

Introduction

- In Portugal, trends show that new diagnoses have declined, and the 90-90-90 goals were achieved in 2017¹
- Despite this scenario, Portugal exhibits one of the highest rates of new HIV/AIDS diagnoses among European countries and concerning rates of late diagnosis.
- Late diagnosis means a higher number of AIDS-related deaths, detectable viral load, increasing the likelihood of transmitting HIV to others.
- Testing constitutes an important prevention strategy, therefore merits analysis for further improvement of services.

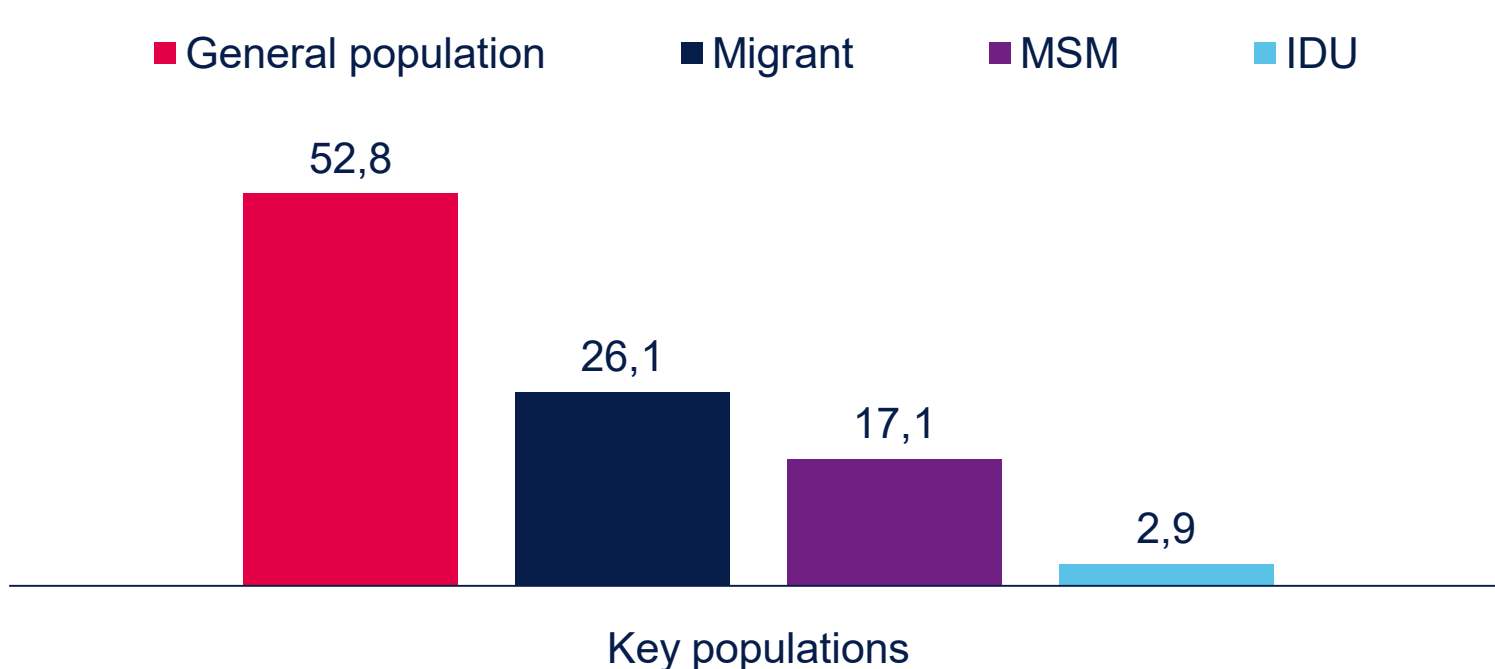
Methods

- Observational, descriptive study in Abraço's screening site in Lisbon
 - Abraço is a Portuguese NGO that has five screening sites nationwide,
 - HIV, HCV, HBV, syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia tests are performed.
 - After counseling and screening, participants were invited to answer an anonymous self-administered questionnaire.
 - Data was analyzed using the statistical package for Social Science (SPSS).

Participants

- To be eligible in this study, participants must be 18 years or older, attended the Abraço's screening site in Lisbon, during 2019, and provide informed consent.
- Sociodemographic, screening history, sexual practices, and risk perception to HIV infection were assessed.
- 1943 participants went to Abraço's screening site in Lisbon, in 2019
 - 61.8% were men, 38.1% woman and 0.1% transgender;
 - mean of 31 years
 - 38% had high school level educational
 - 81.2% lived in Lisbon
 - 66.1% had Portuguese nationality
 - Regarding key populations 52.8% general population, 26.1% migrants, 17.1% HSH and 2.9% IDU.

Figure 1. Representativity of key populations (percentage)



Acknowledgments

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Results and Discussion

- Upon screening we observed
 - 34 cases of reactive for HIV (1.7%);
 - 19 cases of syphilis (1%);
 - 19 cases of chlamydia (1%);
 - 7 cases of reactive for HBV (0.4%);
 - 2 cases of gonorrhea (0.1%).
- Our study shows that
 - the foremost reasons to do the screening were curiosity (65.2%)
 - for 33% was the first-time testing for HIV.
 - The main reason for not using condoms was "regular partner" (31.2%)
 - Low Risk for HIV Perception: mean of 4 (scale ranging from 0 "no Risk" and 10 "extreme Risk").
 - 22% of the cases of reactive for HIV never had been tested.
- Several studies corroborate the evidence that HIV risk perception and pro-testing attitudes were consistently associated with HIV testing^{2,3}.
- Moreover, Portugal shows that the cases of heterosexual transmission prevail and the highest proportion of undiagnosed infections was found to be among heterosexual males. Heterosexuals men may not be considered at increased risk and may be at a disadvantage in terms of knowledge⁴.
- Context-specific studies to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of various interventions proposed in the literature to address barrier to HIV testing are needed..

Conclusions

- The number of undiagnosed cases in Portugal remains a concern, highlighting the need for more effective and innovative prevention and early diagnosis strategies.
- Efforts must be made to address the need for public awareness about HIV risk and benefits of testing for HIV.
- Abraço's testing site in Lisbon seems to be able to address the general population and be an active agent in HIV prevention and tailor education materials to reach different populations.

References

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