Acceptability of Rapid HIV Diagnosis Technology among Primary Health Care Practitioners in Spain


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Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament de Salut
Background

- In Spain in 2009, 2264 new HIV diagnoses were reported, an incidence of 79.3 per million inhabitants per year (Centro Nacional de Epidemiología, 2010).

- In 2009, 50.2% of all new diagnoses were late presenters (defined as CD4 count < 350 cells/µL) and 30.4% of people with a new diagnosis of HIV had advanced disease (defined as CD4 count < 200 cells/µL) (Secretaría del Plan Nacional sobre el Sida & Centro Nacional de Epidemiología, 2011).

- Delayed diagnosis is associated with higher morbidity and mortality (Aldaz et al., 2007).

- Early diagnosis of HIV infection allows the modification of risk behaviours in order to reduce onward transmission. Some studies estimate that 54% of new infections can be attributed to those with undiagnosed HIV infection (Marks, Crepaz, & Janssen, 2006).
Background

- General Practitioners (GP), as a first point of contact with health care services, could play a significant role in the early diagnosis and prevention of HIV.

- In Spanish Primary Care centres, the percentage of new diagnoses with recent HIV infection identified is higher than in other facilities. (Romero et al., 2011)

- Identifying patients at risk of infection and offering them counselling and testing for HIV is one of the most important contributions to be made by GPs. Every consultation is an opportunity to offer counselling and testing and to diagnose HIV infection early. Despite this, several studies have shown that GPs frequently miss testing opportunities (Burns et al., 2008; Read et al., 2005).
Background

• Previous studies have demonstrated that, in Spain, rapid tests are acceptable to users of alternative testing centres which offer a free, anonymous and confidential service (de la Fuente et al., 2009; Fernàndez-Lopez et al., 2010).

• These tests are currently available in only a handful of primary care clinics in Spain.

• The availability of rapid HIV testing in GP consulting rooms could increase the number of HIV tests performed:
  – Facilitating their implementation
  – Increasing their acceptance
  – Allowing the patient to know the preliminary result even if he or she does not return to collect the confirmation.
Objectives

1. To describe the acceptability to General Practitioners of offering rapid HIV testing in their clinics

2. To identify the perceived needs of GPs and barriers to the implementation of HIV testing in primary care.
Methods

- Cross-sectional descriptive study using a convenience sample of GP members of two Spanish scientific medical societies for family and community medicine (semFYC y CAMFiC).

- A self-administered and anonymous online questionnaire was developed.

- The following information was collected: socio-demographic data, knowledge and attitudes to rapid HIV testing, barriers to test uptake, type of test considered feasible, patient groups who would be offered testing and the health professional best placed to carry out testing.

- The questionnaire was piloted among 34 members of both societies.

- At the start of the study all members were sent a link to the questionnaire by email and a reminder a month before the study closed. The questionnaire was available on both society’s websites.

- Data were collected between the 15th June and the 31st October 2010.
# Results

Table 1. Characteristics of GPs participating in the survey. Spain, 2010. N:1308

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>(IQR: 33.0-47.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time since qualifying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>between 5 and 10 years</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>24.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>69.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist in family and community medicine (General Practitioner)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1188</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure/Not answered</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace setting</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-urban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
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<td>Autonomous Region</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Andalusia</td>
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<td>Aragon</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canary Islands</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantabria</td>
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<td>Castilla and Leon</td>
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<td>Catalonia</td>
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<td>Ceuta and Melilla</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.8</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</table>

IQR: Inter-quartile range
Results


- 70.4% were aware of the existence of rapid HIV tests but were unaware of how to use them.
- 12.9% were unaware of the existence of rapid HIV tests.
- 13.0% knew how rapid tests worked.
- 3.4% had used rapid HIV tests.
Most participants (79.8%) strongly agreed with the statement “I would be willing to offer rapid HIV testing in my practice”.

74.7% of participants strongly agreed with the statement “I would be confident in the results obtained by rapid HIV testing”.

Kind of rapid HIV test Identified as Most Feasible and Acceptable in Their Practice by GPs Participating in the Survey. Spain, 2010.

N:1308

- Both: 53%
- Oral fluid testing: 28%
- Fingerprick blood spot testing: 19%
Results

Results

Patient Groups Who Would Be Offered Rapid HIV Testing by GPs Participating in the Survey.
Spain, 2010. N:1308

- All patients: 4.4%
- All patients at risk: 76.1%
- Patients who expressed anxiety about their results: 59.2%
- Patients considered unlikely to return for results: 51.6%
- Patients who refused venepuncture: 42.4%
Results

Time which GPs Participating in the Survey felt should be devoted to Pre-test Counselling. Spain, 2010. N:1308

- Less than 15 minutes: 51%
- 15 to 30 minutes: 45%
- 30 minutes to 1 hour: 4%
Results


Who should do the test?

- Physicians and Nurses/Midwives: 51.2%
- Nurses/Midwives exclusively: 38.2%
- Physicians exclusively: 10.6%

Health Professional Identified as Best Placed to Carry Out Counselling by GPs Participating in the Survey. Spain, 2010. N:1308

Who should counsel?

- Physicians and Nurses/Midwives: 71.5%
- Nurses/Midwives exclusively: 7.7%
- Physicians exclusively: 20.9%
Conclusions

• Most of the GPs are aware of the existence of rapid HIV tests but were unaware of how to use them.

• The introduction of rapid HIV testing to primary care would be widely accepted in our settings.

• GPs considered that rapid testing (either oral fluid or blood) could be feasibly implemented in their clinics by either medical or nursing staff.

• The two key barriers to HIV testing identified were: lack of time and training.

• Pilot studies are necessary to estimate the feasibility of rapid HIV testing in these settings.

PO2/01. Pilot study to analyze the feasibility of introducing rapid HIV testing in primary health care.
Laura Fernàndez (1,2), Cristina Agustí (1,2), Jordi Casabona (1,2) and Rapid testing in Primary Health Care Working Group.
Recommendations

Based on the identified barriers, the main aspects that would facilitate the implementation of rapid HIV tests in the primary care context:

- A simplification of counselling to reduce the time taken.
- Further training on the use of rapid tests.
- Standardisation of behavioural and clinical criteria for determining who should be offered HIV testing.
- To include both medical and nursing staff and to establish task distribution according the organization of each centre.
Study group

- **CEEISCAT:**
  - Cristina Agustí
  - Laura Fernàndez
  - Alexandra Montoliu
  - Jordi Casabona

- **Scientific Medical Societies (CAMFiC and semFYC):**
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