

Dating Apps – flirting with  
disease?

# Me and smart apps...!



# Apps and health issues?

- More partners, and more risky sexual behaviour?
- Influence on travelling MSM and their ability to hook up online for private sexparties?
- Increased use of sexualised recreational drugs (chemsex)?
- Potential for increased health prevention, eg testing sites, harm reduction services etc – our response to the above?

# What are we talking about?

- There is evidence that the use of Apps by MSM has increased significantly across countries:
  - Grindr
  - Tinder
  - Growlr
  - Jack'd
  - Scruff etc

# More partners – more disease?

- Uncertainty as to whether MSM have more partners due to apps!
- BUT we see:
- Significant increase in reported gonorrhoea and syphilis among MSM from 2010
- In 2013 MSM accounted for 6% of reported Chlamydia, 43% of reported gonorrhoea and 54% of reported syphilis cases in the EU/EEA.
- a recent Lancet article (23rd June 2015) with figures from UK: Although total STI diagnoses decreased by 0.3% in England from 2013 to 2014, diagnoses in MSM rose sharply, with syphilis increasing by 46%, gonorrhoea by 32%, chlamydia by 26%, and genital herpes and warts by 10% each.

# More sex?

- There seems to be an easier access to hooking up online and there seems to be evidence that smart phone apps facilitate access to private sex parties. Whether this has been a shift from other platforms such as Gayromeo or others, or it represents a real increase, is a bit uncertain.

# Chemsex

- There is evidence that suggests that the patterns of recreational drugs have changed, and that apps do appear to be playing a role in in organising and finding group gatherings of MSM for sex which include the use of recreational drugs.

# Our response

- What can Checkpoints do to meet the needs of the travelling MSM?
- Offer targetted outreach testing sauna/sexclubs
- Ensure better EU collaboration between Checkpoint to facilitate linkage to care in home country.
- Ensure free condoms and lube
- Easy access to PEP
- Promote PReP



# Our response 2

- Engage with app owners to improve and increase health messages on apps – how?
- Across EU and in partnership with the US, explore what works in STI/HIV prevention and health promotion
- Explore best practices and good examples of health messages for MSM
- Establish a platform for sharing information/experiences about smart phone apps and MSM sexual health messages

# Our response 3

- The need for a bi-annual conference connecting practitioners, scientists and other stakeholders in the MSM prevention field.
- Include questions on smart apps, private sex parties, and use of recreational drugs in next pan-european EMIS survey.
- Offer harm reduction services AND sexual health services to meet the needs of MSM who use recreational drugs during sex.

# Our response 4

- Identify organisations who work with MSM sexual health and harm reduction services in the various countries, and set up better collaborations between the two to better meet the needs of chemsex trends among MSM in Europe.
- A need to raise awareness of interactions of chemsex and HIV/HCV medications
- Keep things in perspective – soon there will be more people writing reports on slamming, than MSM outthere who actually are slamming! 😊