

OptTEST Newsletter



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Horizontal Work Packages

Annual meeting: The end of OptTEST's first year is approaching and all partners are currently involved in planning the annual meeting to be held **29 May in Tallinn, Estonia**.

Data collection is at its height in all work packages and the annual meeting is an opportunity for all partners to meet face-to-face and discuss the ongoing work in parallel sessions in the morning. In the afternoon there will be a common session with updates on achievements, challenges, status on milestones and publications, and approval of year 2 work plans for the work packages. There will also be a discussion of ensuring sustainability of OptTEST results kick-started by a presentation by Matthias Wentzlaff-Eggebert, Quality Action/[OptTEST Advisory Board](#).

Website: The [OptTEST website](#) has been updated - you may have noted some changes already? There is a more elaborate description of the project [here](#) and links to partner websites and details on the [Shell Project](#) have also been added. We very much welcome your feedback on the website and please do also let us know if you have any news or updates that you would like us to put online.



Core Work Packages

Baseline data collection is ongoing in all work packages and analysis of data is the next step.

Work package 4: The literature review on linkage to HIV care is ongoing, in particular what countries do and what information they gather on linkage to care and retention in care. Public Health England (PHE) who is coordinating this has also provided input to the WP5 questionnaire. PHE has facilitated and attended a meeting held in London MRC with EUROCoord members and ECDC to discuss the

What's next for OptTEST?

A particular **TC for WP6** will take place on **20 May from 14-15.30 CET** to discuss achievements, challenges, and approve the year 2 work plan for this work package.

The first annual technical and financial progress report is due to the European Commission on **04 August 2015**.

Templates for partner and work package reporting have been sent out. The deadline for submitting all final reports to the coordinating team is **15 June 2015**.

Admin TCs, process & Deadlines

The next Admin TC is held on Tuesday 19 May from 10-10.30 CET. On the agenda is a change in reporting format and the upcoming annual reporting process.

News

There is a new article out on "**HIV pre-test information, discussion or counselling? A review of guidance relevant to the WHO European Region**". In the context of

roll of cohort in developing a cascade of care for EU countries. After a recruitment process Sara Croxford has been employed as a PhD student and she will be working on OptTEST WP4 tasks. The next step is to begin analysis of data – first the UK data and also data from ECDC.

Work package 5: The setting up of pilot sites is progressing and so far there are sites in the UK, France, Spain, Estonia and Poland, and sites in Greece and Czech Republic are still in progress. Countries covered in the shell project are also progressing and both Georgia and Ukraine are currently setting up sites. The sites will test indicator condition guided testing of HIV. Partners and sites have received baseline questionnaire on HIV testing. A weekly HIV testing data collection tool is almost complete. This will be completed by staff implementing indicator condition guided testing, and will measure any changes in testing following the implementation of tools.

Work package 6: Partners from Spain, France and Estonia have started data collection, and the first cost-effectiveness analyses have begun. To ensure that data are in accordance with the initial recommendations WP6 lead has met with partners during the data collection phase to discuss the methodology and process.

Face-to-face meetings were held with the Estonian partners in March and with the Spanish and French partners in April.

Work package 7: For the partner countries where Stigma Index data has not been collected baseline data is gathered from other sources. External funds have enabled the inclusion of Belarus, Ukraine and Georgia as partner countries in this work package. A questionnaire on 'stigma and legal barriers to testing' is ready for distribution shortly. In relation to the OptTEST annual meeting a 2-day meeting has been planned for all WP7 partner organisations on 27 and 28 May in Tallinn to discuss data collection.

a shift from exceptionalism to normalisation, the study examines recommendations/evidence in current pan-European/global guidelines regarding pre-test HIV testing and counselling practices in health care settings. It also reviews new research not yet included in guidelines. It can be accessed [here](#).

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