

# Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on testing for HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs in the WHO European Region

EU Civil Society Forum on HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis and TB

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# HIV in Europe/EuroTEST Initiative



# Consortium composition

Representation/support from:



+ Independent experts



# COVID-19 impact assessment

**Objective:** To assess the impact of COVID-19 on HIV, viral hepatitis and STI testing in the WHO European Region.

Responses from different actors:


- Laboratories
- Secondary care clinics
- Primary health care units
- Community testing sites
- National public health level

[WHO call for good practices](#) (case studies)

**Survey period:** 14 October to 13 November

Preliminary results **published:** [Euro Surveill 26 Nov 2020](#)

[Link to survey website](#)



The poster features a central graphic with two large test tubes labeled 'STI TEST' and 'HIV TEST'. A red banner across the tubes reads 'New deadline: 13 November 2020'. The word 'EXPRESS' is written vertically on the left tube, and 'LAB TEST' is on the right. Below the tubes, two stylized figures are shown, one holding a magnifying glass over the word 'TEST'. The background is a light orange color.

**Provide your feedback into a WHO European Region  
Assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on  
TESTING FOR HIV, VIRAL HEPATITIS AND STIS!**

If you're an **HIV, viral hepatitis and/or STI service provider**, you can participate in this online survey to provide your feedback.

We're looking for responses from the following settings:

- Laboratories
- Secondary/specialist care
- Primary health care units
- Community organisations providing testing for one or more of these infections
- National level public health institutions or Ministry of Health level.

Access the survey here:  
<https://is.gd/EuroTESTCOVID19impact>  
or get more info at [eurotest.org](http://eurotest.org)

**EuroTEST**  
Working together for integrated testing and earlier care  
Addressing Hepatitis, HIV, STIs and TB

**Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on testing services for HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections in the WHO European Region, March to August 2020**

Daniel Simões<sup>1,2</sup>, Annemarie Rinder Stengaard<sup>3</sup>, Lauren Combs<sup>3</sup>, Dorthe Raben<sup>3</sup>, The EuroTEST COVID-19 impact assessment consortium of partners<sup>4</sup>

1. EPIUnit–Instituto de Saúde Pública, Universidade do Porto, Porto, Portugal

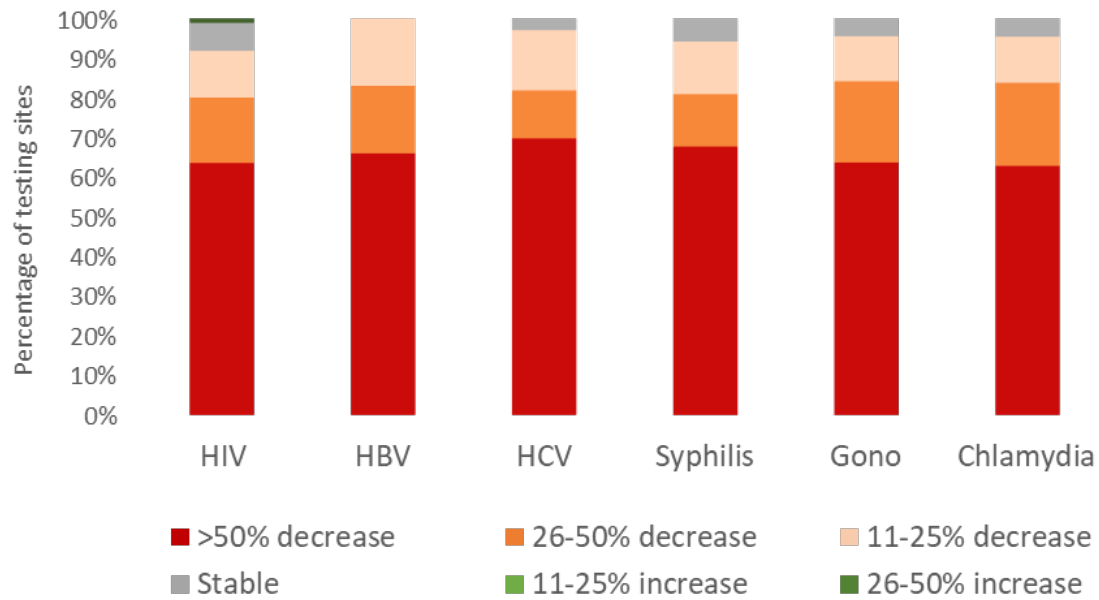
2. Grupo de Ativistas em Tratamentos (GAT), Lisboa, Portugal

3. Centre of Excellence for Health, Immunity and Infections (CHIP), Rigshospitalet, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark.

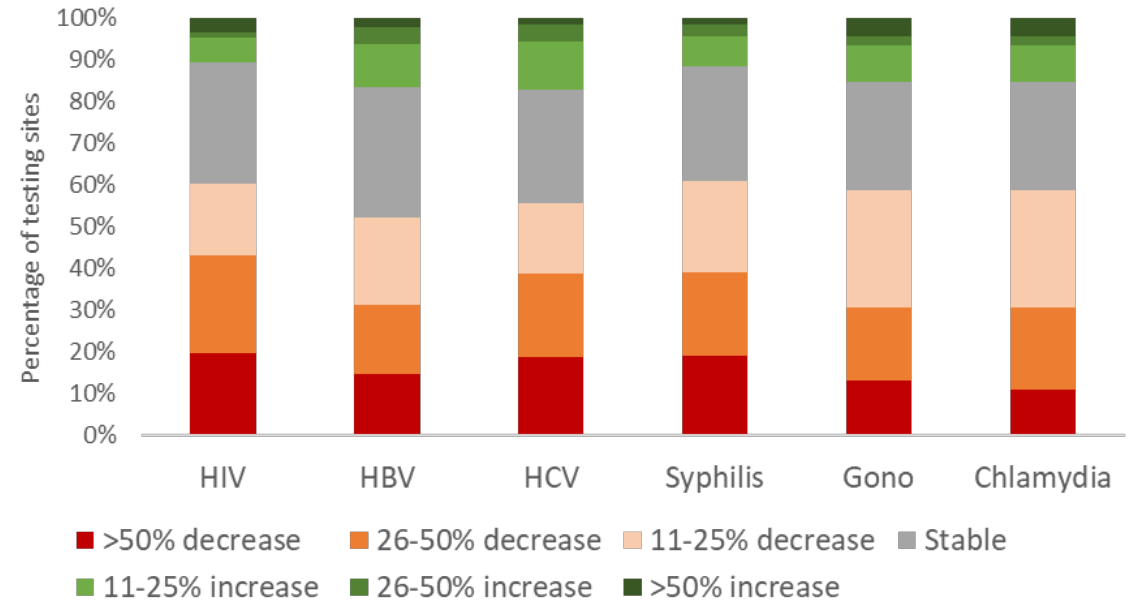
4. The members of the EuroTEST consortium of partners are listed at the end of the article

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# Percentage changes in testing volume, by infection: March-May and June-August 2020 compared to March-May 2019 (n=96) (Preliminary results)



March-May 2020

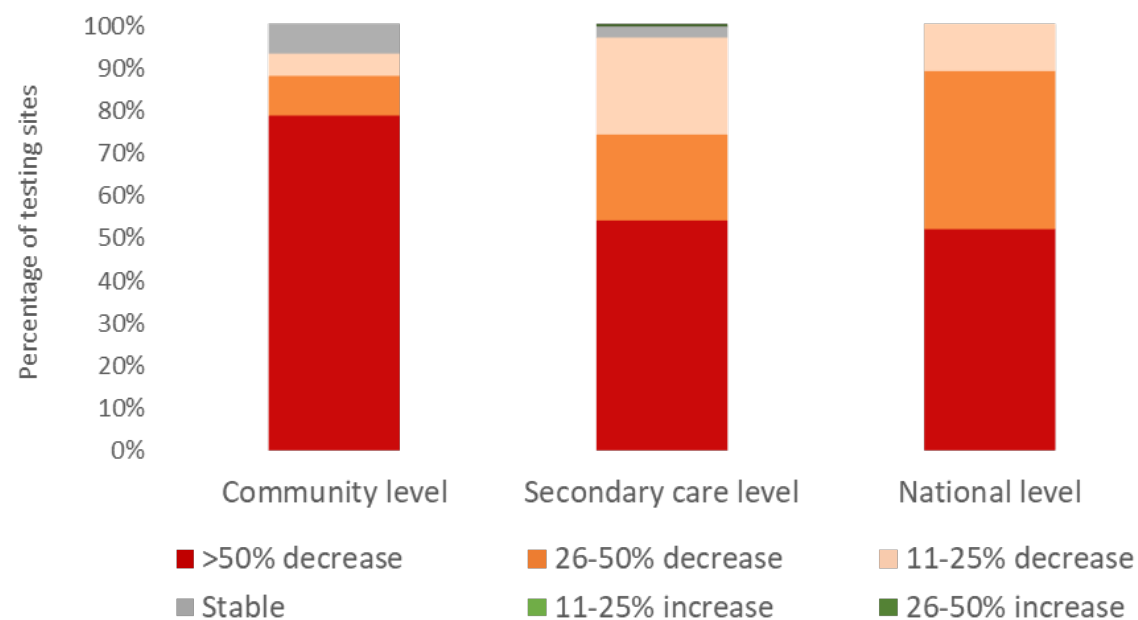


June-August 2020

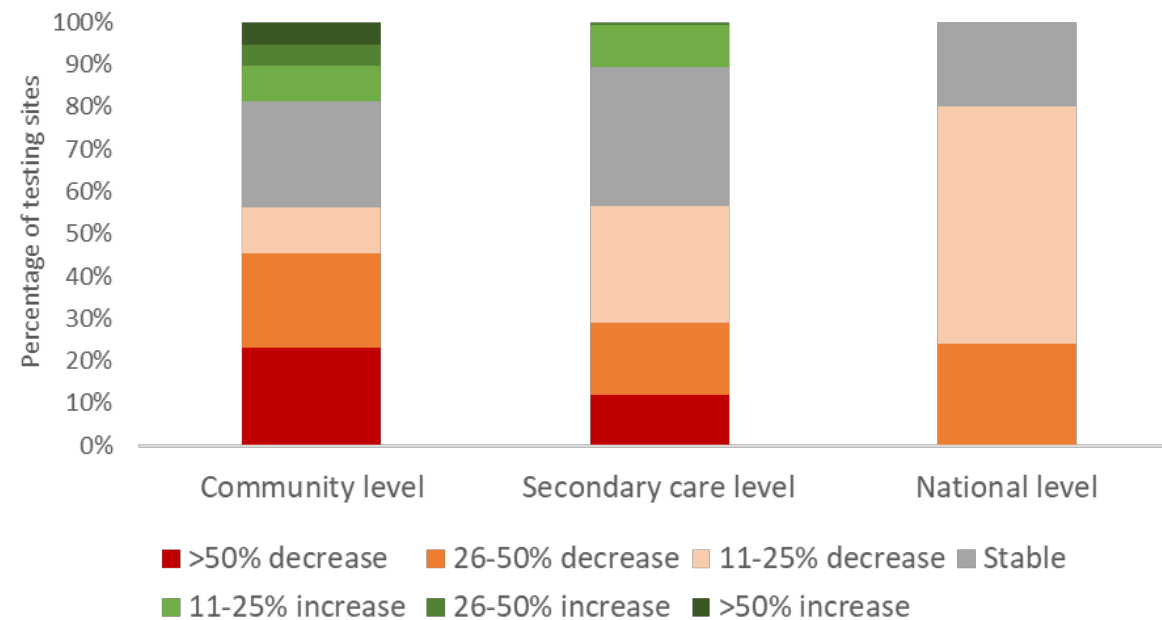
# Percentage change in testing volume (all infections) by sector

## March-May and June-August 2020 compared to March-May 2019 (n=96)

(Preliminary results)



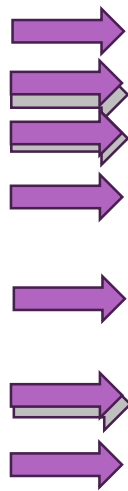
March-May 2020



June-August 2020

# Reported reasons for observed declines in testing volume, by sector (n=98) (Preliminary results)

	Community level sites (n=52)		Secondary level care sites (n=36)		National level (n=10)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Reasons for observed declines in testing volume</b>						
Site(s) closed during lockdown	36	69%	21	58%	6	60%
Staff re-allocated to COVID-19	8	15%	15	42%	5	50%
Reduced staff in site	31	60%	11	31%	-	-
Fewer appointments scheduled/reduced attendance	36	69%	28	78%	8	80%
Fewer samples sent to the lab/ fewer referrals to blood draw/testing	10	19%	24	67%	-	-
No 'drop-in' service (only testing by appointment)	26	50%	15	42%	-	-
Fewer referrals to your site	13	25%	18	50%	-	-
Changes in financing system	10	19%	4	11%	0	0%
Stock-out of test kits, tubes, reagents or consumables	3	6%	5	14%	1	10%
Triaging of patients <sup>b</sup>	16	31%	12	33%	2	20%
Moved to telemedicine/remote consultations	20	38%	14	39%	-	-
Laboratories overburdened	-	-	-	-	4	40%



# Reported new measures implemented to restore testing provision, by sector (n=98) (Preliminary results)

	Community level sites (n=52)		Secondary level care sites (n=36)		National level (n=10)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>New measures implemented to restore testing provision</b>						
Remote counselling appointments	35	67%	25	69%	0	0%
Home-based sampling	8	15%	6	17%	2	20%
HIV self-testing (on-site or by referral)	23	44%	4	11%	1	10%
Triaging of patients	16	31%	13	36%	0	0%
No 'drop-in' service	25	48%	13	36%	-	-
Referral to other testing sites	19	37%	6	17%	-	-
Staff reinforcement	5	10%	8	22%	0	0%
Funding reallocations	13	25%	1	3%	-	-
Equipment acquisition	5	10%	0	0%	-	-
Expanded outreach testing	11	21%	4	11%	-	-
Testing campaigns	19	37%	4	11%	-	-
Revised diagnosis algorithm	-	-	-	-	0	0%
Community based testing	-	-	-	-	0	0%
Lay provider testing	-	-	-	-	1	10%



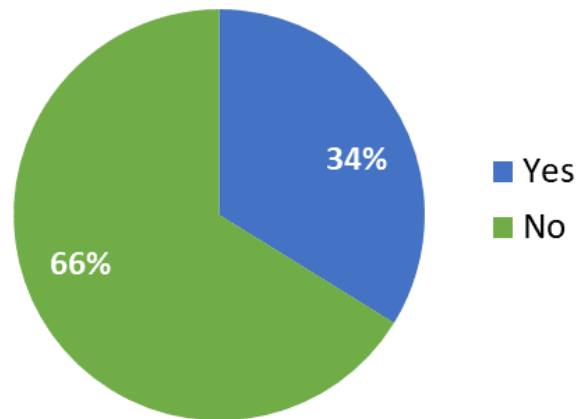


# Guidance or support considered important to reduce impact of COVID-19 on testing, by sector (n=98) (Preliminary results)

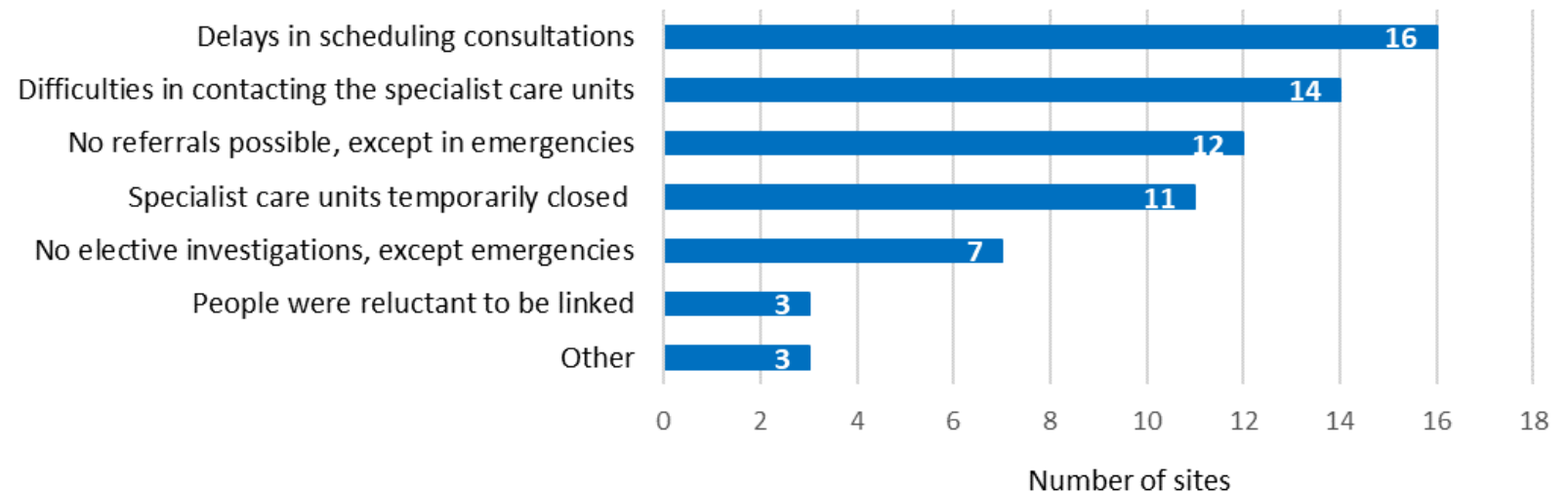
	Community level sites (n=52)		Secondary level care sites (n=36)		National level (n=10)	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
Additional human resources	23	44%	16	44%	1	10%
Increased financial support	35	67%	13	36%	1	10%
Regulatory changes	16	31%	2	6%	0	0%
Programmatic guidance	4	8%	1	3%	2	20%
Technical guidance	6	12%	3	8%	1	10%
Technical support on specific issue	5	10%	4	11%	1	10%
Procurement/supply chain related support	6	12%	4	11%	1	10%
Other	4	8%	2	6%	0	0%
None	7	13%	5	14%	4	40%

# Linkage to care (HIV/viral hepatitis/STI)

Percentage of community testing sites experiencing problems in ensuring linkage to care (March-August 2020) (n=71)



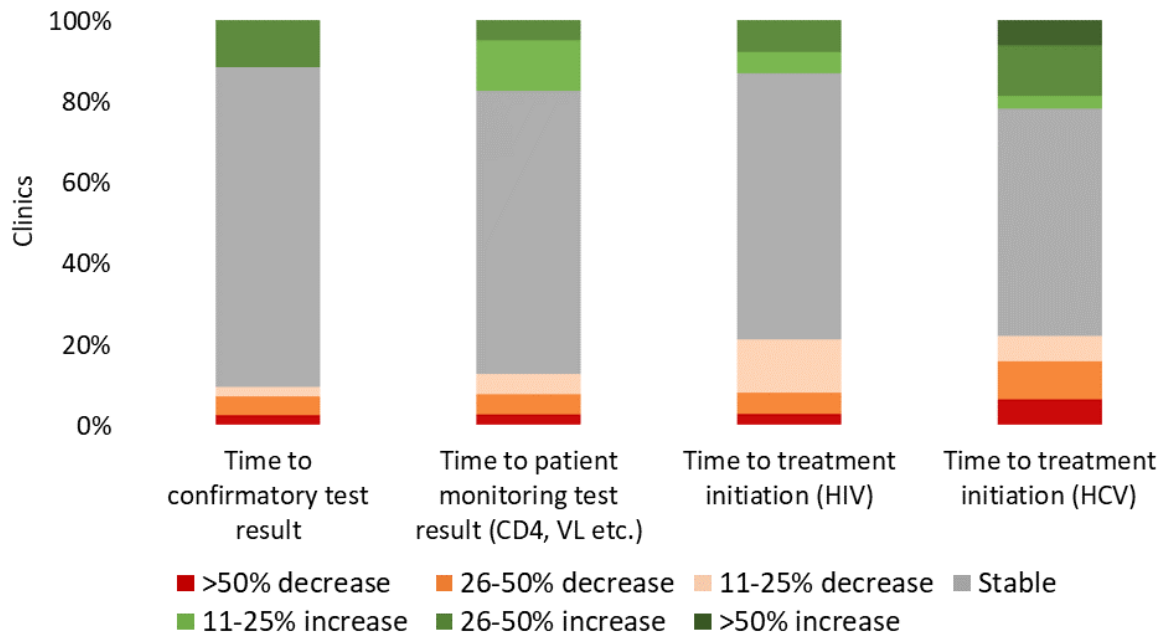
Main reported challenges in ensuring linkage to care for people testing/screening positive in a community testing site (March-Aug 2020)



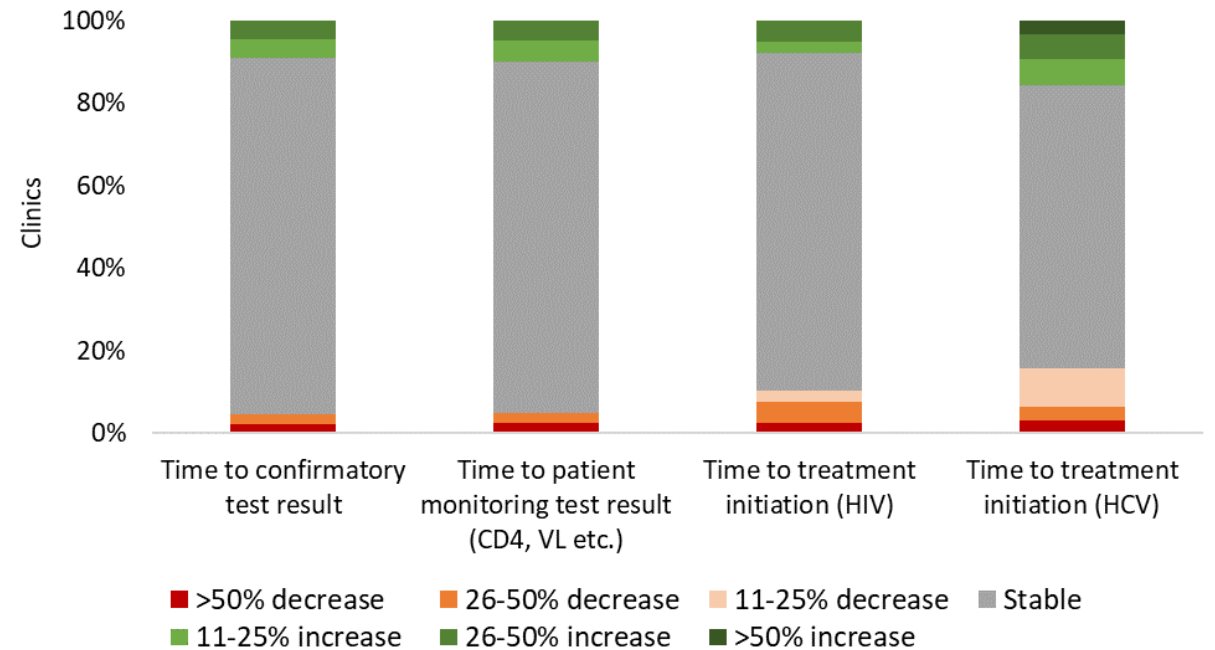
# Continuum of care

Changes in selected continuum of care measures (all infections), by category of change

March-May 2020 compared to March-May 2019 (n=43)



June-Aug 2020 compared to March-May 2019 (n=44)



# HepHIV2021 Conference (Lisbon/virtual)

**7<sup>th</sup> biennial conference on optimal testing and earlier care** hosted by the EuroTEST Initiative

Takes place in Lisbon, Portugal & virtually on **5-7 May 2021**

Coincides with the Portuguese **EU presidency**

**Convenes** European clinicians, community groups, policy makers, health care providers, researchers and public health experts.

**Free access** via online conference portal

- On-demand access to pre-recorded talks
- E-posters and virtual exhibition rooms

Deadline for **late breaker abstract submissions** 14 March

More information via the [conference website](#)

Email: [hephiv.rigshospitalet@regionh.dk](mailto:hephiv.rigshospitalet@regionh.dk)



HepHIV 2021  
5-7 MAY · LISBON & VIRTUAL

# THANK YOU

For any questions, please contact  
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No conflict of interest