

A non-healthcare HIV test clinic improving testing and linkage to care

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Introduction:

- In Sweden, migrants are overrepresented among those newly diagnosed with HIV, however The Swedish Institute for Communicable Diseases estimated in 2009 that only 38 % of migrants seeking asylum were actively offered an HIV test.
- This suggests the need for further efforts, beyond regular health care, to reach this population as well as individuals with high-risk sexual behaviour not seeking care.

Objectives:

The project explored an alternative approach to target difficult-to-reach groups and provided linkage to care. Target groups have been migrants, other vulnerable groups and individuals with an HIV-related health anxiety.

Method:

An HIV test clinic was established in down-town Stockholm offering quick-test on a free-of-charge basis in a non-healthcare setting.

- Availability:
 - Phone counselling Mo – Fri,
 - Pre-booked testing Mo, Tue, Thu,
 - Drop-in testing Wed pm (1500 -1800)
- Test Method: Alere Determine HIV-1/2 Ag/Ab Combo.
- In addition, clinic staff have visited a care facility for undocumented refugees to offer tests.
- Referral of individuals testing positive to an outpatient HIV-clinic for care.
- Project period: 04NOV2009 – 08DEC2011.

Results:

Demography & outcome: 1764 tests 04NOV2009 – 08DEC2011, n (%)

Male	1106 (63)
Female	658 (37)
Born in Sweden	1307 (74)
Born abroad	457 (26)
Mean age	34

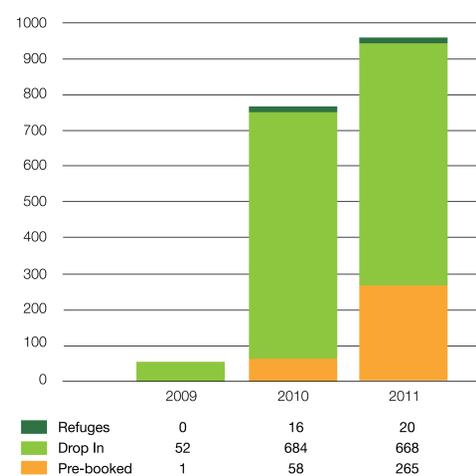
Particular groups:

MSM	270 (15)
Transsexual men	3 (0.2)
WSW	14 (0.8)
IVDU	8 (0.5)
Undocumented refugees	36 (2)
Total positive tests	12 (0.7)
Time from + test to outpatient clinic visit	Same day – 2 days

Reasons for seeking a test

Routine “wish to know status”	47 %
New relation	16 %
HIV-related anxiety	6 %
Own infidelity	6 %
General worry	5 %
Worry due to symptoms	4 %
Contact tracing	3 %
Condom failure	3 %
Unprotected sex in endemic region	3 %
Sex with HIV + individual	2 %
Rape/sexual assault	1 %

Visit types



Reasons for selecting this clinic

Quick test	61 %
Confidence in Noaks Ark/Venhälsan	12 %
Easy access/opening hours	5 %
Recommended	4 %
Not questioning/denying testing	1 %

Conclusions:

A free-of-charge test clinic, with drop-in possibility, in a non-healthcare setting using the quick-test method has attracted 1764 individuals to take a test and 12 persons have been diagnosed with HIV over ~ 2 years. The predominant visit type was drop-in testing and the positive testers could be provided rapid linkage to care. Among difficult-to-reach groups, migrants constituted approx ¼ of testers while IVDU's have not been reached. The most common reason for testing was “wish to know status” (47%) and the leading cause for choosing this setting was the quick-test (61%). The outcome warrants further development of the concept.

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