

# *Testing in Europe*

What's hindering and what's helping?

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## *What's wrong with testing now?*

- Testing programmes are underfunded
- Many testing campaigns aren't targeted
- Stigma makes people reluctant to test
- Laws and regulations act as barriers too often
- New testing strategies often blocked by vested interests and “custom & practice”

## *Legal barriers*

- Criminalisation of exposure/transmission
  - testing
  - disclosure of risk when seeking help
- Criminalisation of some key pops (varies)
- Legal barriers for migrants/trans people (most)
- Mandatory testing drives people underground
- Lack of protective legislation e.g. in work

# *Regulatory barriers*

- What kind of tests can be done
- Where testing can take place
- Who can do tests or give results
- Activities reserved to specific professions
- Outdated guidelines
- Financial barriers for NGOs
- Barriers to referrals after testing for NGOs
- Anonymity that isn't (demanding ID for tests)

## *Creative responses*

- Hiring your own doctors/nurses/pharmacists
- Sticking only to the letter of the law/regulation
- Ignoring the law (sometimes w/govt. collusion)
- Getting national guidance updated
- Document/publicise what isn't working
- Collaboration with clinicians, public health
- Projects creating change – e.g. OptTEST

## *Creative responses 1: OptTEST*

- Ten partners, funded by EU and matching funds
- Timescale 2014-2017, four key areas
- Linkage to care
- Guided testing for indicator conditions
- Cost effectiveness of some testing strategies
- Stigma, legal & regulatory barriers

## *Can you help us in this?*

- Country database
- Examples of current legal/regulatory barriers
- Case studies of overcoming such barriers
- Toolkit – what would help you make change?

## *Creative responses 2: Testing Week*

- European HIV (now + HCV) Testing Week
- Now in 4<sup>th</sup> year; 417 active participants in 2015
- Evidence & toolkit online at [testingweek.eu](http://testingweek.eu)
- Half report resource barriers but only one in ten use it as a lever for influencing
- You can use it any way you want (and influencing can be cheap)

## *Creative responses 3: using tech*

- Euro HIV Test Finder
  - find a test anywhere in the EU
  - works with key sex apps/mobile friendly
  - 40k visits, 75k page views in Testing Week
- Increasing interaction with sex app owners
- Use of apps as triage for postal/home testing
- Reduced cost, increased targeting

## *What more can we do?*

- Challenge vested interests in restricting testing
- Work with pub. health, clinicians who agree
- Focus on key pops especially MSM, migrants
- Participate in European testing initiatives
- Document the case for change locally
- Shout about how we can increase testing
- Be more creative and less afraid of change