

OptTEST Newsletter



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On 29 May 2015 the first OptTEST annual meeting was held in Tallinn, Estonia. In addition to the OptTEST partners the meeting had participation from Advisory Board members, [Chafea](#), Estonian partners from Tartu University and representatives from several national PLHIV networks.

During the meeting participants discussed the work progress, achievements and problems encountered, and work package leads presented detailed work plans for year 2 for approval.

To follow-up on the discussions from the annual meeting a SC TC was held on 25 June 2015.



Core Work Packages

Work package 4: Linkage to and retention in HIV care after diagnosis

The literature review to compile current definitions for measuring linkage into HIV care in Europe, measure levels of linkage to care following diagnosis in Europe and identify barriers to entering HIV care is near completion and the results are currently being written up.

A meeting is being organised jointly by OptTEST and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) on 7-8 September in Stockholm at which surveillance definitions for linkage to care will be agreed on with expert consultation. Representatives from each of the OptTEST pilot countries are invited.

Work package 5: Development and implementation of tools and strategies for indicator condition guided HIV testing

At the pilot sites, indicator condition guided testing for HIV has commenced in Estonia, Spain, Poland and UK with first data being already reported and the plans for testing are well advanced in France. WP5 is working in close

What's next for OptTEST?

OptTEST **first technical and financial report** is due to Chafea by 4th August 2015, and all partners are engaged in the reporting process. The coordinating centre has now received all data from partners and will proceed with writing up the joint report. We would like to thank all partners for their engagement and dedication to the OptTEST project!

The next SC TC is scheduled for **22 September from 10-11.30 CET**.

The next OptTEST **face-to-face meeting** is planned for 23 October as a side meeting to the EACS conference in Barcelona. There will also be arranged a WP6 workshop during the [EACS conference](#) to discuss modelling.

collaboration with WP4 and WP7 – questions relevant to these two working groups were included in the baseline questionnaire and results have been handed over to the WP leads.

Baseline HIV testing data has been collected on national and site level, including attitudes and knowledge about HIV among staff, and the weekly online data collection tool is online and being filled in by the sites that have commenced testing.

Work package 6: The cost-effectiveness of HIV testing strategies in priority groups and regions

The data collection process in France, Spain and Estonia is completed and the first cost-effectiveness analyses using the CEPAC (Cost-Effectiveness of Preventing AIDS Complications) model developed by the Kenneth Freedberg's team based in Boston, MA, USA will start in July.

WP6 partners are planning to submit two abstracts to the 15th European AIDS Clinical Society (October 21-24, 2015 in Barcelona) on AIDS-related costs of care vs. not AIDS in Estonia and on HIV-related costs of care in Spain.

Work package 7: Stigma and legal barriers to the provision of HIV testing services

A questionnaire on 'stigma and legal barriers to testing' is currently being distributed to civil society organizations and activists across Europe. The ambition is to reach more than 600 potential respondents.

The update on the situation regarding criminalisation of non-disclosure, exposure and transmission of HIV is partially completed and a database to interrogate data from Stigma Index countries has been developed. The literature review on stigma and regulatory barriers to testing and timely treatment for key groups is ongoing. To discuss data collection and verification, a community 'expert reference group' meeting took place in Tallinn on 27-28 May. The meeting involved the GNP+ consultant for legal and regulatory barriers and six community members with expertise in the issues of stigma and barriers to testing and treatment access in the countries involved. In addition a meeting with Harm Reduction International and INPUD (International Network of People Who Use Drugs) was also held in London on 18 May.

The aim is to unite modelers and decision makers in the same room. Invitations will be ready shortly and the exact times will be confirmed.

Ann Sullivan will present OptTEST at the **EU Health Programme Symposium** "Doing the right things right - Guidance, Standards and Quality in the European response to HIV/AIDS and co-infections", which is held at the University of Amsterdam on the 29 July during the [AIDS Impact conference in Amsterdam](#).

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