

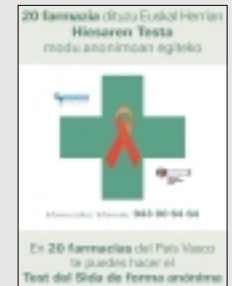
# A new approach to increase HIV serostatus knowledge in the Basque Country (Spain): rapid HIV test provided in pharmacies

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## Background

In the Basque Country it is estimated that 30% of people infected by HIV do not know their HIV status. To improve the serostatus knowledge of people with high risk factors, the Department of Health and the Colleges of Pharmacists initiated in march 2009 a Rapid HIV Test pilot program in pharmacies.



## Methods

20 pharmacies were selected based mainly in the following criteria: motivation, private desk to attend people, and number of pharmacists (two or more). Staff was trained on HIV testing procedures and counselling. A referral system was created and an e-mail network established to support the pharmacies. The test was anonymous.



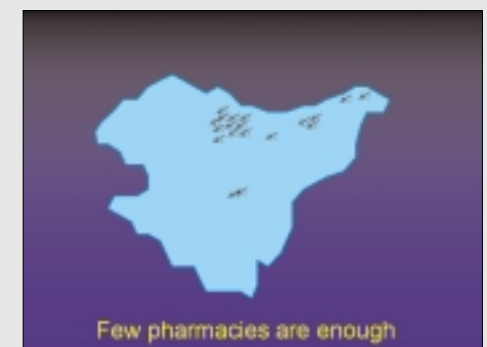
## Results

Between March 2009 and February 2010, 3.317 tests were performed (65% more than expected). Men: 71,8%. Women: 28%. Median age: 35,9 yr (men: 36,9 and women 33,5). Foreigners: 7,7%.  
 Reasons to take the test: unprotected vaginal penetration (57,6%), oral sex -hetero and homosexual- (14,3%) and unprotected anal penetration (7%). 13,3% of testing was taken by MSM.

**Main reasons for choosing a pharmacy: rapidity and accesibility (60,7%) and anonymity (13,8%)**



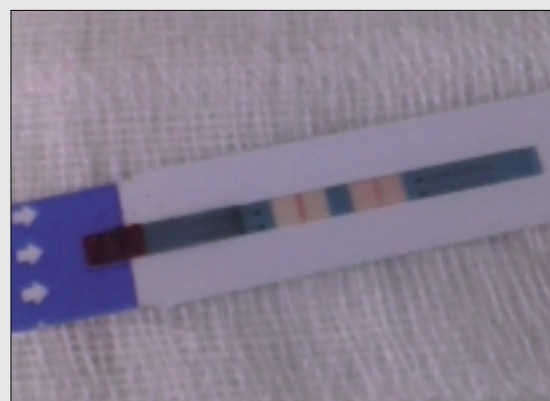
**Positive tests** (strong red line): 29 (22 men and 7 women) Prevalence (0,87%) similar to that found in HIV centres. Median age: men 34,7; women 40,7. Nine did not attend the referral centre. Risk practices: unprotected vaginal penetration: 14 and unprotected anal penetration: 10. Foreigners 9 (31%): 6 men and 3 women. 3 subsaharians and 5 latinamericans. Six knew they were seropositive previously. All positives were asymptomatic.



### Opinion of pharmacists

- ✓ very motivating experience
- ✓ they feel useful
- ✓ the experience strenght their role as health advisors

It was difficult for pharmacists:  
 1) to give a positive HIV test and  
 2) to talk about sexual risk practices with customers.



### Results of testing

- ✓ Total: 3.317 tests
- ✓ Negative: 3.278 (98,8%)
- ✓ Positive (strong red line): 30
  - Confirmed: 20
  - False positive: 1
  - Clients did not come to confirm the result: 9
- ✓ Weak positive (thin red line): 9
  - Confirmed positives: 0
  - Confirmed negatives: 8
  - Clients did not come to confirm the result: 1

**In March 2010 the experience was expanded to a total of 30 pharmacies**

## Conclusions

The implementation of HIV rapid testing in pharmacies is an excellent, innovative and effective program, well accepted by customers and pharmacists, and complementary to detect new HIV infections in health services.