

# Feasibility and acceptability of Rapid HIV Testing (RHT) by French General Practitioners (GP).

A. Wajsbroth<sup>1</sup>, S. Bouée<sup>1</sup>, R. Gauthier<sup>2</sup>, J.M. Livrozet<sup>1</sup>, F. PrevotEAU  
du Clary<sup>1</sup>, S. Heber Suffrin<sup>1</sup>, O. Taulera<sup>1</sup>, C. Majerholc<sup>1</sup>,  
C. Compagnon<sup>1</sup>, J.M. Peter<sup>1</sup>, J.P. Aubert<sup>1,2</sup>

1 : GERVIH, 59 rue du ruisseau, 75018 Paris, France

2 : Département de Médecine Générale, Université Paris Diderot, 16 Rue Henri Huchard, 75018 Paris, France

# Background

- As of 2008, 152, 000 persons were infected with HIV in France
- About 7,000 new infections occur each year
- Five millions HIV tests are performed annually
- Around 6, 500 new cases of HIV infection are diagnosed each year
- In 2010, about 50, 000 persons were unaware that they were infected with HIV.
- Last guidelines recommend routine screening of the entire adult population by general practitioners (GP) and suggest offering rapid HIV tests (RHT) instead of conventional laboratory tests.

# Methods

- Prospective interventional study led in French GPs offices between June and October 2010.
- Objective: to evaluate feasibility and acceptability of a new RHT based HIV screening procedure.
- Adult patients visiting their physicians were informed that RHT were available.
- RHT was performed following spontaneous patient request or physician recommendation.
- VIKIA® HIV 1/2 (bioMérieux) with finger-stick whole blood was used



- Acceptability rate was defined as the percentage of patients accepting RHT and feasibility rate as the percentage of tested patients divided by the total number of patients visiting their GP during the study period.
- Satisfaction and problems encountered by patients and physicians were recorded.

# Results

| Table I: Datas                     |                        | N = 383 | %       |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|---------|---------|
| • Prior history of HIV screening   | Yes                    | 299     | (78,1%) |
|                                    | No                     | 84      | (21,9%) |
| • Last test (mean) : 2,9 years ago |                        |         |         |
| • Reason for rapid HIV testing     | Patient's request      | 244     | (64,7%) |
|                                    | Physician's indication | 133     | (35,3%) |
| • Results                          | Negative               | 348     | (92,1%) |
|                                    | Invalid                | 30      | (7,9%)  |
| • Problems during procedure        | Yes                    | 157     | (41,9%) |
|                                    | No                     | 218     | (58,1%) |
| • Principal difficulties           | Blood sampling         | 143     | (91,7%) |
|                                    | Problems with test kit | 2       | (1,3%)  |
|                                    | Unreadable result      | 10      | (6,4%)  |
|                                    | Other                  | 21      | (13,5%) |

| Table II: Patients characteristic according to prior HIV testing |                   |                |              |         |
|--|-------------------|----------------|--------------|---------|
| Past history of HIV screening?                                   |                   | Yes<br>N = 299 | No<br>N = 84 | p*      |
| Gender   | Male              | 149 (49,8%)    | 47 (56%)     | 0,3215  |
|  | Female            | 150 (50,2%)    | 37 (44%)     |         |
| Age  | ≤ 20 years old    | 19 (6,4%)      | 13 (15,9%)   | <0,0001 |
|  | ]20–40] years old | 189 (63,6%)    | 37 (45,1%)   |         |
|  | ]40-60] years old | 81 (27,3%)     | 17 (20,8%)   |         |
|  | > 60 years old    | 8 (2,7%)       | 15 (18,3%)   |         |

- 62 French GPs, n = 383 patients (187 women, 196 men), mean age 36.2 years.
- 84 (21.9%) patients had never been tested for HIV, and 297 (82.3%) had had HIV testing recommended in past, but did not have it done.
- Patients never tested before were more likely to be under 20 and over 60 years old.
- A total of 382 patients agreed to be tested and 382 tests were performed (acceptability rate 99.75%)
- 64.7% tests were performed at the patient's request.
- The screening (feasibility) rate was 1.5% of the adult population visiting their GP.
- Most patients were satisfied by the procedure:
  - 93.8% would recommend the test to a friend
  - 96.9% would prefer receiving results immediatly
- At the end of the study 59.4% of the physicians would continue to use RHT in their daily practice
- Principle inconveniences were:
  - Finger-stick whole blood sampling technique
  - Time taken to complete the test

\* Chi2 test

# Conclusion

- Routine Rapid HIV Testing by French GPs is feasible and the acceptability rate is high.
- 22% of participating patients were tested for HIV for the first time.
- Obstacles to implementation of RHT were the need for finger-stick blood sampling and time constraints.
- Further investigation of RHT is warranted to determine if its routine implementation by all GPs could decrease the number of undiagnosed persons with HIV in France.