

The European HIV Testing Week in Italy: An Opportunity for Diagnosis and Prevention

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Background

In November 2013, HIV in Europe launched the first European HIV Testing Week; several Italian organizations joined. We collected data from 9 organizations (Omphalos Arcigay Arcilesbica Perugia and Anlaids AA, Arcobaleno Aids AR, INMI "L. Spallanzani" Roma IS, LILA Milano LM, LILA Trentino LT, LILA Catania LC, Circolo di Cultura Omosessuale Mario Mieli MM, Plus PL, Università Sapienza/Ospedale SM Goretti SG, Fondazione Villa Maraini VM) that offered rapid HIV testing in Italy as part of the European initiative, to evaluate characteristics of users, testing attitudes and way to improve HIV test opportunities.

The European HIV Testing Week in Italy

The initiatives of the 9 organizations were held totally in 40 days corresponding to 165.5 hours. The duration of each initiative varied from 1 day (AA, AR) to 8 days (PL). Most organizations held their initiative in one place except some which were displaced in 2 locations (MM) or 3 (SM). HIV testing was offered in 5 organizations headquarters (AA, LC, LM, LT, PL), 4 public places (AR, SM), 3 schools (SM), 2 gay venues (MM), 1 university (VM), 1 hospital (IS). The initiatives were directed to the general population (AR, SM, IS, LC, LT), LGBT people (MM, LM, AA, PL), youth (LM, VM) and sex workers (LT). A total number of 866 HIV tests were performed: they correspond to a median of 5.2 tests per hour.

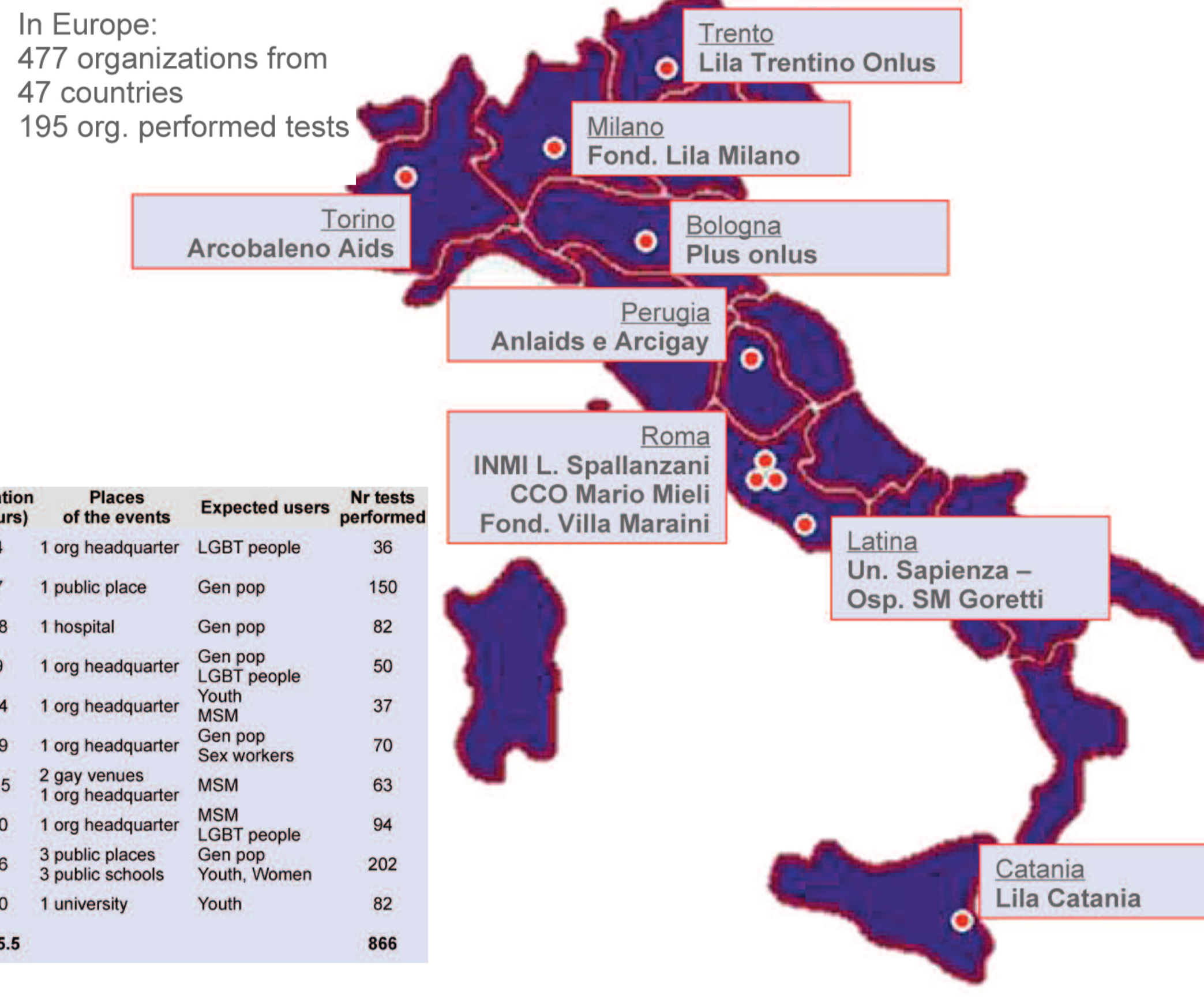


Table with 7 columns: ORGANIZATION, Dates of the events, Duration (days), Duration (hours), Places of the events, Expected users, Nr tests performed. Lists 9 organizations and their respective testing details.

Users' Characteristics

The users were mostly men (60.5%, range 39.0%-88.9%), aged 20-29 (46.1%, range 32.9%-71.9%) or 30-39 (26.1%, range 13.4%-39.0%); more than a half

was heterosexual (61.1%, range 22.2%-100.0%) and one third MSM (25.7%, range 0.0%-79.4%); nine out of ten were Italian (89.3%, range 65.7%-100.0%), some

from other UE countries (3.8%, range 0.0%-14.3%) and some from extra-UE countries (6.1%, range 0.0%-20.0%). 38.0% of them was occupied, 30.8% students.

Age

Table with 7 columns: AGE (<20, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, ≥50, N/D, TOTAL). Shows the distribution of users by age group across all organizations.

Gender

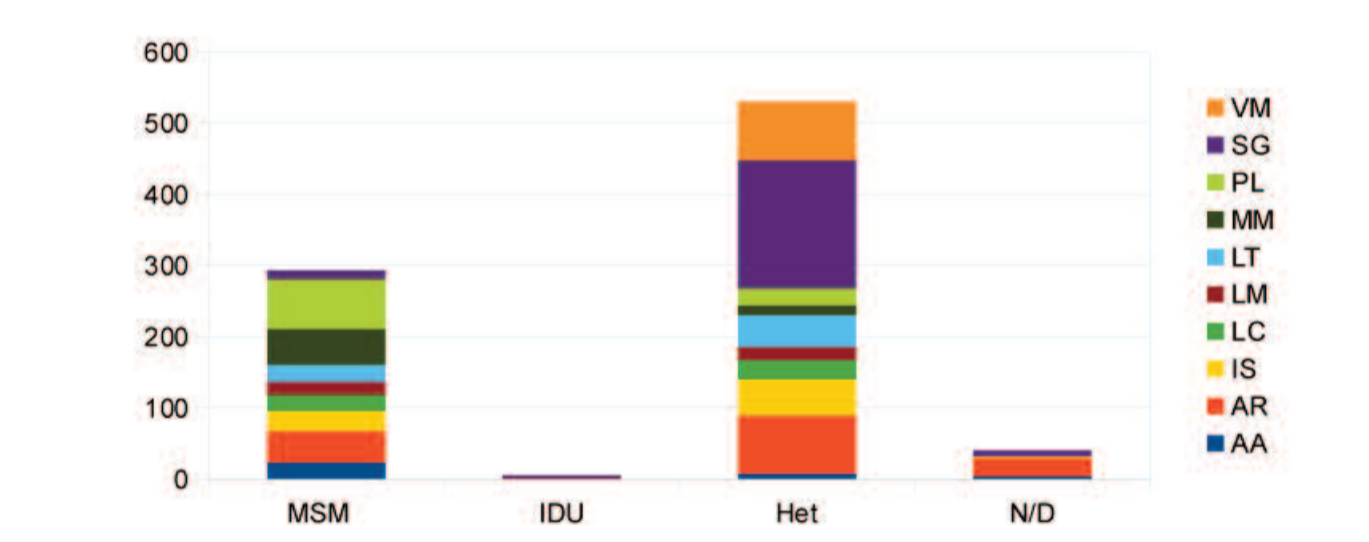
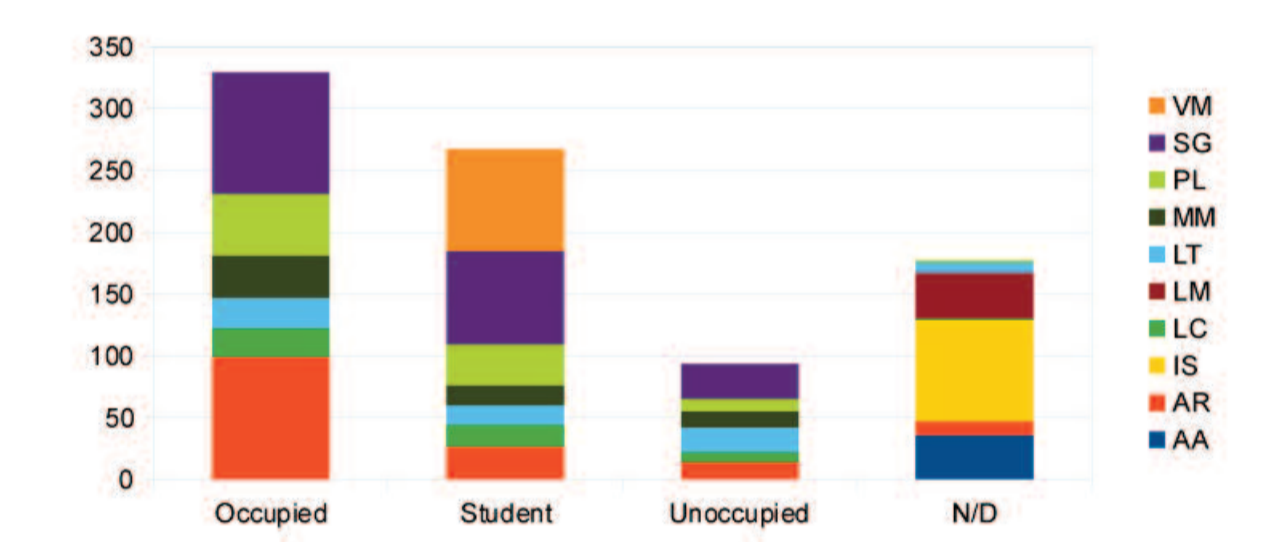
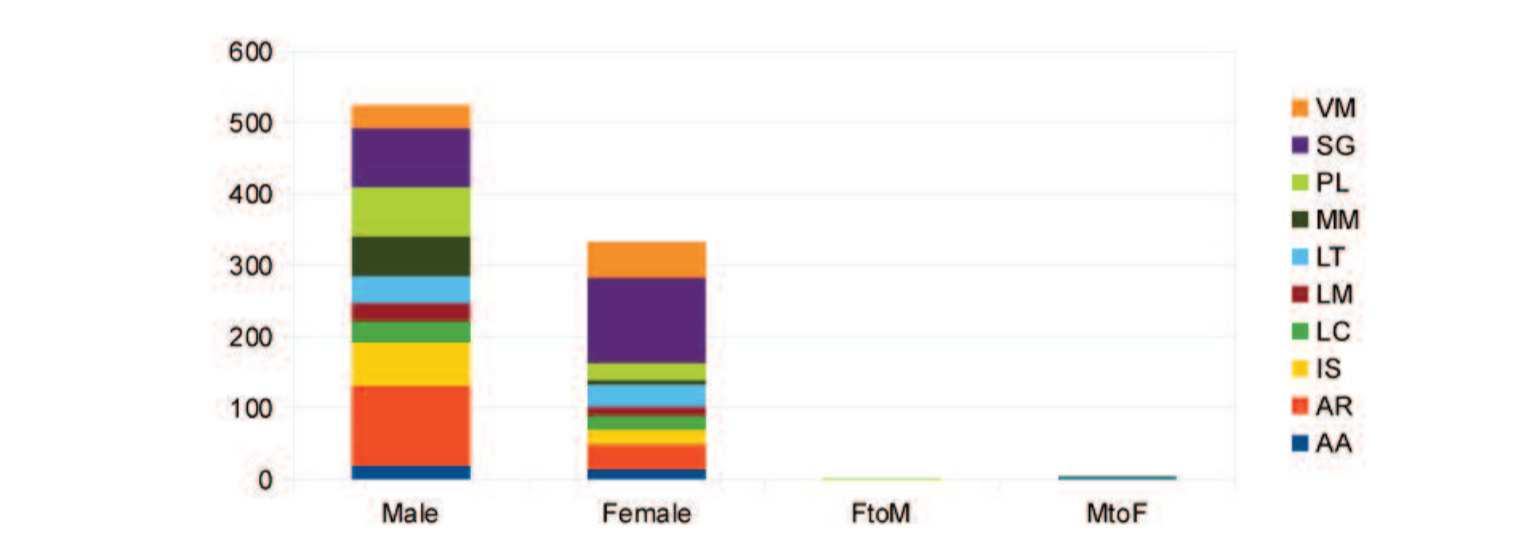
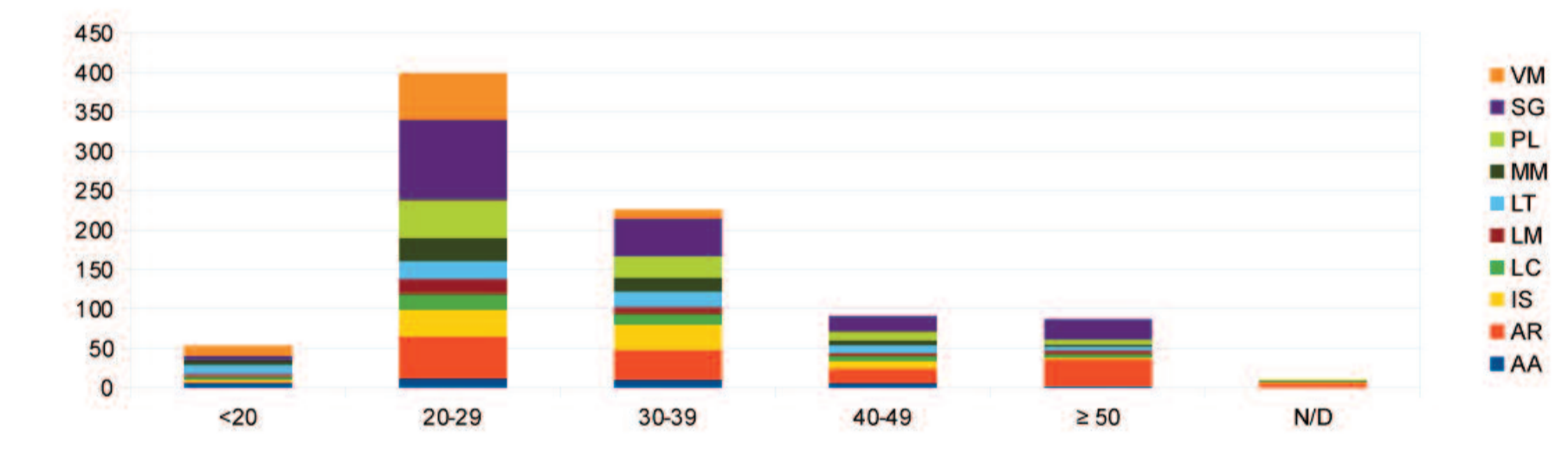
Table with 6 columns: GENDER (Male, Female, FtM, MtF, N/D, Total). Shows the distribution of users by gender across all organizations.

Occupation

Table with 5 columns: OCCUPATION (Occupied, Student, Unoccupied, N/D, Total). Shows the distribution of users by occupation across all organizations.

HIV Risk

Table with 5 columns: HIV RISK (MSM, IDU, Het, N/D, Total). Shows the distribution of users by HIV risk factor across all organizations.



Testing Behaviour

One half of the users (50.3%, range 24.3%-82.9%) never had an HIV test before; among those who were asked about it (n=598), 27.2% (range 0.0%-99.0%) said this was their first rapid test.

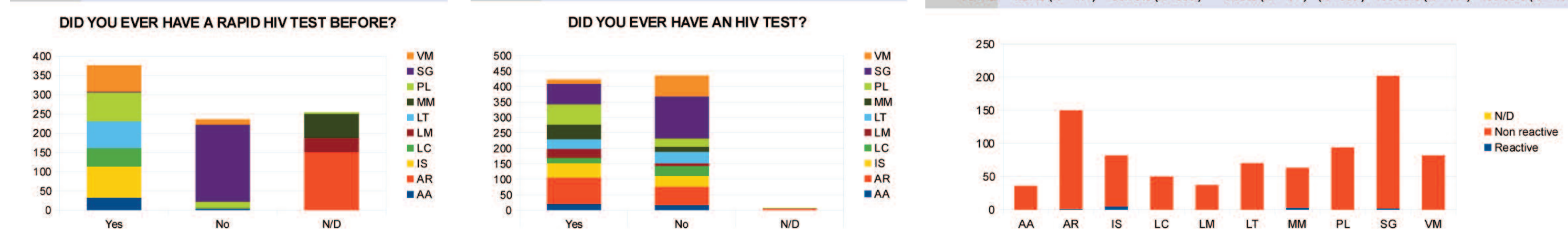
Testing Results

Overall 11 people (1.3%, range 0.0%-6.1%) had a reactive result. All of them received a positive result from the confirmation essays and all of them were linked to care.

Conclusions

- The events were seen as useful and successful from all the organizations; all of them wish to replicate similar initiatives in the future; in some cases they want to establish a more continuous HIV testing service.
• The number of users shows that it was considered useful from the public too.
• The European HIV Testing Week in Italy was also another good opportunity to implement HIV prevention and counseling services in unusual contexts.
• The use of rapid tests confirms to be an opportunity to give information and test in a single session, both to repeated testers and to those who never tested before.
• A more targeted audience could contribute to a higher proportion of reactive results.
• A more coordinated effort will be needed in future similar events to get better quality data and to better focus on the most important objectives.

Tables showing testing behavior and results by organization. Includes 'DID YOU EVER HAVE A RAPID HIV TEST BEFORE?' and 'DID YOU EVER HAVE AN HIV TEST?' tables.



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