

GMHS23



THE ANNUAL REPORT 2015 GAY MEN'S HEALTH SERVICE, HSE

The Gay Men's Health Service (GMHS) HSE reached its 23rd year of operation on October 6th 2015 and continues to be the only statutory Public Health Service in Ireland for Gay, Bisexual Men and Men who have Sex with Men (MSM).



Ministers visit to GMHS November 2015. Dr Susan Clarke Consultant; Medical, Director GMHS, Minister for Health (Mr Leo Varadkar TD) and Mick Quinlan; Manager GMHS

According to the HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) in Ireland in 2015 of the 491 newly recorded HIV cases MSM accounted for 58%. The high rates of HIV for MSM along with the significant increase in other STIs highlights the importance of a targeted service for MSM. It also shows that addressing these concerns in a holistic and comprehensive manner is an important approach as outlined in the National Sexual Health Strategy launched in 2015.

This GMHS annual report highlights the continued work of GMHS and the increasing demand on its services. The popularity of the clinic and the significant cohort of MSM attending from all parts of Ireland (one in five reside outside Dublin) show that the HSE is fulfilling some of the indicators from the National Sexual Health Strategy. Important is the high number (n=971) of men attending GMHS for the first time in 2015 and who had never tested previously for HIV (41%) or STIs (55%), including the younger age profile. Proving that the continuation of and increased access to the GMHS STI checkpoint is vital. The delivery of the clinical service is made possible by the commitment and work of the staff, which is widely appreciated and acknowledged by HSE Executive Management.

Some highlights in 2015 was a first ever visit of a Minister for Health (Mr Leo Varadkar TD) to the GMHS clinic while in operation, which was very much appreciated by the staff and patients. Recognising the GMHS and the needs of the community it serves it is also key point in the National Sexual Health Strategy. Another was the retirement of Mick



Mick's Retirement Party by GHN at Pantibar.

Quinlan long time manager of the service and the smooth changeover to the new manager Siobhan O'Dea.

STI CHECKPOINT AT BAGGOT ST.

The GMHS run STI Checkpoint at Baggot St Hospital, Dublin 4² is for all men who have sex with men (MSM) including transgender people. A multi disciplinary team provide free, friendly and confidential clinics on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. The weekly attendance of over 120 men highlights the popularity and need for such a service.

STI CHECKPOINT 2015

In 2015 there were 102 clinics (51 weeks) and the demands on GMHS continued to increase with over 6,300 men attending (971 were first time to GMHS).

- Doctors provided over 3,200 assessments.
- Nurses provided over 2,500 assessments for self rectal testing.
- Nurses also provided 4,105 patient contacts for testing and treatment.
- Health Advisor provided over 750 consultations in regards to follow-up and partner notification in relation to a diagnosis.
- Counsellors provided pre and post HIV test counselling to over 880 men at the clinic and ongoing counselling to 76 people with over 680 sessions at Outhouse LGBT Community Centre, Capel Street, Dublin 1.

¹ <http://ndsc.newsweaver.ie/epiinsight/11c21vno2lw?a=1&p=50218569&t=17517774>

² <http://hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/sexhealth/gmhs/clinics/>

DIAGNOSIS AT GMHS 2015

There were over 1019 diagnoses in 2015, summarised as follows:

- 343 Gonorrhoea – similar to 2014 (40% were first time patients to GMHS).
- 256 Chlamydia – an increase of 24% over 2014 (41% were first time patients to GMHS).
- 68 HIV – an increase of 36% over 2014 (60% were first time patients to GMHS note 4% had tested at Outhouse and were brought into GMHS for results). Furthermore 17/68 (26%) had tested positive elsewhere) overall 63% were first time patients to GMHS.
- 102 Syphilis - an 21% increase over 2014 (59% were first time patients to GMHS).

There were further cases of: HSV (genital herpes), LGV, Shigella and Hepatitis C and approximately 250 treatments for HPV (genital warts).

PEP AT GMHS 2015

134 patients were prescribed Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) in 2015 (an increase of 84% compared to 2014). 49 (37%) patients were first time patients to the clinic.

FIRST TIME PATIENTS TO GMHS 2015

There were 971 first time patients to GMHS an increase of 5% over 2014. Of these:

- 40% were aged 24 and younger, rising to 69% for those aged 29 and younger. This was a 3% increase for those aged 24 and younger.
- 49% were born abroad (57 other countries) similar to 2014.
- 388 (41%) men had never tested for HIV previously and 510 (55%) had never tested for STIs previously.

Over one in three first time patients (344) received some diagnosis. First time patients to GMHS represent a significant percentage (41%) of those diagnosed with Gonorrhoea or Chlamydia or (62%) of those diagnosed with HIV or Syphilis.

ENHANCING ACCESS TO HIV AND STI TESTING 2015

There is a 'nurse led' assessment and self-testing (rectal) for STIs asymptomatic patients at Baggot St Hospital and this is also provided at the outreach service at Outhouse LGBT Community Centre, Capel St., Dublin 1 (held on the third Saturday of each Month).

STI CHECKPOINT BAGGOT ST HOSPITAL

There were over 2,500 assessments and tests and the results is contained in this report.

STI CHECKPOINT @ OUTHOUSE.

In 2015 there were 12 outreach sessions at Outhouse with 187 men testing an average of 16 per clinic. Two nurses run this STI Checkpoint along with the Gay Switchboard Ireland volunteers, whose support is invaluable for a 'meet and greet' and much appreciated.

TESTING AT SHAG WEEK

In February 2015 the GMHS nurses along with the GUIDE provided a pilot Outreach testing at two third level insitiuations, DIT Aungier Street and IT Carlow. This was part of the Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy communications working group. The response was huge and over 85 people tested at each venue, a fuller report is available³.

HIV PREVENTION & SEXUAL HEALTH AWARENESS 2015

As a HSE service, GMHS values the partnership with the Gay Health Network (GHN), and its members across Ireland, GOSHH Limerick, Outhouse (LGBT Community Centre Dublin), Gay Switchboard Ireland, Ositive Now and BeLonG To Youth Service amongst others. As co-manager GMHS sees the continued sustainability of the www.man2man.ie programme as vital for a national response to the HIV and sexual health education and prevention needs of MSM in Ireland.

This and other stratigic work is outlined in GHN annual reports www.ghn.ie. Including the promotion of the Sexual Health Information provided by the Gay Switchboard Ireland and the personal development courses delivered run by Gay Switchboard Ireland and BeLonG To Youth Service aimed at different age groups.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT HAPPENINGS FOR GMHS IN 2014 WERE:

- Outreach Testing for SHAG Week February 2015.
- Published LUV Bug Leaflets on Shigella. www.healthpromotion.ie
- Published GMHS 22: The Annual Report 2014. (www.gmhs.ie)
- Articles in EPI-Insight (www.hpsc.ie).
- Organised the 13th Annual Gay Health Forum at Dublin Castle along with GHN and supported by the Department of Health.
- Continued to supply free condoms and lubricant at venues and events and the GMHS clinic and as part of HIV prevention initiatives.
- Promoted awareness of HIV and STI testing services for MSM at LGBT Pride events and in the GCN magazine and social media.
- Helped launch HIV Laid Bare (www.man2man.ie)
- European HIV and Hepatitis Testing Week.
- The World AIDS Day 2015 promotion 'solidarity will all people living with HIV', along with Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme.

MSM Internet Survey Ireland (MISI) 2015

In 2014 GMHS was instrumental establishing a cross-sectoral research partnership to progress and sustain Gay Men's Sex Surveys in Ireland. The MSM Internet Survey Ireland (MISI) went live between March 1st to May 31st 2015 and over 3,200 men responding. The findings are to be published at GHF14 2016 and available online at www.misi.ie

GAY MEN'S HEALTH SERVICE

SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE FOR MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN AND TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

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W: www.gmhs.ie for Services, Reports and Links

³ <http://www.crisispregnancy.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/HIV-STI-TESTING-PILOT-PROJECT-SEXUAL-HEALTH-ADVICE-GUIDANCE-SHAG-WEEK-2015.pdf>