Zazecke A, Stoniene L, Raahauge A, Kakalou C, Drosou V, Natsiavas P. *RiskRadar: the 1st integrated ICT tool on combination prevention for hepatitis/HIV/TB/STI*. HepHIV 2021 Conference, 6 May 2021.
4. Stengaard AR. *Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on testing for HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs in the WHO European Region*. Viral Hepatitis Prevention Board Technical Meeting, 25 March 2021.

5. Simões D. *Key findings from the EuroTEST assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on testing in Europe*. IUSTI Europe and BASHH United Kingdom monthly webinar, 31 March 2021.
6. Collins B., “*Catch up on testing*”, *European Testing Week 22-29 November; testing for viral hepatitis, HIV and STIs*. Presentation for “Special Session – Testing Week Campaigns: An effective tool for increasing HIV and integrated testing rates in key populations during and beyond Covid-19”, at the EACS Conference in London and online, 28 October 2021.
7. Collins B., Bom Kahama C. *European Testing Week*. Presentation at International and European Testing Week launch event in Lisbon and online, 22 November 2021.
8. Stoniene L, Subata E, Sirvinskiene A, Grice A, Jakobsen ML, Finne Jakobsen S, Raben D, Rae C, Sullivan AK. *Expanding integrated HCV/HIV testing to alcohol dependent clients attending treatment centres for drug and alcohol dependency in Lithuania*. HepHIV 2021 Conference, 5-7 May 2021.

Other media

1. Statements from the European Testing Week Working group regarding the COVID-19 pandemic: [May 2021](#) and [November 2021](#).
2. Joint press release by European and International Testing Week: “[HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs: Let’s make up for lost time against the epidemics!](#)”, 28 November 2021.
3. European Testing Week Video on YouTube “Join the upcoming November ETW 2021”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjT8c-gjHKQ>
4. European Testing Week 2021 webinar:
 - “Self-testing for Hepatitis C”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfz7dtTvlnk>
5. European Test Finder:
 - YouTube video: Registration instructions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbFVs1Ddq8M>
6. HepHIV 2021 Lisbon & Virtual [Press Release](#) of Wednesday, 5 May 2021

Annex 1. Overview of ongoing and planned activities

Project	Description	Expected Outcome	Period
Secretariat coordination, communication/dissemination, advocacy, collaboration			
All projects (including ETW, ETF, ECDC Country Support, HepHIV Conference, subcontracting, research and proposed new activities)	Management tasks for each project (e.g. reporting, budgeting, fundraising, organising teleconferences and face-to-face meetings, etc); coordination of expert groups, advisory boards, steering committees and working groups; monitoring and evaluation.	Annual Reports for 2021 and 2022, teleconferences, face-to-face meetings (in 2022 and 2023) including EuroTEST SC meetings, conference planning kick-off meeting and ETW and ETF Working Group meetings. These outcomes will guide the direction of the EuroTEST projects and ensure their successful implementation. A well-functioning secretariat will also ensure support and endorsement from a broad range of stakeholders (community organisations, health care professionals, government agencies and international organisations).	2022-23
	Each project coordinated by EuroTEST has its own network including stakeholders, endorsers, sponsors, community organisations, health care professionals and public institutions. The secretariat communicates with its networks through frequent updates on project websites, posts on social media, press releases, newsletters, promotional materials (online and paper) and through representation at relevant meetings and conferences.	Communication plan, regular updates to project websites, posts on social media, press releases, newsletters, development of promotional materials (online and paper), 1-2 publications annually (peer-reviewed, posters, newspapers, online articles, other journals).	2022-23

Project	Description	Expected Outcome	Period
	EuroTEST's Policy Secretariat coordinates the advocacy tasks to foster renewed political commitment at the National and European levels to achieve universal access to prevention, testing, treatment and care for HIV, viral hepatitis, STIs and TB. The policy secretariat engages and participates in all related open EU-level meetings.	Representation at relevant meetings and conferences including the EU-level meetings.	2022-23
Ongoing projects			
Expand on knowledge from HIV self-testing implementation	New working group established aiming to support roll-out of self-testing in a broader range of disease areas, including HCV, STIs and HIV. Based on lessons learned from implementation of existing HIV self-testing activities.	Update of European situation report and toolkit for HIV self-testing published May 2021. Identification of case studies or best-practice examples and initiation of development of a 'lessons learned' catalogue on good practices.	2021-2022
COVID-19 impact assessment follow-up	Data collection for the 2021 COVID-19 impact assessment will continue through March 2022 followed by data cleaning and analysis and publication.	Publication in peer-reviewed journal article.	2022
Review and update of late presentation of chronic viral hepatitis consensus definition	New working group established to develop an updated definition of late presentation of chronic viral hepatitis. Current definition needs adjustment to distinguish patients diagnosed late from patients previously diagnosed but presenting late for treatment initiation.	A new consensus definition and actions taken to increase use of the definition in clinical research settings, e.g. via webinars to encourage broader use of the definition. Potential publication.	2021-22

Project	Description	Expected Outcome	Period
Review and update of existing HIV late presentation consensus definition	New working group established to develop an updated definition. Current definition needs adjustment to enable distinction between low CD4 due to late diagnosis and due to recent infection.	A new consensus definition to be published in a stand-alone publication or a commentary to the original short communication where the definition was first published.	2021-22
ECDC Country Support	Management and coordination of the design, development, and implementation of training activities.	First contract covering Spring 2022. Tentative first training activities: - online trainings/workshops on the HIV/HEP testing guidance and STI testing standards to the network - 3 webinars per disease area (topics to be finalised)	2022
European Testing Week	Management of biannual ETW campaigns (May and November); coordination of Working Group, stakeholders, partners, endorsers and sponsors; communication of project updates. Further strengthening of newly initiated collaboration with International Testing Week (ITW)	SETW (16-23 May) and Autumn (21-28 November); WG F2F meeting; Upkeep of the ETW materials (development of new logos, templates); development of online materials, webinars and other events evaluation reports; submitted manuscript to scientific journal. Increased visibility of ETW through events such as launch and closing events conducted in collaboration with ITW.	2022-23
European Test Finder	Further development of the new Test Finder website with new information and features; continued efforts to encourage more testing sites to register; intensified promotion of the site.	Expanded European Test Finder with 500+ registered testing sites.	

Project	Description	Expected Outcome	Period
HepHIV Conference	Fundraising; coordination of organising committee, endorsers and sponsors; development of scientific programme (including identifying and inviting speakers, abstract categories); logistical planning of the event	Convening the conference organising committee including local affiliates, establishment of preliminary conference logistics (main aim and objectives, date, venue, etc), development of the conference programme, invitations to speakers, preparations for hybrid or F2F Conference.	2022-23
Collaboration with diagnostic kit companies	Continued dialogue and collaboration with diagnostic kit companies to improve testing technology and availability in community settings; support pilot activities of POC in community settings.	Continued collaboration with diagnostic kit companies, jointly with EATG. Increased access to affordable diagnostic kits to support ETW testing activities.	2022-23

Annex 2. Financial statement and EuroTEST Steering Committee

Financial statement

The EuroTEST initiative has received funding and grants from Gilead Sciences, ViiV Healthcare, Merck/MSD, Cepheid, the European Commission under the 3rd Health Programme and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

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EuroTEST Steering Committee

Ann K. Sullivan, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital, United Kingdom; Ben Collins, European Testing Week working group chair, ReShape/International HIV Partnerships, United Kingdom; Brian Gazzard, Imperial College, School of Medicine, HIV Research Director, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital, United Kingdom; Cary James, World Hepatitis Alliance, United Kingdom; Daniel Simões, EPIUnit - Institute of Public Health of the University of Porto; Grupo de Ativistas em Tratamentos (GAT), Coalition PLUS, Portugal (Chair); Daniela Rojas Castro, Coalition PLUS, France; Ferenc Bagyinszky, AIDS Action Europe, Germany; Francesco Negro, European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL), Switzerland; Igor Karpov, Department of Infectious Disease, Belarus State Medical University, Belarus; Irith De Baetselier, Antwerp Institute of Tropical Medicine, Belgium; Jack S. Lambert, University College Dublin (UCD), Ireland; Jeffrey V. Lazarus, ISGlobal, Barcelona Institute for Global Health, Hospital Clínic - University of Barcelona, Spain; Jens D. Lundgren, Rigshospitalet, CHIP (Centre of Excellence for Health, Immunity and Infections), University of Copenhagen, Denmark; Johanna Brännström, Department of Infectious Diseases, South Hospital & Institute of Medicine, Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden; John de Wit, University of New South Wales & Utrecht University, Netherlands; Jordi Casabona, Center for HIV/STI Epidemiological Studies of Catalonia (CEEISCAT), Spain; Jürgen Rockstroh, Department of Medicine I, University Hospital Bonn, Germany (Chair); Kira Grazava, TB Coalition Europe, Ukraine; Lella Cosmaro, Fondazione LILA Milan, Italy; Liudmyla Maistat, Medicines Patent Pool, Switzerland; Liver Patients International (name TBC); Magnus Unemo, WHO Collaborating Centre for Gonorrhoea and Other STIs, National Reference Laboratory for STIs, Örebro University Hospital, Sweden; Mark Vermeulen, Aidsfonds – Soa Aids Nederland, Netherlands; Mojca Matičič, University Medical Centre Ljubljana, Slovenia; Nikos Dedes, European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG) & Positive Voice, Greece; Nino Tsereteli, Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health – Tanadgoma, Georgia; Rajul Patel, Department of Genitourinary Medicine, Southampton University Hospitals & International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections (IUSTI), United Kingdom; Tom Platteau, HIV/STI clinic of the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium; Valerie Delpech, Public Health England, United Kingdom; Yazdan Yazdanpanah, France.

Observer organisations to the EuroTEST Steering Committee

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC); European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMDCCA); World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe.

European Testing Week Working Group members

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