

Evaluation Report: HepHIV2014 Conference Barcelona (5-7 October 2014)

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Overall evaluation

The HepHIV2014 Barcelona conference, the first European conference to bring together the fields of HIV and viral hepatitis, was attended by 250 people. The overall evaluation of the three-day event was very positive, with 84% of the 86 participants evaluating the conference as excellent/good. This is supported by 88% of respondents scoring that the conference met or exceeded their expectations.

Overall comments from individual participants include:

“This was very important meeting... for discussions and forming of policies of hepatitis and HIV.”

“Excellent meeting, well organised and very up-to-date topics”

“Very interesting to combine the HIV and hepatitis fields.”

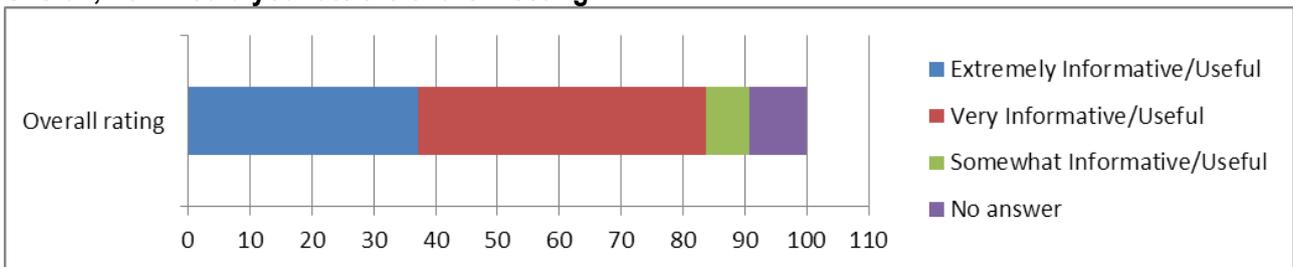
Others, while praising the combined topics of HIV and viral hepatitis, also expressed the desire to have some sessions dedicated solely to HIV or Hepatitis to permit the audience to focus on specific issues.

The brief summaries (short reports) of the previous day's events were considered very useful, and the parallel sessions were generally considered very informative. Participants further noted that the conference covered all the main topics and issues relating to both viral hepatitis and HIV by highlighting themes such as key populations, alternative approaches, affordable pricing, prevention, treatment, and community involvement. Regarding future HepHIV conferences, suggestions included giving more attention to diagnosis and treatment of co-infections in vulnerable groups, having even greater political attention, having more meetings as

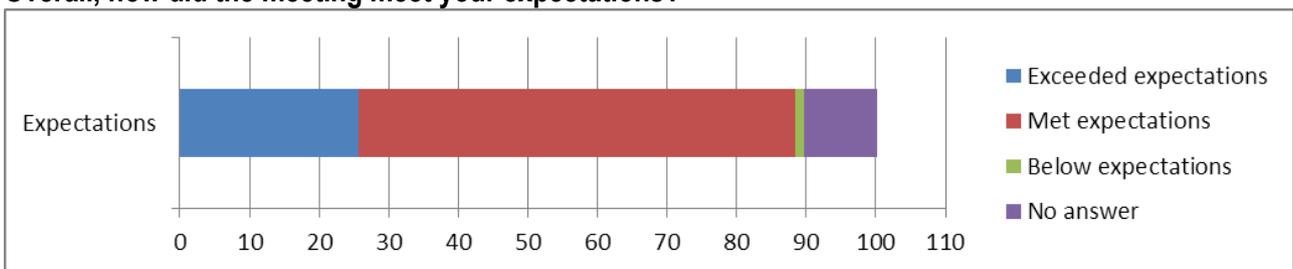
'roundtables' to improve interaction and discussion, and having the perspective from a wider range of countries across Europe.

In this report, all data from the evaluation forms completed by 86 participants is presented. Each section has a graphical overview of the evaluation scores, with blue and red representing good/excellent or extremely/very informative scoring, and green and purple representing being fair/poor or somewhat/not at all informative scoring.

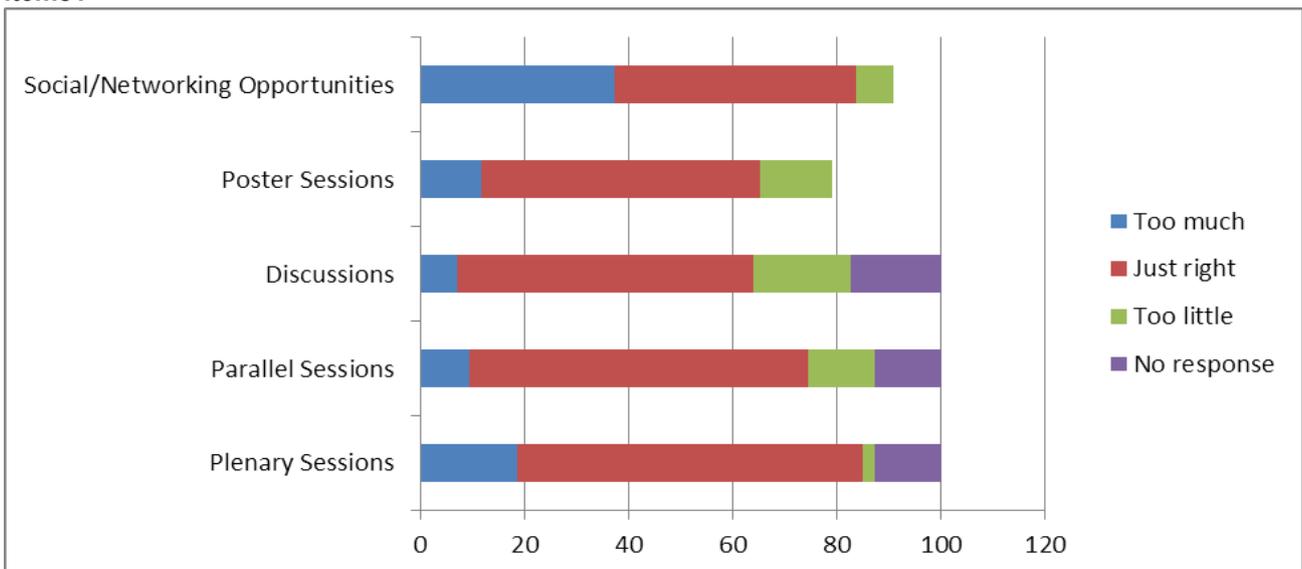
Overall, how would you rate the entire meeting?



Overall, how did the meeting meet your expectations?



How appropriate was the time spent on each of the following agenda items?



Plenary Sessions

Opening Session

The opening session consisted of a number of key note speeches by prominent representatives from leading European viral hepatitis and HIV/AIDS organisations, including the Secretary of Public Health of the Catalan Ministry of Health and the Deputy Director of Health Promotion and Epidemiology. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the WHO Regional Office for Europe outlined lessons learned from the implementation of testing guidelines and the specific challenges in different European regions regarding access to earlier testing, diagnosis, care and treatment. Finally, Luís Mendão, GAT Checkpoint Portugal, gave a patient perspective on HIV and viral hepatitis testing and linkage to care.

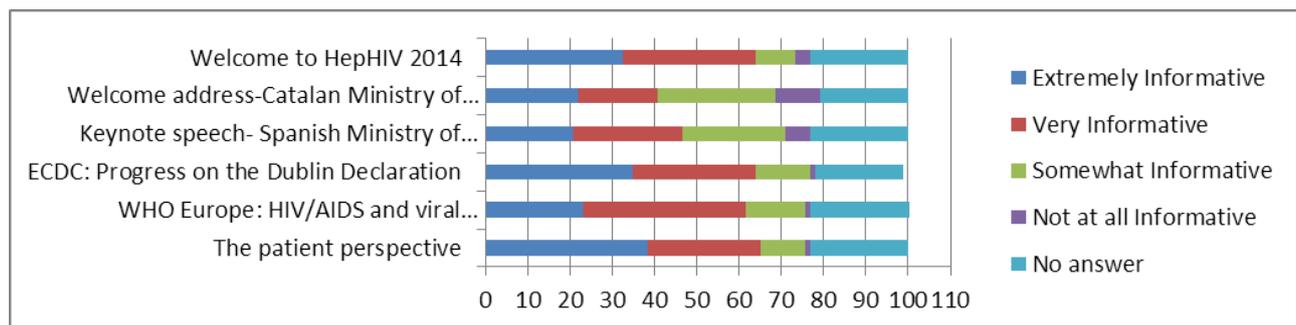
Comments from participants who attended this session included:

‘Objectives and expected outcomes of the conference were presented in a clear, concise and constructive manner’

The Spanish Welcome address and Keynote speech were considered ‘very informative and interesting’;

ECDC & WHO presentations: ‘Very useful and informative’;

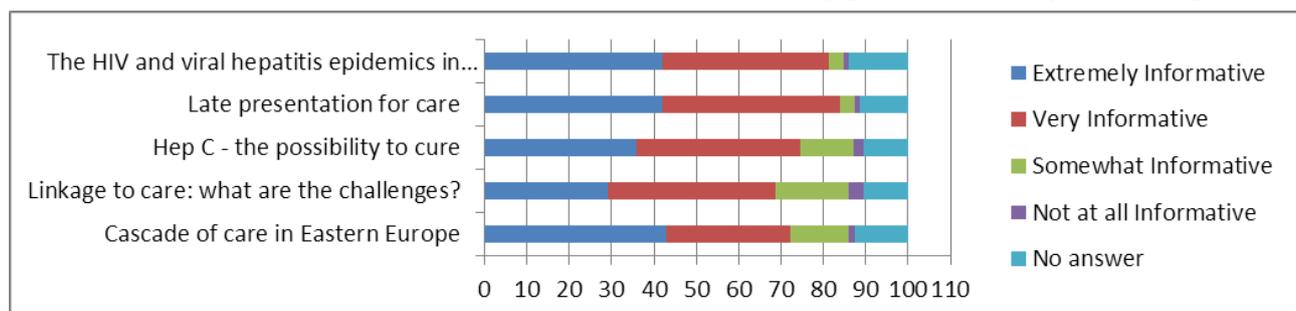
Patient perspective: ‘Inspiring - great perspective’; ‘a very professional and honest talk.’



Plenary 1: What's the status of the continuum of care in HIV and viral hepatitis?

The aim of the session was to set the scene for the conference and look at the two disease areas together, highlighting their similarities and differences. An overview of the situation of the continuum of care in HIV and viral hepatitis was provided, from the infected not yet diagnosed to issues related to linking people into health care systems for treatment. Current challenges were also identified.

Comments from participants who attended this session included ***‘really good’***; ***‘extremely interesting’***



Plenary 2: Public health challenges of earlier diagnosis of HIV and viral hepatitis

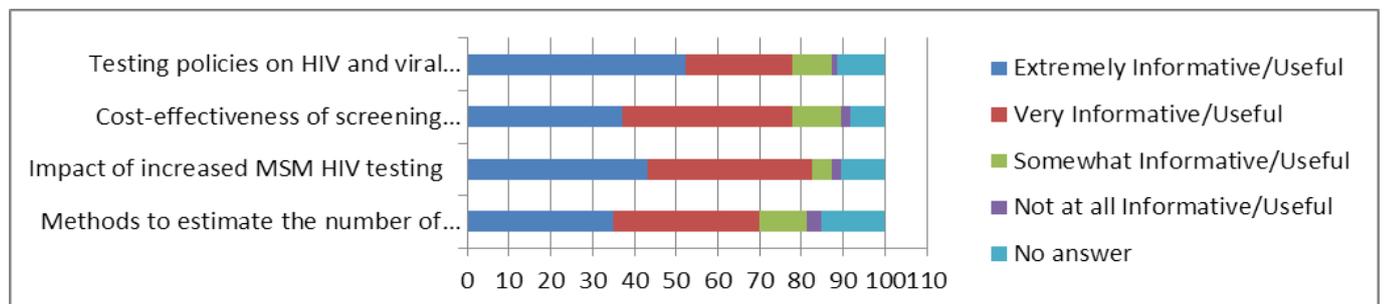
The aim of the session was to investigate the political and public health challenges of earlier diagnosis of people living with HIV and viral hepatitis. The session also highlighted lessons learned from different public health approaches and political leadership, and identified tools needed for effectively tackling the hidden epidemic. The session presented testing policies, methods to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of screening strategies and methods to estimate the number of people living with HIV and/or viral hepatitis.

Comments for this session included:

'Since this is a rare opportunity (for us, coming from the SEE and EE) to discuss these issues in the presence of the activist and community representative, more time for the discussion is needed.'

'Finding the last 20% of undiagnosed may not be cost-effective but needs to be done'

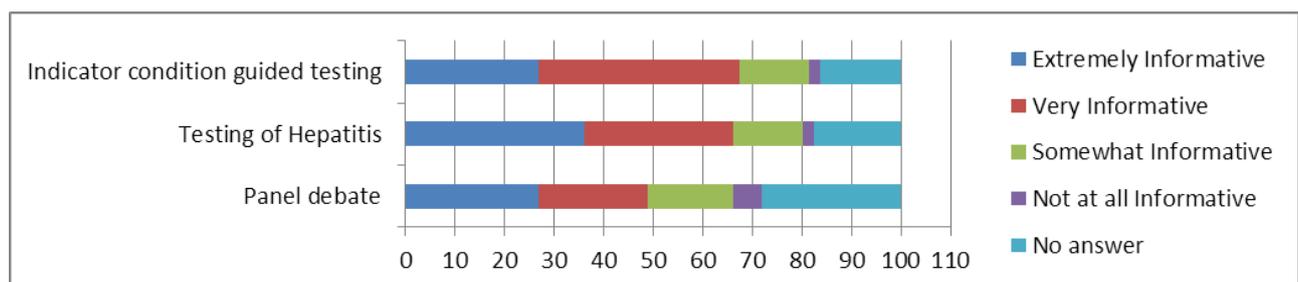
'A challenging topic'; 'very clear'; 'excellent'.



Plenary 3: Testing strategies in HIV and viral hepatitis: new innovative approaches. Including civil society panel debate

On a more operational and practical level, this session looked at different innovative testing and screening approaches and how successful they are in diagnosing people with HIV and viral hepatitis. Part of the session consisted of a panel debate, which discussed the role of civil society and the major challenges from an NGO perspective in access to testing and care.

This session raised the most comments requesting that a lot more time be dedicated for discussion around the topics presented.



Plenary 4: Linkage to care and economic consequences - bridging lessons learned in viral hepatitis and HIV

This session presented the more technical and economic aspects of testing and what affect such aspects could have on earlier diagnosis and linkage to care. A proposal for a definition of late presentation for care for viral hepatitis was also presented.

Comments from this session included:

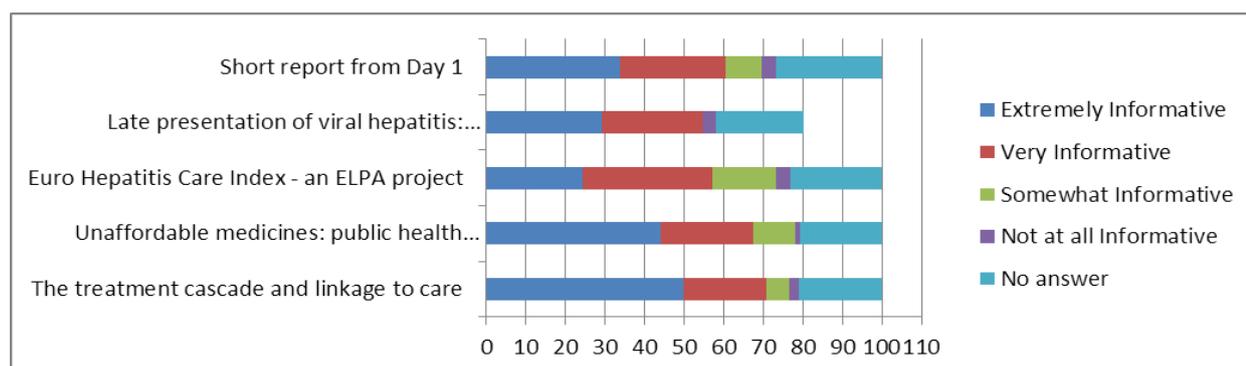
'The short report was a quick yet effective way of recapping the previous day's events'

'Clear speakers - a very interesting session'

Many also expressed pity that the 'New diagnostics in HIV and Hepatitis testing' presentation was cancelled.

The presentation 'Unaffordable medicines' was described as ***'Passionate, inspiring'***; ***'The most important presentation for Hepatitis'*** and ***'Unbiased'***.

The 'treatment cascade' presentation was described as ***'Brilliant - data from UK 'know your epidemic' came through very clearly.'***; ***'Very inspiring'***.

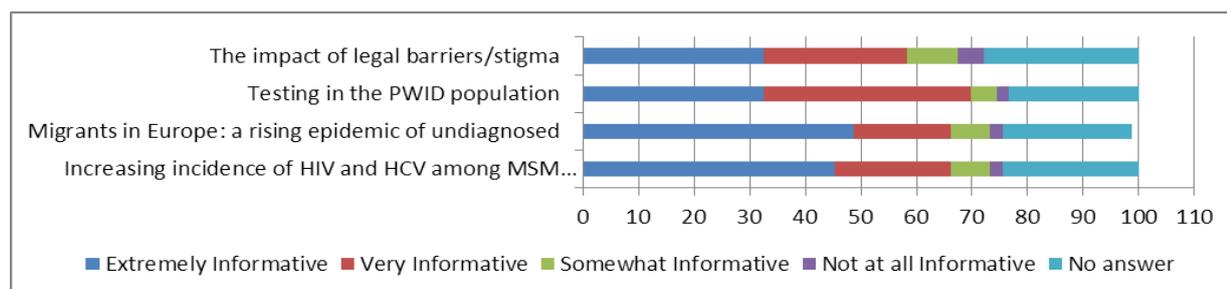


Plenary 5: Testing and linkages to care in key populations

Many studies have shown that access to care poses particular challenges for key populations. The session, as well as two specific parallel sessions, addressed these challenges and discussed particular barriers for key populations and lessons learned in addressing these barriers. Comments from participants attending this session included:

For the 'Impact of legal barriers' presentation: ***'Good overview on country based differences'***

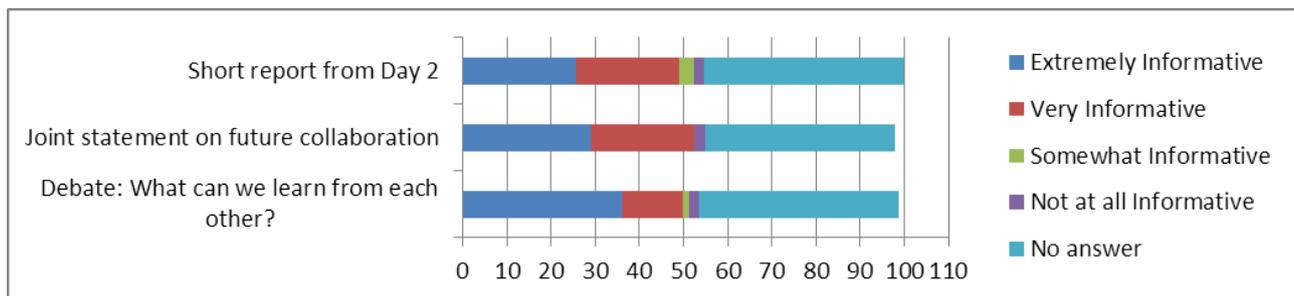
For the Migrants presentation: ***'Confronting! Excellent presentation'***; ***'I would give a 5, if it was possible: extremely informative.'***; ***'thought provoking'***



Closing Session

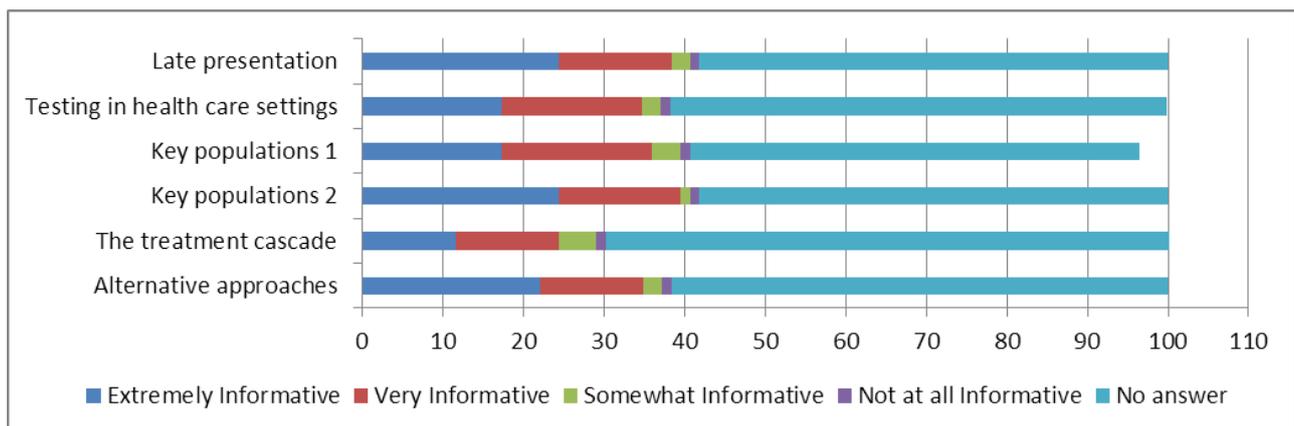
The final plenary session consisted of general feedback from the parallel sessions, including highlights and commitments made during the conference. These were formulated into a joint statement and an eventual Call to Action on the future collaboration between the fields of HIV and viral hepatitis. A panel discussion, with key stakeholders from across Europe, discussed what the fields of viral hepatitis and HIV can learn from each other, the way forward and political considerations on improving access to testing and care for viral hepatitis and HIV.

Comments from the closing session included: **'The Call to Action points - fantastic'**



Parallel Sessions

There were six parallel sessions, based upon the accepted abstracts submitted to the HepHIV conference. Comments included: PS 1: **'good presentation on challenge of late presentation definition'; Excellent presentation challenging the late presentation definition.'** PS 3 & 4: **'Both very informative sessions'**.



Conclusion

HepHIV2014 was the first European conference to bring together the fields of HIV and viral hepatitis. Based upon the data from the evaluation above, the overall consensus is that event was a success. The 'Call to Action', the product of the three conference days and initially discussed at the closing session, was finalised by key hepatitis and HIV stakeholders. It was subsequently issued as a formal press release in November 2014, sending a clear message to national and European decision makers that there is urgent need to focus testing strategies for HIV and hepatitis across Europe.

The HepHIV2104 Barcelona conference and the subsequent Call to Action statement both clearly signal that the fields of HIV and viral hepatitis are joining forces to ensure that such concerns remain of highest priority. There are already plans for the second HepHIV Conference to be held in spring, 2017.