



MEETING REPORT

European STI and HIV/AIDS Surveillance Networks

Berlin, 28–30 September 2010

Background

For the second year running, the meetings of the HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STI) surveillance networks were partly combined. Hosted by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, participants included nominated contact points for STI and HIV/AIDS surveillance from the 27 countries of the European Union and Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland.

The purpose of this 2010 meeting was to review the new surveillance results, find ways of enhancing collaboration between the networks and consult the experts with respect to ongoing projects.

European STI Surveillance Network meeting

The meeting reviewed recent data collections for sexually transmitted infections, including the 1990–09 data, and discussed extensively the data presentation and the interpretation of differences across the EU/EEA and of diverging trends. The experts reviewed the transfer of STI Alert to EPIS-STI and established a group to review the guidance for alert reporting. The microbiologists and epidemiologists discussed the results of the 2009 European Gonococcal Antimicrobial Susceptibility Surveillance Programme (Euro-GASP) and how to include new countries in Euro-GASP, and explored how to implement a pilot study on molecular surveillance for resistant and susceptible *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* strains in the EU/EEA. Future ECDC activities and collaborative opportunities were also addressed.

The working groups were organised around issues related to interpretation of data and trends, presentation of regional and sentinel STI information, challenges related to reporting antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the further implementation of Euro-GASP. The working groups, in their observations and recommendations, noted the following:

- Current reporting systems vary widely and producing a single EU graph with trends is a challenge because of the interpretation of diverging trends.
- Challenges include under- and over-reporting and will remain for data collection, particularly in federal countries, but it is expected that reporting will improve over time as countries standardise their formats.

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- Data can be presented in many different ways but are only useful when they are comparable.
- Regular reviews can encourage reporting and promote change to enable reporting of currently missing variables.

Recommendations made with respect to Euro-GASP called for ECDC to amend the reporting protocol to take into consideration the minimum set of antimicrobials to be tested, and to state that non-consecutive isolates may be submitted if more epidemiological information is available. Difficulties with data uploading into TESSy were discussed, and it was suggested that countries should be able to upload more than 100–200 isolates per year. It was also decided to postpone quarterly testing of isolates and possibly pilot this in 2012.

Countries that are *not* currently participating in Euro-GASP described their methods for diagnosing gonorrhoea, with particular regard to their (in)ability or experience to perform culture for *N. gonorrhoea*. Five countries indicated that they plan to start collecting isolates for Euro-GASP.

The meeting also featured a session on topics that are common to surveillance and control of STI and HIV, including the prevalence of HIV among STI patients, prevalence studies of HIV and STI among men who have sex with men, the results from antenatal screening programmes for HIV and syphilis, and the establishment of combined services for STI and HIV. HIV and STI experts in the respective networks had an opportunity to learn from each other with respect to methodological issues in surveillance and research.

European HIV/AIDS Surveillance Network meeting

The meeting reviewed the results of the HIV resistance project and its public health value, and the results of the ECDC project on TB–HIV co-infection. The upcoming HIV testing guidance document was discussed with respect to implementation and follow-up. The ECDC project on HIV modelling of improving prevalence estimates and the undiagnosed fraction were discussed at length and minimum surveillance requirements were identified in working group sessions. Additionally, the experts discussed the epidemiological framework for conducting HIV incidence studies within Europe using Recent Infection Testing Algorithms (RITA) tests, implementation of the pilot study and identified opportunities for collaboration.

Working groups discussed the HIV incidence framework, data quality, HIV modelling related to the undiagnosed fraction and HIV testing guidance. The HIV incidence working group identified factors that need to be taken into account when interpreting the proportions of recent infections, essential individual data that must be collected in order to participate in the pilot study on the use of RITA in Europe and criteria for selection of countries to participate in the RITA pilot study (many country representatives stated their willingness to join the pilot study and criteria will need to be applied).

The data quality working group identified numerous ways of grouping countries, emphasising that quality assurance is key. Some compromise and adjustments may be needed, however, when there are delays or missing reports. The dangers of adjustments were also identified.

The HIV modelling working group identified strengths and weaknesses of current modelling approaches for generating estimates of the HIV-infected population in the EU. There was strong interest in finding ways to improve modelling because current methods are difficult to use in most Member States. Many country representatives expressed interest in participating in pilot studies.

The HIV testing guidance working group suggested additional indicators for testing guidance and questions on patient and staff acceptability.

Annex 1: Programme

STI surveillance in EU/EEA Tuesday, 28 September 2010

- 08:00–08:30 Registration
- 08:30–10:30 Session I: STI surveillance activities** | Chairs: Catherine Ison, Marita van de Laar
- 08:30–09:00 Welcome and update; a. STI surveillance network (Marita van de Laar, ECDC); b. STI microbiology project (Catherine Ison, UK)
- 09:00–09:20 STI surveillance data, 1990–2009 (Marita van de Laar, ECDC)
- 09:20–09:35 EPIS STI presentation (Tobias Bergroth, ECDC)
- 09:35–09:50 AMR surveillance of gonorrhoea, 2009 (Michelle Cole, UK)
- 09:50–10:20 Gonorrhoea typing for public health information (Kirstine Eastick, UK)
Challenges for chlamydia typing? (Magnus Unemo, Sweden)
Proposal for molecular surveillance, 2010–2011 (Catherine Ison, UK)
- 10:20–10:30 Questions and answers
- 10:30–11:00 Coffee break*
- 11:00–12:30 Session II: STI country contributions** | Chairs: Gwenda Hughes, Steen Hoffmann
- Epidemiological surveillance of STI in Latvia (Violeta Mavcutko, Latvia)
Results from STI sentinel surveillance in Germany (Karin Haar, Germany)
Results from STI surveillance in Spain (Mercedes Diez, Spain)
Congenital syphilis reports (Vasileia Konte, Greece)
Spotlight – a health communication tool of scientific findings (Irina Dinca, ECDC)
- 12:30–13:30 Lunch*
- 13:30–17:00 Session III: STI working groups**
- 13:30–15:00 STI 1. STI surveillance report including AMR report (3 parallel sessions)
- 15:00–15:30 Coffee break*
- 15:30–17:00 STI 2a and 2b. Implementation of Euro-GASP
- 17:00–18:00 Feedback plenary** | Chairs: Marita van de Laar, Mika Salminen

STI and HIV session Wednesday, 29 September 2010

08:30–09:00 Registration

09:00–10:30 Session IV: HIV and STI common topics (part 1) | Chairs: Inga Velicko, Osamah Hamouda

Welcome and update on HIV and STI activities (Marita van de Laar, ECDC)

The European MSM Internet Survey (EMIS): Preliminary findings on sexually transmitted infections (Axel Schmidt, Germany)

SIALON results on HIV and syphilis in MSM (Massimo Mirandola, Italy)

Update on the evidence of HIV treatment as prevention – Danish experience and highlights AIDS 2010 'treatment is prevention' (Susan Cowan, Denmark)

10:30–11:00 *Coffee break*

11:00–12:30 Session IV: HIV and STI common topics (part 2) | Chairs: Magdalena Rosinska, Saulius Čaplinskas

HIV incidence and prevalence in STI patients in Italy (Barbara Suligoj, Italy)

Ongoing LGV outbreak in MSM in United Kingdom (Gwenda Hughes, UK)

Short overview of EU antenatal screening programmes for HIV and STI (Johann Fontaine, ECDC)

Effectiveness of antenatal screening for HIV, hepatitis B and syphilis, 2006–2008, Netherlands (Eline Op de Coul, Netherlands)

Antenatal screening for HIV and syphilis, Bulgaria (Tonka Varleva, Bulgaria)

12:30–13:30 *Lunch*

HIV surveillance in EU/EEA Wednesday, 29 September 2010

13:30–16:00 Session V: HIV surveillance related projects | Chairs: Caroline Semaille, Mika Salminen

HIV resistance – EU public health value of HIV ARV surveillance (Osamah Hamouda, Germany)

HIV testing guidance – state of the art (Johann Fontaine, ECDC)

Framework for HIV incidence studies (Valerie Delpech, UK)

Tuberculosis and HIV co-infection: challenges for improving surveillance (Emma Huitric, ECDC)

Improving data quality in HIV surveillance (Giedrius Likatavicius, ECDC)

16:00–16:30 *Coffee break*

16:30–18:00 Session VI: HIV Working groups (part 1)

HIV 1: HIV incidence – framework and pilot

HIV 2: Improving data quality in HIV surveillance

HIV surveillance in EU/EEA Thursday, 30 September 2010

09:00–10:30 **Session VII: HIV prevalence estimates** | Chairs: Marita van de Laar, Geoff Garnett

Estimating the HIV undiagnosed fraction – minimum surveillance requirements (Andrew Phillips, UK)

Overview of HIV estimates models (Ard van Sighem, Netherlands)

ECDC HIV modelling project (Geoff Garnett, UK)

10:30–11:00 *Coffee break*

11:00–12:30 **Session VIII: HIV Working groups (part 2)**

HIV 3. HIV modelling – undiagnosed fraction

HIV 4. HIV testing guidance

12:30–13:30 *Lunch*

13:30–15:00 **Feedback plenary** | Chairs: Marita van de Laar, Mika Salminen

Closure of the meeting

Annex 2: Participant list

Network participants

Country	Surname	Name	Meeting
Austria	Vinzelj-Horvath	Eva-Maria	STI
Belgium	Cruciti	Antonina	STI
Belgium	Sasse	Andre	HIV
Belgium	Verbrugge	Ruth	STI
Bulgaria	Gladnishka Hristova	Teodora	STI
Bulgaria	Yakimova	Tsvetana	STI/HIV
Bulgaria	Varleva	Tonka	STI/HIV
Cyprus	Hadjiloukas	Avgi	STI/HIV
Czech Republic	Zakoucka	Hana	STI/HIV
Denmark	Cowan	Susan	STI/HIV
Denmark	Hoffmann	Steen	STI
Estonia	Epshtein	Jevgenia	STI
Estonia	Rätsep	Merike	HIV
Finland	Hiltunen-Back	Eija	STI
Finland	Brummer-Korvenkontio	Henrikki	HIV
Finland	Liitsola	Kirsi	HIV
France	Semaille	Caroline	HIV
France	Goulet	Veronique	STI
France	Sednaoui	Patrice	STI
Germany	Kohl	Peter	STI
Germany	Hamouda	Osamah	STI/HIV
Greece	Nikolopoulos	Georgios	HIV
Greece	Konte	Vasileia	STI
Greece	Hadjivasilou - Pappa	Maria	STI
Hungary	Dudás	Mária	STI/HIV
Hungary	Balla	Eszter	STI
Ireland	O'Hora	Aidan	STI/HIV
Italy	Stefanelli	Paola	STI
Italy	Suligoj	Barbara	STI/HIV
Latvia	Ozolins	Dzintars	STI
Latvia	Upmace	Inga	HIV
Latvia	Mavcutko	Violeta	STI
Lithuania	Čaplinskas	Saulius	STI/HIV
Lithuania	Caplinskiene	Irma	STI/HIV
Lithuania	Butylkina	Rita	STI/HIV
Luxembourg	Etienne	Valerie	HIV
Malta	Barbara	Christopher	STI/HIV
Malta	Maistre Melillo	Jacqueline	STI/HIV
Netherlands	van der Sande	Marianne	STI
Netherlands	Linde	Ineke	STI
Netherlands	Op de Coul	Eline	HIV
Norway	Skogen	Vegard	STI
Norway	Jakopanec	Irena	STI/HIV

Country	Surname	Name	Meeting
Poland	Rosinska	Magdalena	STI/HIV
Portugal	Soares Ferreira	Joana	HIV
Portugal	Borrego	Maria José	STI
Portugal	Azevedo	Jacinta	STI
Romania	Mardaescu	Mariana	HIV
Romania	Gheorghiu	Viorica	STI
Romania	Coltan	Gabriel	HIV
Slovakia	Truska	Peter	STI/HIV
Slovenia	Bergant	Nejc	STI/HIV
Slovenia	Jeverica	Samo	STI
Spain	Diez Ruiz-Navarro	Mercedes	STI/HIV
Spain	Vázquez	Julio	STI
Sweden	Unemo	Magnus	STI
Sweden	Velicko	Inga	STI/HIV
Sweden	Fredlund	Hans	STI
UK	Eastick	Kirstine	STI
UK	Hughes	Gwenda	STI
UK	Delpech	Valerie	HIV

Consultants, guests and invited speakers

Country/Affiliation	Surname	Name
HPA	Ison	Catherine
HPA	Cole	Michelle
HPA	Quaye	Nerteley
HPA	Thornton	Alicia
EMCDDA	Wiessing	Lucas
Germany	Marcus	Ulrich
Germany	Schmidt	Axel
Greece	Papadogeorgaki	Eleni
Italy	Mirandola	Massimo
Netherlands	van Sighem	Ard
UK	Garnett	Geoffrey
UK	Phillips	Andrew

ECDC staff

Surname	Name
van de Laar	Marita
Salminen	Mika
Likatavicius	Giedrius
Bergroth	Tobias
Noori	Teymur
Fontaine	Johann
Dinca	Irina
De Leo	Luisa
Shaukat	Asima
Spiteri	Gianfranco
Huitric	Emma

Meeting rapporteur

Tamsin Rose, World Health Communication Associates.