

21-28
 NOVEMBER
 EUROPEAN
 HIV
 TESTING
 WEEK
 2014
 TALK HIV.TEST HIV.

Expansion of HIV Testing

The 2014 European HIV testing week

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OBJECTIVES

Around one third of the estimated 2.2 million people living with HIV in Europe are unaware of their HIV status and approximately half of those diagnosed are diagnosed late (CD4 < 350 cells/μl).⁽¹⁾

The purpose of the European HIV testing week (ETW) was to engage with organisations and networks to support dialogue and promote HIV testing throughout the European Region. The project was developed and coordinated under the HIV in Europe Initiative by a working group covering a cross-section of European HIV organisations and NGOs.

METHODS

ETW took place from 21-28 November 2014. The strategy was to include civil society, healthcare professionals, governmental and other policy organisations. The dedicated website (www.testingweek.eu) was the hub for interested organisations to sign up, obtain information and download materials to support the implementation of activities. Materials included a logo, a dossier of evidence for HIV testing strategies, and six toolkits providing practical guidance on implementing and evaluation of activities. Materials were available in key European languages or were translated on demand. The ETW was evaluated by electronic survey in REDCap.

1. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO Regional Office for Europe. HIV/AIDS surveillance in Europe 2013.

www.hivtestingweek.eu
www.hiveurope.eu

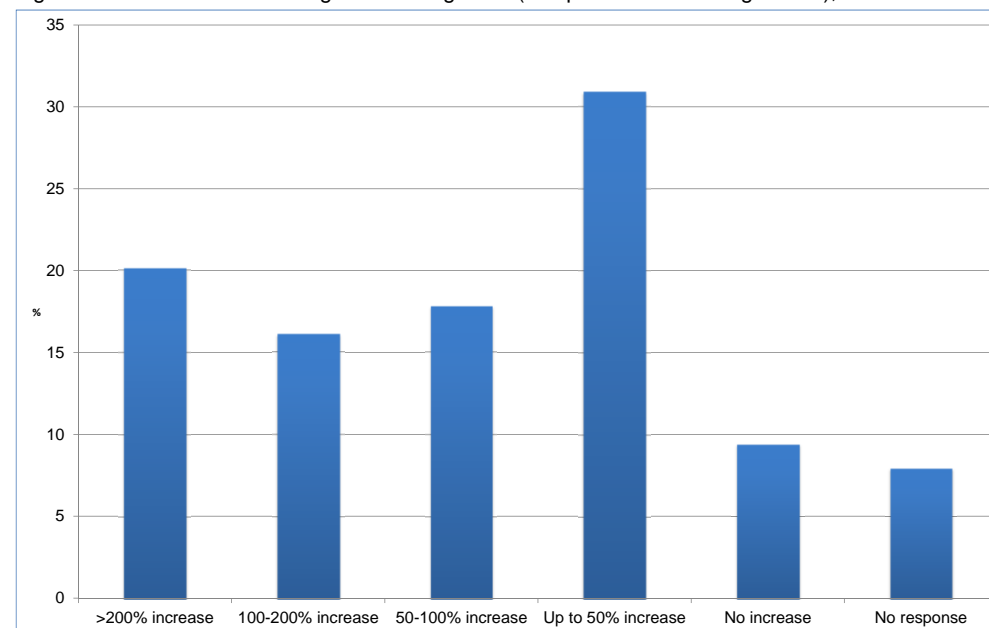
2014 European Testing Week team from Croatia



2014 EHTW poster from Belarus



Figure 1: Increase in HIV testing rates during ETW (compared to an average week), N=139



RESULTS

By 25 November 2014, 709 organisations from 49 countries had signed up and pledged to undertake some kind of activity during ETW and 24% completed the survey.

63% of respondents were from NGOs/CSOs, 20% were healthcare professionals/hospitals/clinics, 11% were governmental (national/regional) and other policy organisations and 7% 'other'. The most frequently targeted population groups were MSM (61%), general population (58%), youth (34%) and sex workers (34%). HIV testing activities (79%) and awareness-raising (77%) were most frequent. 20% of the organisations performing HIV testing reported a 200% increase or more in HIV testing during ETW compared to an average week (16%: 100-200% and 18%: 50-100%) (**Figure 1**). 40% of organisations performing HIV testing found new HIV cases. Examples reported by participants include using Grindr (an MSM social networking site) to increase awareness of testing options, testing inside a sauna, and outreach testing in bars and clubs offering HIV-test results to be sent home. Several informed that they would carry forward these new experiences after the ETW.

CONCLUSIONS

The European testing week has gathered momentum with 709 organisations signed up in 2014 compared with 477 in 2013. The ETW provides a unique opportunity for organisations across Europe to unite to share resources and lessons learnt and increase HIV testing and introduce novel ways to test persons most at risk of HIV infection. In 2015 the European Testing week will expand to also include testing of hepatitis B and C.