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## OptTEST Newsletter

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### OptTEST Final Conference in Brussels

Jean-Luc Sion from DG Santé and Cinthia Menel-Lemos from Chafea provided the opening words, which were followed by presentations by Jordi Casabona and Dorthe Raben who explained the most important outcomes of Euro HIV EDAT and OptTEST respectively among their original objectives, and also why and how these outcomes will be merged and carried on in the INTEGRATE Joint Action.

The two projects' results, the developed tools and examples of their implementation, were presented under the following session headlines:

- Ways to overcome barriers to HIV testing with new approaches
- Tools for innovative testing strategies
- Improving linkage to care
- Cost-effectiveness and monitoring of HIV testing

It was impressive to see the results of three years of work and the audience was very engaged in discussing the results and next steps.

The conference was attended by 130 people, and the meeting report is [coming soon](#). Presentations are available [here](#).

Thanks to all presenters and participants for making the Joint Euro HIV Edat and OptTEST Final Conference in Brussels a great day!



OptTEST Final Conference: Jens Lundgren, CHIP, Denmark & John F Ryan DG Santé

### Launch of Joint Action INTEGRATE

#### *Moving towards integration of HIV, hepatitis, TB and STIs*

In the afternoon of 19th September, a policy session and debate on how to move towards integration of HIV, hepatitis, TB & STIs was held with the official launch of the EU-co –financed Joint Action on integrating prevention, testing and link to care strategies across HIV, viral hepatitis, TB and STIs in Europe (INTEGRATE). The project brings together 29 partners from 15 countries and will run for three years.

This final discussion panel discussed the future work and objectives of INTEGRATE with representatives of the main partners and work package leaders.

### Other events

#### Launch of tools, Paris

OptTEST tools were launched in July in conjunction with IAS 2017 in Paris. Presentations are available [here](#).

#### Stakeholder meeting, Barcelona

OptTEST, in collaboration with CEEISCAT, organised a regional meeting on 10 July 2017 in Barcelona, Spain, on *Improving early diagnosis in primary care in Catalonia and in Europe*. The meeting gathered 50 participants from primary care centres, public health and research institutions, and private foundations from Catalonia as well as international partners of the OptTEST project. The meeting report is available [here](#).

#### Stakeholder meeting, Madrid

OptTEST partner, ISCIII, arranged the meeting *Optimizing HIV testing and Linkage to care in Spain* on 14 September with national stakeholders in order to discuss how findings from the OptTEST project can help curving the HIV epidemic in Spain. Meeting report is available [here](#).

#### Community training, Berlin

On 20 September, INTEGRATE partners, Advisory Board members and collaborating stakeholders met and discussed the work plans and first steps. The meeting was opened by the Commissioner for Health & Food Safety, Mr. Vytenis Andriukaitis, who delivered an engaged speech.

## Goodbye to OptTEST!

OptTEST will officially close on 30 September 2017. Please visit [OptTEST.eu](http://OptTEST.eu) to see all project outcomes, results and tools.

From CHIP we would like to thank all partners, Advisory Board members, collaborating stakeholders, clinical sites, PLHIV networks and all other organisations and individuals that have been part of the OptTEST project. This work could not have been done without your engagement and dedication! Thanks to you all.

We are happy to announce that CHIP will be the coordinator of INTEGRATE and that several OptTEST activities will be carried on into the Joint Action INTEGRATE, including review of national speciality guidelines, Indicator Condition-guided HIV testing, integrated testing, monitoring of linkage to care and barriers to testing for specific key groups.

## OptTEST Tools:

All OptTEST tools and resources are now online:

1. [Tools to set up/ improve indicator condition \(IC\) guided testing in clinics](#): these include overall introduction to IC guided testing, online tool on how to set up IC guided testing in a clinic, staff training for IC guided testing and a briefing providing a recap of guidelines and evidence on the implementation of IC guided testing. The tools are available in different languages to facilitate local use: English, French, Estonian, Polish, Russian, Spanish
2. [Tools for improving linkage to HIV treatment and care](#): these include a literature review, reports on country pilots measuring linkage to care, an assessment method and country example on efforts to improve national data
3. [Tools to evaluate cost-effectiveness of testing](#): these include methodology; examples of heat maps; published articles; country reports for Estonia, France, Spain
4. [Tools to advance legal and regulatory changes to improve testing and linkage to care of key affected communities](#): these include a searchable database on legal and regulatory barriers: advocacy tip sheets; case studies on legal and regulatory reform to remove problematic restrictions and provisions; a briefing summary guidance on testing outside of medical settings and published evidence (e.g. lay provider testing, self-testing etc). The resources are available in several languages.
5. [Tools to address Stigma](#): these include stigma index and case studies

A community training addressing punitive and restrictive legal environments hindering early HIV diagnosis and linkage to care was held from 12-13 September in Berlin. It was based on OptTEST research, interventions and advocacy toolkit on legal and regulatory barriers. Around 25 participants from across Europe took part in this training, which focused on three intersectional legal barriers affecting people living with, and at risk of, HIV. Presentation is available [here](#).

## Interviews

*What are the barriers to HIV testing and treatment access – and how do we overcome them?*

Great interview on NAM with Lisa Power on her work in OptTEST on legal and regulatory barriers available [here](#).

Daniel Simões from GAT discusses their involvement in OptTEST and Euro HIV EDAT Project, and also the main outcomes and recommendations in this videointerview: <https://youtu.be/mmkd-Keu7Q>

## Get social with us!

We will continue to post relevant stories and news on our social media channels! Follow our OptTEST Facebook page ([OptTEST by HiE](#)) and Twitter ([@OptTESTbyHiE](#)).



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