

OptTEST Newsletter

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Kick-off meeting

September 2nd 2014: the **official Kick-off** meeting took place in Luxembourg, marking the beginning of this three year project co-funded by the 2nd Health Programme of the European Union. The project has the overarching objective to reduce the number of undiagnosed people with HIV infection and newly diagnosed late presenters within the European Region, and to promote timely treatment and care.

During the Kick-off meeting, members of the OptTEST Advisory Board were present, alongside representatives from the European Commission. The work packages, presented by their leads, were thoroughly discussed with valuable input from all attendees.



Work shop September 1st

The project partners used the opportunity of being in the same country for a workshop to discuss the project's four core work packages: Linkage to and retention in HIV care; Development and Implementation of tools and strategies for indicator condition guided testing; The cost-effectiveness of HIV testing strategies in priority groups and regions; Stigma and legal/regulatory barriers to provision and uptake of HIV testing services.

Some of the outcomes from the Kick-off meeting

From **Work package 4**: The ECDC representative on the Advisory Board was present and, with the work package lead, collaboration was discussed with the aim to include established European HIV cohort data alongside national surveillance data, in order to present a more accurate picture of the right hand side of the treatment continuum. Furthermore, work package 4 would provide the basis for better indicators for the Dublin Declarations 10- year review.

From **Work package 5**: A very interesting discussion took place on data driven implementation research, which is much needed to compliment current empirical research and could provide a paradigm shift in how health services are measured and new initiatives and programmes are implemented..

From **Work package 6**: It was emphasized how important it is to target policy makers when doing cost-effectiveness studies and how these studies could also be used to highlight where savings can be seen as an incentive to healthcare professionals.

Finally, from **Work package 7**, GNP+ along with an external consultant shall investigate the legal and regulatory frameworks that impact key populations according to the WHO Europe definition, and identify global legal barriers to HIV testing. This work package shall maintain focus on the undiagnosed

HepHIV2014 Conference side meetings

Many of the [OptTEST](#) partners also attended the [HepHIV2014](#) Barcelona conference: *HIV and Viral Hepatitis: Challenges of Timely Testing and Care*, which took place in Barcelona in early October and took the opportunity to meet and discuss the work packages and the developments of the project since the kick-off meeting.

An important outcome was the further development of a cross-work package baseline data collection survey: The identification of suitable clinic sites to investigate indicator condition guided HIV testing strategies was also discussed.

The EU commission also used the conference to arrange a side meeting, whereby OptTEST representatives and others from recently funded EU projects could present and discuss their findings. A brief workshop also took place on how to improve the dissemination of project outcomes and materials to wider audiences once projects were completed.

Everyone agreed the EU project database as a platform for distributing knowledge and experience needed a good overhaul to make it more user-friendly and intuitive as a search engine to identify and locate

people with HIV and identify barriers to HIV testing and well as linkage to care.

■ specific project deliverables.

Upcoming deadlines for the project are at the end of November, whereby the stakeholder analysis, communication strategy and the project evaluation plan are to be finalised.

The OptTEST brochure is now available in 4 languages: English, French, Spanish and Russian and they will also be available online at the new [OptTEST](#) website.

OptTEST newsletters shall be distributed quarterly.

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