

PO3/03

Checkpoint Zagreb: A Successful Start of a Community Based HIV and HCV Testing Site in Zagreb, Croatia

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CONCLUSION

Of 1641 HIV tests performed, 17 were positive (1.04%, 95% CI 0.63 to 1.67%).

Of 1413 HCV tests performed, 12 were positive (0.85%, 95% CI 0.47 to 1.50).

Checkpoint Zagreb attracted a considerable number of young persons and contributed significantly to detection of new HIV infections in Croatia.

INTRODUCTION

The first community-based center for HIV and HCV testing (CheckPoint-Zagreb) in Croatia was established in May 2013.g.

It targets primarily young people and offers rapid oral fluid tests for HIV and HCV with linkage to care.

CheckPoint Zagreb is a centre for health education, counselling and psychosocial support of young people and place of providing voluntary, anonymous, confidential and free of charge oral fluid quick tests for HIV and HCV, enabling results in only 20 minutes.

The Center is working in Zagreb, in Knez Domagoj Street 10 under supervision of HUHIV (Croatian Association for HIV and viral hepatitis).

The CheckPoint Centre is a joined project of the:

- Zagreb City Office for Health
- Croatian Association for HIV and Viral Hepatitis
- University Hospital for Infectious Diseases
- Croatian Red Cross

OBJECTIVE

To describe the main characteristics of the clients of Checkpoint-Zagreb (CPZ) and assess the prevalence of HIV and HCV infection as well as linkage to care.

METHODS

We describe our data with frequencies, rates, medians and 95% confidence intervals. Included into the analysis were all clients seen at CheckPoint Zagreb in the period May 2013 to April 2014.

RESULTS

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS APPROACHED | 1781 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS TESTED | 1706 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS TESTED FOR HIV | 1641 |
| HIV POSITIVE (+) | 17 |
| PREVALENCE OF HIV INFECTION | 1.04% (95% CI 0.63 to 1.67%) |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS TESTED FOR HCV | 1413 |
| HCV POSITIVE (+) | 12 |
| PREVALENCE OF HCV POSITIVITY | 0.85% (95% CI 0.47 to 1.50) |

5 working days per week/ 460 working hours

Main characteristics of persons seen at Checkpoint:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Age, years, median (p25-p75)* | 28 (24-35) |
| Male gender | 1067 (60%) |
| Employment status | |
| Employed | 844 (50%) |
| Not employed | 327 (20%) |
| University student | 507 (30%) |
| Intimate status | |
| Single | 690 (40%) |
| In partnership | 701 (41%) |
| Married | 171 (10%) |
| Casual relationship | 96 (6%) |
| Divorced | 48 (3%) |
| Self declared sexual orientation | |
| Homosexual | 245 (14%) |
| Bisexual | 129 (8%) |
| Heterosexual | 1332 (78%) |
| Had a sexually transmitted infection | 305 (19%) |
| First time testers | |
| MSM ^a | 148 (40%) |
| Heterosexuals ^b | 1050 (79%) |

*Based on 1771 persons. Total vary because of missing data.

^a5 were HIV+ and 1 HCV +; ^b5 were HIV+ and 9 were HCV+

Linkage to care:

- Of 17 HIV infected persons:
- 14 (82.4%) were linked to care; 12 (85.7%) were linked within 2 weeks
- Median time to integration to care: 4.5 days
- Median CD4 cell count at inclusion 370.5 per mm³
- Of 94 persons who entered care in Croatia in the period May 2013 to April 2014, 15% were linked from Checkpoint Zagreb.

Key Learnings points:

- Community based outreach initiative effectively complements existing national counselling and testing network – **institutional barriers are eliminated**
- Focusing on youth in general and its tendency to experiment with risky behaviors has increased overall social acceptance – **stigma is lessend**
- Providing anonymous, non-judgmental, confidential and free of charge counselling and rapid testing ensured that **the population at risk has been effectively attracted**
- By closely collaborating with relevant institutions, **quality assurance is provided and further care and treatment for all positively tested individuals is enabled**



What makes CheckPoint Zagreb model distinctive?

- COMMUNITY BASED
 - Increasing acceptance and eliminating institutional barriers
- NGO MANAGED COUNSELING BASED ON ORAL FLUID TESTING
 - Friendly & non judgmental environment
 - Relevant services to attract population at risk
- INTERLINKED WITH RELEVANT HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS
 - Institutional Quality Assurance protocols are in place (Oral fluid testing, Managing further care)
- TARGETING YOUTH IN GENERAL
 - Youngsters tend to experiment with risky behaviors
 - The community setting is minimizing stigma related to particular risk behaviors

Quality Assurance

- PEOPLE
 - Certified HUHIV/CAHIV counsellors
 - Highly qualified MDs from Referral Centres
- PROCESSES
 - Written counselling and testing protocols in place
 - Controls in place / Certified virology laboratory
- TECHNOLOGIES
 - Oral fluid rapid tests
 - Certified data collection and filing programme