

IMPACT IN HIV CARE CONTINUUM OF A TAILORED COMMUNITY-BASED HIV VOLUNTARY COUNSELING TESTING CENTRE FOR MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN: CHECKPOINTLX, LISBON, PORTUGAL



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BACKGROUND

Portugal estimates that 20 to 25 000 people living with HIV are undiagnosed and in high prevalence settings, such as Lisbon, men stay behind with late or delayed linkage to prevention, care and support. WHO recommended that countries with HIV concentrated epidemics have to prioritize and focus on tailored community-based HIV testing sites (HTS) approaches for those who remain undiagnosed and at greatest ongoing risk for HIV infection (WHO 2015).

In 2011, GAT opened the first community-based HTS in Portugal, tailored to men who have sex with men (MSM) (WHO 2016).

DESCRIPTION

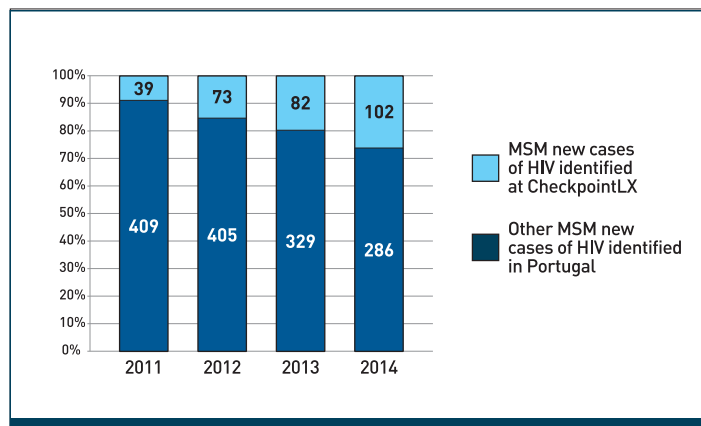
CheckpointLX is a peer-led, community-based, voluntary counselling, testing and linkage to care centre tailored for MSM. Provides condoms and lube, tailored counselling, HIV, syphilis, hepatitis C virus (HCV), gonorrhoea, chlamydia, human papillomavirus and anal cancer screenings programs, escort those with HIV/HCV reactive test to hospital for care and gives access to web-based anonymous partner notification.

This centre generates surveillance data through an open cohort, a joint GAT and University of Oporto Public Health Institute (ISPUP)/ Epidemiology Unit (EPIUnit) collaboration (Meireles et al. 2015).

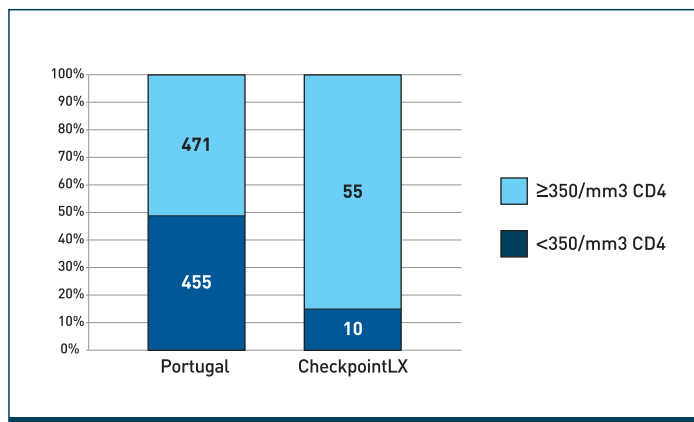
LESSONS LEARNED

Between April 2011 and December 2015, 10002 HIV tests were performed in MSM, 4,1% reactive overall. According to official surveillance data (Diniz et al. 2015), per civil year, on national level, CheckpointLX found 8.71% (2011), 15.27% (2012), 19.95% (2013) and 26.29% (2014) of MSM new HIV infections (Graph 1).

Linkage to care was 79.49% (2011), 73.97% (2012), 78.05% (2013), 83.33% (2014) and 74.78% (2015). Overall referred, 2.3% had confirmed primary HIV infection. In 2014, almost 50% of the MSM new cases where late presenters at national level, whilst our data showed only 15% (Graph 2).



Graph 1 - Proportion of new notified cases of MSM living with HIV in Portugal (2011-2014) versus new cases of MSM living with HIV identified at CheckpointLX (2011-2014)



Graph 2 - Proportion of early (≥350/mm3 CD4) and late diagnosis (<350/mm3 CD4) amongst the new cases (2014) of people over 14 years old with available information on CD4 cells count in Portugal versus in CheckpointLX

Between April 2011 and February 2014, 804 HIV negative MSM were followed for a total of 893 person-years. The overall HIV seroconversion was 2.80/100 person-years (95% IC:1.89-4.14) (Lucas et al. 2015).

CONCLUSIONS/NEXT STEPS

CheckpointLX shows to have an increasing impact on MSM HIV early diagnosis and linkage to care on both local and national levels. The replication of this centre in other Portuguese high prevalence settings, such as Oporto, is urgent.

Due to persistent high incidence estimates, new HIV prevention tools rollout are urgent, namely pre-exposure prophylaxis.

This centre has been recognized by ECDC as a new and innovative service developed in Portugal reflecting the communication emphasis on key vulnerable populations and selected by WHO as an example of good practice reflecting the new HTS recommendations.

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