

ECDC Scope and purpose document

Disease Programmes Unit/STI, Blood-Borne Viruses and TB Section

Webinar on current and upcoming point-of-care testing technologies and how they can impact sexual health, particularly for key populations

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Background

Every year, more than 500 000 sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are reported in the European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA) and the United Kingdom (UK) [1]. Even though STIs in the WHO European Region are among the lowest in the world, there is still a substantial burden of STIs in Europe [2, 3]. There is also large variation in testing strategies and reporting throughout the region [4]. Certain groups, especially young people and men who have sex with men (MSM), are disproportionately affected by STIs and pregnant women from several vulnerable groups (such as migrant women and women exercising high-risk behaviours including injection drug use, sex work, etc.) are especially at risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes because of STIs and poor access to care [4].

In 2021, ECDC published a technical document, [Technologies, strategies and approaches for testing populations at risk of sexually transmitted infections in the EU/EEA](#) [4], to present results of a systematic literature review investigating the impact of novel strategies and approaches on access to testing, testing coverage, and linkage to care of key populations at-risk for STIs, particularly for chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, trichomoniasis and *Mycoplasma genitalium* infection. This document aims to inform policymakers, national and international programme coordinators, public health and clinical experts, and civil society organisations involved in STI prevention and control in the EU/EEA on how to improve testing services among key populations at high risk for STIs.

To support earlier diagnosis and increase accessibility for key populations, point-of-care testing (POCT) can facilitate rapid linkage to care, ensuring immediate treatment initiation and minimising loss to follow-up and the risk of onward transmission. These types of tests may also support better integration of testing to assess for more than one infection during a single consultation, maximising opportunities to detect multiple conditions.

Developments in POCT technologies are constantly evolving, therefore, providing an overview of the latest technologies with practical guidance on how to use them in an accessible and acceptable way can strengthen the STI response from countries in the EU/EEA.

Aim and objectives

The overall aim of this online webinar organised by ECDC, EACS and CHIP is to increase EU/EEA countries' knowledge and awareness of current and upcoming POCT technologies for STIs, and the contexts they can be used in. At the end of the webinar, participants should:

- Have gained an understanding of the current and upcoming POCT technologies for STIs available in the EU/EEA;
- Have gained an understanding of the benefits and limitations of these technologies for the sexual health of key populations;
- Have gained an understanding of how to make these technologies more accessible and acceptable to key populations.

Target audience

The webinar is aimed toward (i) STI network members, including National Focal Points (NFPs) as well as microbiology and epidemiology Operational Contact Points (OCPs) (ii) STI specialist clinicians and (iii) representatives from the STI community.

Platform, format and approach

The webinar will be hosted online using Zoom with a duration of 90 minutes. The format will include expert plenary presentations and open discussion/Q&A. A set of background materials will be shared with the participants in advance via the [ECDC Virtual Academy \(EVA\)](#), including the following:

- ECDC Technical report: [Technologies, strategies and approaches for testing populations at risk of sexually transmitted infections in the EU/EEA](#) [4]
- WHO Report: [The Point-of-Care Diagnostic Landscape for Sexually Transmitted Infections \(STIs\)](#) [5]
- WHO resources: [Point-Of-Care Diagnostic Tests \(POCTs\) for Sexually Transmitted Infections \(STIs\) – Resource page](#) [6]

Expected outputs and evaluation

The webinar presentation slides will be shared with participants within a maximum of two weeks following the webinar via the [ECDC Virtual Academy \(EVA\)](#).

At the end of the webinar, participants will be asked to respond to 5-7 quantitative and qualitative standardised evaluation questions regarding feedback on the webinar organisation and overall impact.

References

1. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Infographic: Sexually transmitted infections: a long-standing and ongoing threat for public health. Stockholm: ECDC; 2021. Available from: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/infographic-sexually-transmitted-infections-long-standing-and-ongoing-threat>
2. Rowley J, Vander Hoorn S, Korenromp E, Low N, Unemo M, Abu-Raddad LJ, et al. Chlamydia, gonorrhoea, trichomoniasis and syphilis: global prevalence and incidence estimates, 2016. Bull World Health Organ. 2019 Aug 1;97(8):548-62p.
3. Newman L, Rowley J, Vander Hoorn S, Wijesooriya NS, Unemo M, Low N, et al. Global Estimates of the Prevalence and Incidence of Four Curable Sexually Transmitted Infections in 2012 Based on Systematic Review and Global Reporting. PloS one. 2015 2015/12/08;10(12):e0143304.
4. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Technical Report: Technologies, strategies and approaches for testing populations at risk of sexually transmitted infections in the EU/EEA. Stockholm: ECDC; 2021. Available from: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/technologies-strategies-approaches-testing-populations-at-risk-sti>
5. Murtagh M. The Point-of-Care Diagnostic Landscape for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). WHO; 2019. Available from: [https://www.who.int/teams/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-research-\(srh\)/areas-of-work/sexual-health/sexually-transmitted-infections/point-of-care-tests](https://www.who.int/teams/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-research-(srh)/areas-of-work/sexual-health/sexually-transmitted-infections/point-of-care-tests)
6. World Health Organization. Point-Of-Care Diagnostic Tests (POCTs) for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). WHO; 2022. Available from: [https://www.who.int/teams/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-research-\(srh\)/areas-of-work/sexual-health/sexually-transmitted-infections/point-of-care-tests](https://www.who.int/teams/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-research-(srh)/areas-of-work/sexual-health/sexually-transmitted-infections/point-of-care-tests)