

# Two years analysis of COBATEST data in Ancona Checkpoint and our experience of “tele visita PrEP”

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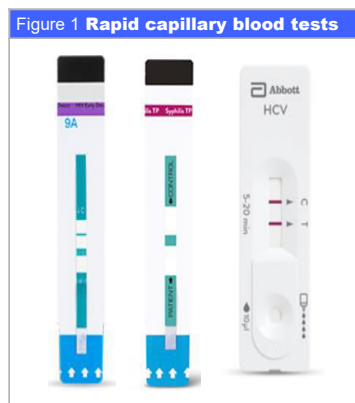
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## Introduction

- The community-based voluntary counselling and testing (CBVCT) centers for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) increased in Italy from 2020.
- The Ancona Checkpoint offered rapid STIs tests, free peer counseling and access to care for all since March 2022.
- In addition, checkpoint offered “tele visita PrEP”, an online appointment to access PrEP with medical doctors of Clinic Immunology in A.O.U. Marche from July 2023.

## Methods

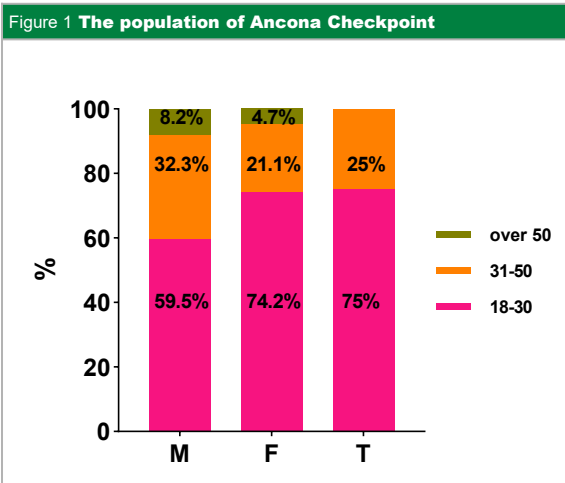
- Rapid capillary blood tests for HIV (Ab and p24 antigen detection), HCV (Ab detection) and Syphilis (Ab detection) were free and anonymous (Figure 1).
- Data were collected from standard COBATEST questionnaires from March 2022 to February 2024.
- Gender, age, sexual orientation and behavior, risk factors, reasons for testing and screening test results were considered for the analysis.



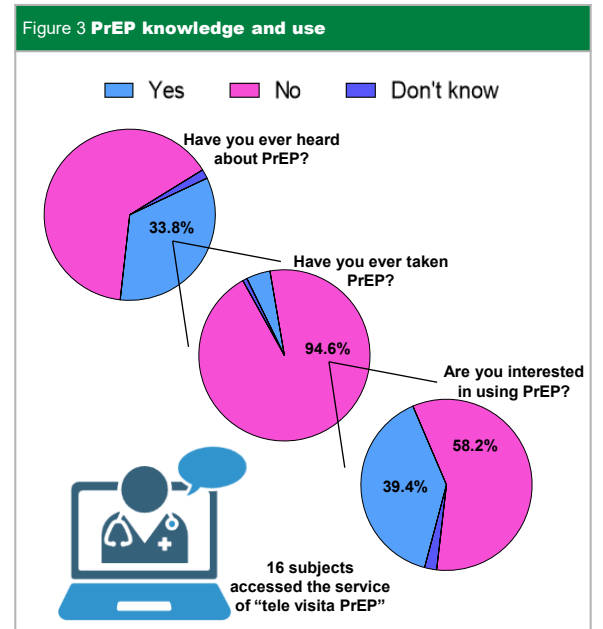
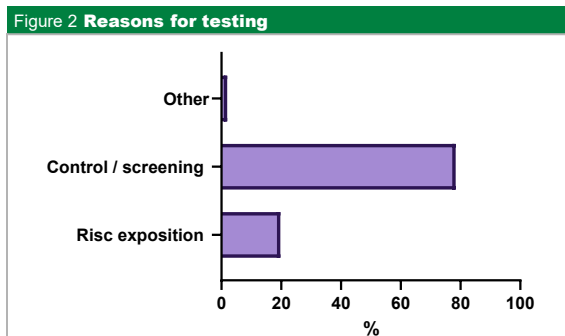
	Yes (%)	No (%)	No answer (%)
Condom use in last sexual relation with penetration	46.8	48.2	5
Received money, drugs, goods or services for sex	2.8	94.2	3.1
STI diagnosed	3.5	93.3	3.2
Drug use	0.22	89.5	10.3

## Results

- During two years of activity, 1375 subjects accessed the service. More than half of the population tested (57.4%) identified as males, 42.1% as females, and 0.5% as transgender. The age of the population is divided as follows: 18-30 65.7%; 31-50 27.6%; 50+ 6.7% (Figure 1). Most of them (86.7%) referred to be Italian.



- Control or screening (78.4%) and risk exposition with unprotected penetrative intercourse (19.7%) were the first and second reasons for testing respectively (Figure 2).
- Interesting 48.2% of all population declared not to use condom in the last penetrative sex (Table 1).
- Regarding the sexual orientation of the population, 15.2% define themselves as homosexual, 6.3% bisexual, 63.2% heterosexual, 15.3% identify with other orientations.
- A small percentage of subjects (33.8%) had knowledge about PrEP, of which 58.2% never consider using it. Only 16 subjects accessed the service of “tele visita PrEP” between July 2023 to March 2024 (Figure 3).



- During these two years 1375 HIV tests were performed of which 0.36% were reactive, 100% with a positive confirmatory test and immediately linked to healthcare system; 1.16% and 0.58% of tests performed were syphilis and HCV reactive respectively.
- Analyzing only the population with a reactive STIs test, 84% identified as males with a mean age of 37. Regarding the risk factors, 64% declared unprotected penetrative sex with MSM in the last 12 month but control or screening was the main reason for testing (70%). 72% of subjects had heard about PrEP of which 80% interested in using.

## Conclusions

- Our results indicated that checkpoint service can be a powerful instrument to provide access to testing, especially for people that have never tested before. Counselling increased awareness of the potential risks especially among young people.
- Efforts should be concentrated in educating people about the tools we now have to prevent HIV transmission such as PrEP and PEP. These two years of testing and counseling in our checkpoint highlighted the great role that this service has in the community in terms of prevention and sexual health education.