

Recent infections in new HIV diagnoses: results of the national surveillance system

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Introduction

- Recent HIV infection is defined as an infection acquired in the few months before diagnosis. The aim of this study is to assess the proportion of recent infections among new HIV diagnoses, and factors associated with being recently infected.

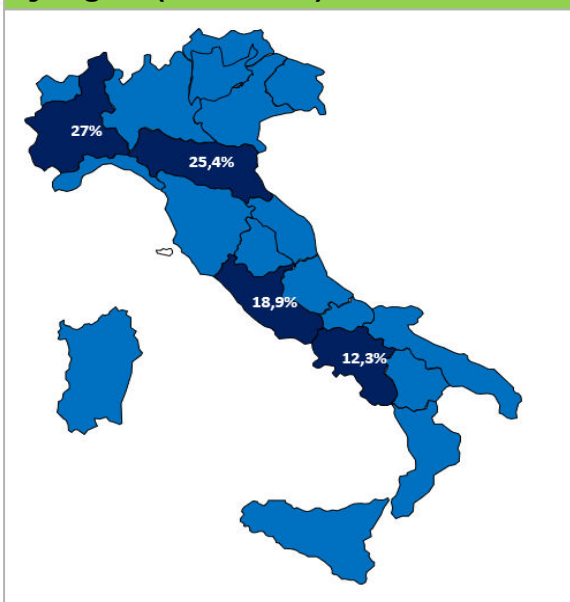
Methods

- We used data from the national HIV surveillance system which collects information from people with a new HIV diagnosis. We defined as "recent" an infection diagnosed within 6 months of HIV acquisition. Date of infection was estimated by either using HIV avidity test, or recent infection algorithm, or presence of acute HIV infection.
- Prevalence of recent infection (RI) and associated factors were evaluated among individuals for whom an estimated date of infection was available.

Results

- From 2012 to 2022, 6,039 (18.0%) new HIV diagnoses were tested for RI, the majority in Piemonte (27.0%), Emilia Romagna (25.4%), Lazio (18.9%) and Campania (12.3%), the remaining regions tested less than 17% (Figure 1). Among tested HIV diagnoses 17% were identified as recent (Figure 2). The annual proportion varied from a minimum of 8.3% in 2017 to a maximum of 27.7%

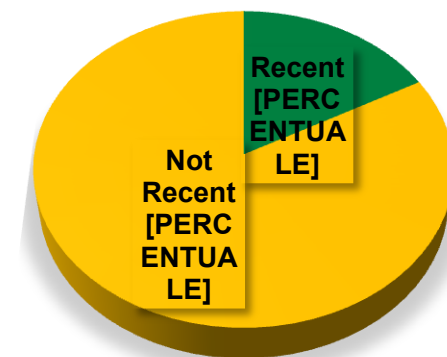
Figure 1 - HIV diagnoses tested for RI by region (2012-2022)



Results of 2

- Compared to individuals with an old infection, those with a RI were significantly younger [37 years (IQR 29-45) vs. 40 years (IQR 31-48)], were more frequently MSM (61.1%), Italians (80.1%), and reporting having had at-risk sexual behavior (34.4%). The lowest proportion of RI was observed among individuals who acquired HIV through heterosexual contact (11.7%), migrants (10.9%), and those who were tested for HIV because of the presence of HIV/AIDS

Figure 2 - Proportion of RI among HIV diagnoses (2012-2022)



Conclusion

- These results show that there is a low early access to HIV test, in particular among people who acquired the infection through heterosexual contact and among migrants. It is also highlighted there is still a high circulation of HIV among young people and MSM.
- Although data on RI may be conditioned by various factors as availability of tests, these results underline the need to promote HIV testing by using new testing strategies (rapid tests, POC tests, community testing, opt-out testing), systematically test new HIV diagnoses for RI, and activate targeted information and awareness campaigns.

References

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