

Two and a half years of In- and Out-Hospital counselling and testing activities: two different and comprehensive preventive strategies

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Introduction

- In December 2020, the city of Latina joined the Fast Track Cities network to deal with the heavy impact that COVID-19 pandemic had on preventive care and the rising rate of late HIV diagnosis.
- The infectious disease unit in association with the local LGBT+ organisation joined forces and opened Latina Checkpoint.
- The aim of this work is to talk about the two and a half years experience and what we learned from it.

Methods

- To get tested at Checkpoint an online anonymous appointment can be scheduled.
- We first provide a community-based counselling and then HIV (Ab/p24), HCV(Ab) and Syphilis(Ab) tests.
- Results are given in 15 minutes and uploaded on the COBATEST website.
- In our hospital clinic no scheduled appointment is needed, a phlebotomy is performed, results are available in 3 days, counselling is conducted by ID specialists and all three tests are offered.
- Data were collected with COBATEST export tool and analysed by chi square and student t test.

Results

- Since January 2022, our Checkpoint and hospital have provided 757 and 1067 tests, respectively.
- In this work we only considered the people who came to get tested for the first time, 600 at Checkpoint and 529 in the hospital.
- Population is described in table 1.
- There are no statistically significant differences regarding gender, percentage of overall reported condom use and unprotected vaginal sex.
- No HIV tests resulted reactive at Checkpoint, 15 HIV tests resulted reactive in the hospital.
- People hospital tested are older (median age 34 yo) and seem to have much more riskier sex, for example the 91,9% of MSM did not use condom, the 7,2% of sex related risk was for unprotected sex with PLWH, lastly 15,2% of test resulted positive for an STI.
- People tested at Checkpoint are younger (median age 28 yo), seemingly more conscious about safe sex and probably got tested for HIV before in their life (59,3%).
- Even though 41% of people at Checkpoint know about PrEP, only 2,5% are taking it.
- From 2022 to 2023 there was a 30,9% and 20,5% increase in the number of people coming at checkpoint and at our clinic.
- The majority of people get to know our Checkpoint initiative by internet and social networks (figure 2).

Conclusions

- Our Checkpoint experience highlighted its great role in terms of prevention and linkage to care that this initiative had and will also have in the future.
- It can be predicted an increase of 44% in the number of people getting tested in 2024.
- Differences between people who come at Checkpoint instead of the clinic show us that it is a safe space to get screened and get info about sexual health, proving itself to be a functional place for primary prevention.
- On the other hand hospital is fundamental for secondary prevention with early HIV and STI diagnosis.
- Furthermore, we should put our effort in educating people about the tools we now have to prevent HIV transmission such as PrEP and PEP.
- Improving our Checkpoint activities will help us get closer to the Fast Track Cities goal of ending the HIV epidemic.

	checkpoint		clinic		p value (<0.05)
	n	%	n	%	
total number of people tested	600	100,0%	529	100%	
median age	28 (16-91)		34 (0-94)		<0,0001
female	197	32,8%	187	35,3%	0,4123
male	393	65,5%	336	63,5%	0,4123
transgender women	4	0,7%	1	0,2%	0,3788
non-binary	6	1,0%	0	0,0%	-
injection drug user	3	0,5%	16	3,0%	0,0009
sex worker	7	1,2%	1	0,2%	0,0737
foreign nationality	25	4,2%	-		
condom not used	398	66,3%	353	66,7%	0,8996
msm	191	31,8%	111	21,0%	<0,0001
who don't use condoms	77	40,3%	102	91,9%	<0,0001
reason to get tested					
sex related risk	220	36,7%	333	62,9%	<0,0001
screening	397	66,2%	74	14,0%	<0,0001
accidental exposure	-		110	20,8%	
PrEP known	250	41,7%	-		
on PrEP	15	2,5%	48	9,1%	<0,0001
first hiv test	244	40,7%	315	59,5%	<0,0001
tested before	356	59,3%	214	40,5%	<0,0001
sex exposure	220	100,0%	333	100%	
unprotected vaginal sex	92	41,8%	159	47,7%	0,1704
unprotected anal sex	71	32,3%	137	41,1%	0,0351
unprotected oral sex	62	28,2%	25	7,5%	<0,0001
unprotected sex with sex worker	7	3,2%	12	3,6%	0,7898
unprotected sex with PLWH	1	0,5%	24	7,2%	0,0001
results					
hiv reactive	0	0,0%	15	2,8%	-
syphilis reactive	6	1,0%	41	7,8%	<0,0001
hcv reactive	1	0,2%	8	1,5%	0,0124
other STIs	-		31	5,9%	
increase from '22 to '23		30,91%		20,54%	

how people find our CP

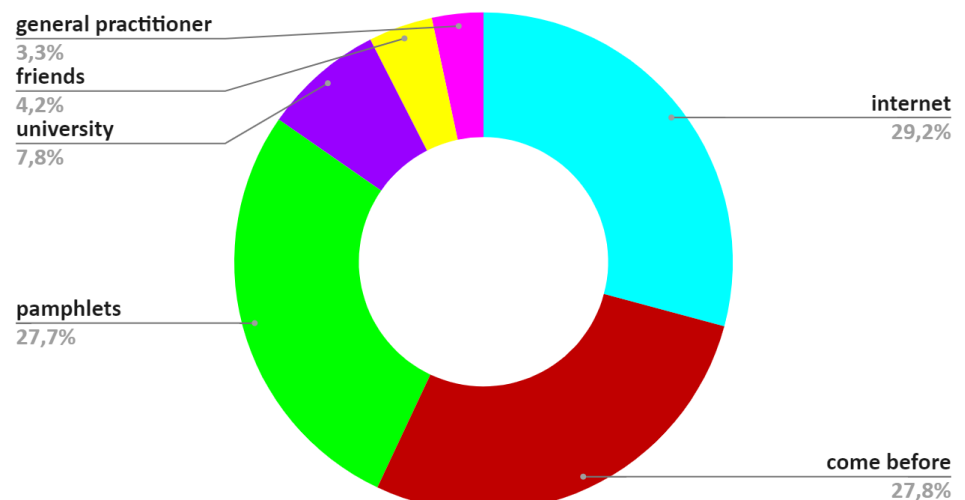


Figure 2. How people get to know our Checkpoint

Number of HIV tests since 2011

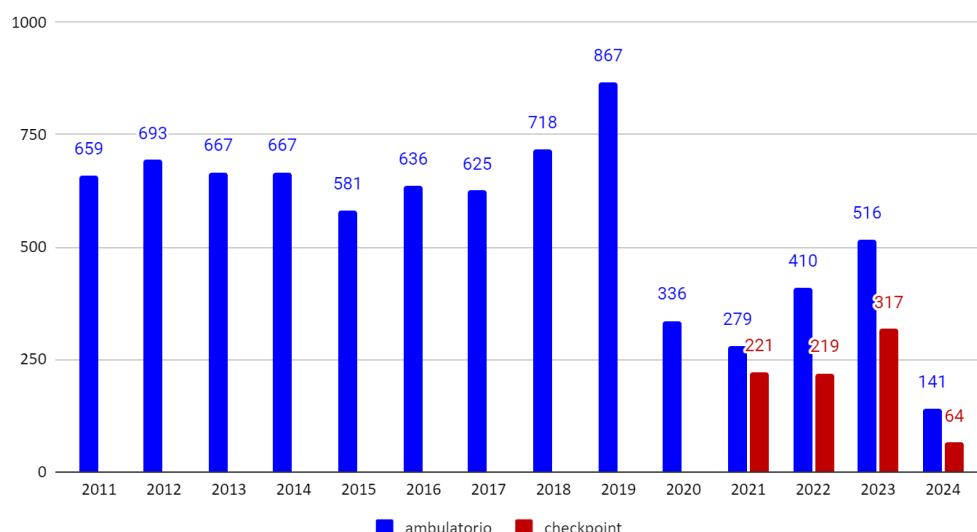


Figure 3. Trend of number of HIV tests taken in our Clinic and in our Checkpoint. It's slowly rising again after COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1. Description of people getting tested at our Checkpoint and Clinic