

EDMA Key Messages on HIV-AIDs

Early diagnosis + early treatment = reduced HIV transmission

- In Western Europe (excluding the United Kingdom), ***the number of annual reported new HIV diagnoses almost tripled between 1999 and 2005***, from 7,497 to 19,476; and it declined significantly in 2006, to 16,316 cases. The annual number of newly diagnosed HIV infections has more than doubled in the United Kingdom, from 4,152 in 2,001 to 8,925 in 2006 ⁽¹⁾.
- ***A relative lack of progress in preventing sexual transmission of HIV through heterosexual contact exists and this must be changed.***
- Heterosexually acquired HIV infections accounted for the largest proportion (42%) of new HIV diagnoses in **Western Europe** in 2006.. A little under one third (29%) of newly diagnosed HIV infections were attributable to unsafe sex between men, and only 6% to injecting drug use ⁽¹⁾.
- About three quarters of heterosexually acquired HIV infections were ***among immigrants and migrants.*** ⁽³⁾
- Among 8,916 individuals who were diagnosed with AIDS in Western Europe in 2002, ***55% discovered their seropositivity only 6 months or less before developing AIDS*** ⁽⁴⁾
- ***About one third of persons with HIV in the UK do not know that they have been infected.*** ⁽⁵⁾ In the EU, the proportion of undiagnosed HIV infections is estimated to be as high as 30%. ⁽⁴⁾
- ***Prevention strategy based on universal testing has been highly effective, e.g. in systematic blood donation screening pregnancy and paediatric screening, and should be extended.***
- As treatment becomes more widespread, ***transmission of HIV strains resistant, to antiretroviral drugs might increase.***

In the US, ***the CDC has revised the recommendations for HIV testing***: the objectives are ***to increase HIV screening*** of all patients aged 13-64, including pregnant women, persons attending STD clinics, people at risk for HIV, in health-care settings; ***to foster earlier detection of HIV infection***; and ***to identify and counsel persons with unrecognized HIV infection.*** ⁽⁶⁾

Based on the above observations, it may be possible to identify **the main objectives of a strategy to increase (earlier) detection of HIV infected persons in Europe:**

- Reiterate the recommendations for ***targeted testing*** on the basis of risk behaviours, preconception care and injecting drug users.
- ***Improve access to routine HIV testing of migrants*** from countries with generalized HIV epidemic, since most of these HIV infections have been demonstrated to be acquired in their country of origin and diagnosed only when already symptomatic or during pregnancy.
- ***Identify and introduce routine targeted testing of new subgroups of high risk individuals***, like young people with multiple sex partners or people with other infectious diseases like Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Tuberculosis, and hepatitis C.

The added value for the patients of adopting such testing policies would be obvious as **"earlier identification through screening would lengthen life by 1.5 years for a person with HIV infection"**.⁽⁷⁾

Various studies demonstrate that voluntary **HIV screening is cost-effective**, even in healthcare settings in which HIV prevalence is low.^{(7) (8) (9)}

References:

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4. **The changing face of the HIV epidemic in Western Europe: what are the implications for public health policies?** Lancet 2004;364:83-94
5. **British Medical Association**, 2006
6. **CDC: Revised Recommendations for HIV Testing of Adults, Adolescents, and Pregnant Women in Health-Care Settings**, MMWR September 22, 2006 / 55(RR14);1-17
7. Sanders et al. **Cost-effectiveness of screening for HIV in the era of highly active antiretroviral therapy.** (N Engl J Med 2005; 352:570—85)
8. Walensky RP et al **"Routine human Immunodeficiency virus testing: an economic evaluation of current guidelines"** (Am J Med 2005;118:292-300)
9. Paltiel AD et al **"Expanded screening for HIV in the United States-an analysis of cost-effectiveness"** (New Engl J Med 2005; 352: 586-595)

This paper has been prepared by the **EDMA Value of IVDs Task Force**.

EDMA, the European Diagnostic Manufacturers Association, is the voice of the In Vitro diagnostic industry active in Europe. EDMA membership brings together National Associations and the major companies, representing in total more than 500 companies (or over 700 legal entities) engaged in the research, development, manufacture or distribution of IVD products. EDMA cooperates with other European and international trade associations as well as with scientific societies and patients organisations, to make a real difference in health and life quality.

In Vitro Diagnostics are the tests performed on a biological sample to make diagnose or rule out a disease. They are used for screening for disease and for monitoring therapy and to ensure the safety of the blood used in transfusions. About 64% of the information held on the patient record comes from diagnostic tests. IVDs cover a wide range from sophisticated technologies run in clinical laboratories to simple self-tests such as for pregnancy.