



## Implementing routine offer of integrated STI testing in health care settings to people reporting a history of *Chemsex*

Partner Organisation(s):

Consorci Institut D'Investigacions Biomèdiques August Pi i Sunyer (IDIBAPS)

Contact

[www.clinicbarcelona.org](http://www.clinicbarcelona.org)



### OVERVIEW

New cases of sexually transmitted infections, HIV and HCV are continuously diagnosed in the western world, mainly in the MSM group. In addition, there has been an increase in the use of recreational drugs to improve and lengthen sexual relations (Chemsex) in the MSM group related to sexual risk behaviors and increased incidence of these infections.

The HIV clinic at the Hospital Clinic de Barcelona (HCB) in collaboration with several clinical partners launched a pilot project with the overall aim to increase integrated testing coverage and earlier diagnosis for HIV, HCV, HBV and STIs using chemsex as a high-risk indicator. The pilot intervention ran between January 2018 and December 2019 recruiting MSM patients (HIV positive and negative) who practice Chemsex. The goal of the intervention was to prompt routine offer of integrated testing in health care settings to the people reporting a history of chemsex.

### APPROACH



Established **collaborations with various health and non-health care facilities** to recruit patients (emergency department; HIV, STDs and PEP units; psychiatry/addictions service and a local NGO).



**Referral system** established for individuals reporting a history of chemsex to the HIV clinic and offered testing for HIV, HCV and STIs with links to treatment.

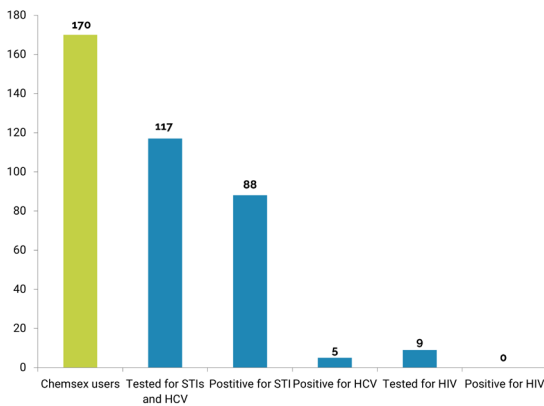


**Trainings** developed and held during the first 3 months for the health care staff from the participating sites about chemsex to support the implementation of the pilot.



An **electronic data capturing system** used to report data on the number of individuals seen with an IC, number tested and number of individuals with positive tests results.

# Country Case Study: Spain



Results of the pilot

## HIGHLIGHTS

The chem-sex users referred for integrated testing at the HCB were predominantly MSM and already known HIV positive.



**52% POSITIVITY RATE FOR ASYMPTOMATIC & UNDIAGNOSED STI**

170 people with a history of chemsex referred from one of the facilities in the network to the HIV clinic at HCB for HIV/HCV and STI screening and assessment.



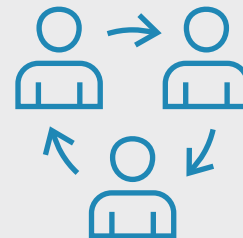
**117 TESTED FOR STI AND HCV (69%) & 9 TESTED FOR HIV**

Positive outcome in stressing chemsex as a risk behavior to be added as indicators for routine offering of integrated testing.

## LESSONS LEARNED



The use of HIV departments for recruitment resulted in **selection bias of mainly HIV-positive patients** with HIV-negative chemsex segment harder to identify and reach.



**Staff training** was key to reaching positive results.



High prevalence of HIV and other STI among chemsex catchment group pointed to an **unmet need for regular testing in this risk group** as well as risk reduction strategies.



Training and education of health care staff to enhance the **routine use of Chemsex as an indicator for offering integrated testing** is therefore essential.