

GMHS24



THE ANNUAL REPORT 2016 GAY MEN'S HEALTH SERVICE, HSE

Gay Men's Health Service (GMHS) HSE reached its 24th year of operation on October 6th 2016 and continues to be the only statutory Public Health Service in Ireland for Gay, Bisexual Men and Men who have Sex with Men (MSM). The GMHS is funded by HSE CHO 6 and is centrally involved in strategies and actions to reduce the incidence of HIV in the MSM community and beyond.



Some of the Monday Clinic team, free friendly and confidential service boost for gay men's health.

In Ireland in 2016, of the 512 newly recorded HIV cases, MSM accounted for 46%¹ according to the HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC). The high rates of HIV for MSM along with the significant increase in other STIs highlights the importance of a targeted service for MSM. In 2016, there was also a reported 50% overall increase in Gonorrhoea infection detected nationally, with 85% of those detections in MSM where mode of transition was known. It also demonstrates that addressing these concerns in a holistic and comprehensive manner is an important approach as outlined in the National Sexual Health Strategy and action plan. The strategy will run from 2015 – 2020 with an action plan drafted for 2015 and 2016 to ensure work started immediately.

The GMHS has a vital role in promoting and delivering this service and strives to meet the increasing demands upon it. The popularity of the clinic and the significant cohort of MSM attending from all parts of Ireland (one in five reside outside Dublin) demonstrate that the HSE is fulfilling some of the indicators from the National Sexual Health Strategy. In 2016, 1044 men attended GMHS for the first time and a significant percentage had never tested previously for HIV (35%) or other STIs (43%) 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 Health Service Executive Management and the MSM community.

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2016

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NURSE LED ASYMPTOMATIC SCREENING CLINIC

A nurse led asymptomatic screening clinic was established in mid-September initially on a 6 month pilot basis on a Monday afternoon with access to a rapid HIV test as well as a full STI screen. This has expanded STI testing services to 3 times weekly. This clinic has proved extremely popular with over 100 patients attending per month. 31% of the clients who present to this clinic are first time attendees to the service with 10% never having had a HIV test previously. The Monday clinic has had a 15% pick up of STI's among this asymptomatic cohort. This is significant in reducing the overall burden of disease as a result of testing, treating and contact tracing. Prior to setting up this clinic, the service did not have the capacity to cater for between 15% and 20% of men who presented on a weekly basis for screening or treatment. Those numbers are now in single figures as a result of funding for this initiative.

INTRODUCTION OF AN OUTREACH PILOT PROGRAMME

An outreach pilot programme was introduced in October 2016 to deliver peer led HIV and STI education and prevention in community and social settings such as bars, clubs and saunas and at Outhouse LGBT community centre. The outreach team have linked with venues, installed and maintained condom dispensers, maintained a visible presence at special events, engaged in online outreach through hook up apps and forged relationships with sub populations and traditionally hard to reach vulnerable groups. This invaluable work has encouraged a number of people to access services, testing and treatment who may not have done so in the past while also providing education and support for this vulnerable cohort of patients. Funding for both of these initiatives was made available through HSE Health and Wellbeing.

STI CHECKPOINT AT BAGGOT ST. HOSPITAL

The GMHS 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 Monday afternoon, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. The weekly attendance of over 180 men highlights the popularity and need for such a service. This is also enhanced by a satellite clinic on the third Saturday of every month at Outhouse LGBT Community Centre.

STI CHECKPOINT 2016

In 2016 there were 116 clinics (51 weeks) and the demands on GMHS continued to increase with over 7,400 men attending (1044 were first time attendees at GMHS).

Doctors provided over 3,000 assessments.

Nurses provided over 2,500 asymptomatic screens in addition to 2,000 patient contacts for phlebotomy, treatments and tests of cure as well as 1,812 vaccinations for Hepatitis A and B.

Health Advisors provided over 1,500 consultations in regards to follow-up and partner notification in relation to a diagnosis. They also carried out retrospective audits of all positive results to ensure adequate treatment, follow up and test of cure.

Counsellors provided ongoing counselling to 60 people with over 600 sessions at Outhouse LGBT Community Centre, Capel Street, Dublin 1.

The presence of a medical scientist for onsite laboratory point of care testing during clinic allows a rapid presumptive diagnosis of gonorrhoea infection and facilitates immediate treatment. This invaluable service greatly enhances a strong working relationship with STI testing facilities and expertise at St. James's Hospital Central Pathology Laboratory

A clerical administrator manages enquiries, processes paperwork, facilitates appointments, and maintains records which greatly contributes to the smooth and successful running of the clinic.

DIAGNOSIS AT GMHS 2016

There were over 1000 diagnoses of an STI in 2016, summarised as follows:

- 491 Gonorrhoea infections – a 43% increase on 2015 figures (33% were first time attendees to GMHS). 8% of patients were treated twice for Gonorrhoea during 2016 while 1% were treated on 3 occasions in that 12 month period.
- 300 Chlamydia infections – an increase of 17% over 2015 (33% were first time attendees to GMHS). 8% of patients were treated twice for Chlamydia during 2016 while 1% were treated on 3 occasions in that 12 month period.
- 68 HIV infections – an increase of 36% over 2015 (60% were first time patients to GMHS. Note 4% had tested at Outhouse and attended GMHS for results). Furthermore 17/68 (26%) had tested positive elsewhere overall 63% were first time attendees to GMHS. All patients diagnosed with HIV were linked to local services within 1-2 weeks of diagnosis.
- 102 diagnosis of Syphilis – 11% were re- infections (54% were first time attendees to GMHS).
- 8 Hepatitis C infections – an increase of 300% on 2015 figures.

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

There were 7,400 patients catered for in 2016 for a combination of assessments, screening, vaccinations and reviews and the results are contained in this report. This figure rises to over 7,500 when the outreach figures for the Outhouse STI clinics are taken into account. The total figure gives an increase of 19% more patient attendances than in 2015.

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

PEP AT GMHS 2015

193 patients were prescribed Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) in 2016 (an increase of 44% compared to 2015). 61 (32%) patients were first time attendees to the clinic.

An audit was performed on PEP assessments made in 2016, and identified important risk factors for acquisition of STIs. This was compared to a published audit from 56 Dean Street, London³.

Overall, there were significantly higher proportions of:

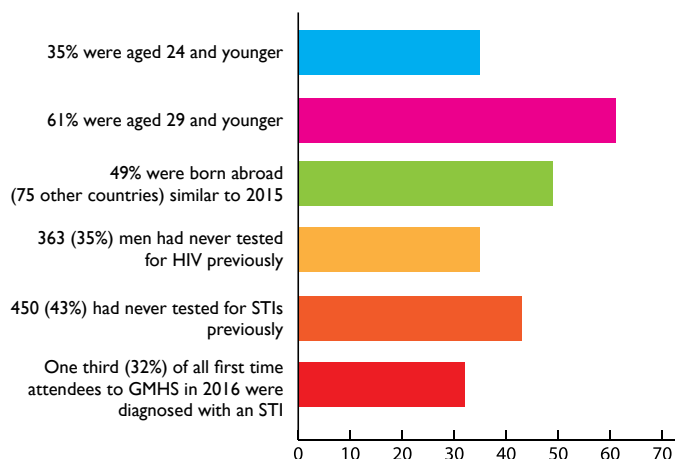
1. Condoms not used for anal intercourse (73% vs 54%; $p < 0.0001$)
2. Use of drugs, other than alcohol, reported by GMHS attendees (30 vs 20%; $p = 0.01$, with an additional 13% using both drugs and alcohol).

Attendees who presented within 24 hours of possible exposure to HIV reported more condom use compared to those who attended within 48 or 72 hours of exposure (38% vs 18% and 25%) and less impaired judgement (47% vs 54% and 68%).

First time PEP attendees were more likely to report impaired judgement compared to those who had received PEP on at least one previous occasion (62% vs 55%) and more likely to be unaware of partner's bacterial infection status (73% vs 58%).

PATIENT'S FIRST PRESENTATION TO GMHS 2016

There were 1044 patients whose first ever presentation to the GMHS screening service was in 2016, an increase of 7.5% on the number of patients who presented to the service for the first time in 2015.



ENHANCING ACCESS TO HIV AND STI TESTING 2016

There is an asymptomatic nurse led screening service available for patients at all 3 GMHS clinics 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 @ OUTHOUSE.

In 2016, there were 12 outreach sessions at Outhouse with 153 testing an average of 13 per clinic. Two nurses run this STI Checkpoint along with the Gay Switchboard Ireland volunteers, whose support is invaluable as they 'meet and greet' all attendees making the experience more friendly and pleasant for those attending. Although this is run as an asymptomatic service, the pickup rate of STI's in this cohort was 21% in total (2 HIV, 1 Syphilis and 29 Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea). All of these patients were followed up at GMHS for treatment, vaccination and onward referral to specialist services where appropriate.

HIV PREVENTION & SEXUAL HEALTH AWARENESS 2016

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, HIV Ireland, Positive 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 STI prevention needs of MSM in Ireland. Of enormous importance and benefit also are the partnerships with Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme and Health Protection Surveillance Centre. A new partnership that emerged in 2016 through designing resources on chemsex was that of addiction services, sexual health services, HIV Ireland, Gay Switchboard and Social inclusion.

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

2016 was a very busy year at GMHS with an overall increase of 19% in patient attendances on the previous year. There was a proportionate increase in all STI's diagnosed as a result. One third of all new attendees were diagnosed with an STI indicating that the service is effective at targeting those who are most in need of STI screening, treatment and follow-up.

³ Whitlock, G., et al., High HIV incidence in men who have sex with men attending for postexposure prophylaxis: a service evaluation. Sexually Transmitted Infections, 2016.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT HAPPENINGS FOR GMHS IN 2016 WERE:

- Setting up an Outreach team in partnership with GHN.
- Partnership with addiction services, and NGO's and designing and publication of resources on G use. www.drugs.ie/GHB
- Published GMHS 23: The Annual Report 2015. (www.gmhs.ie).
- Articles in EPI-Insight and Health Matters (www.hpsc.ie).
- Posters submitted to IDSI, SSSTDI and BASHH annual conferences.
- Organised the 14th Annual Gay Health Forum at Dublin Castle along with GHN and supported by the Department of Health and the HSE.
- Continued to supply free condoms and lubricant at the GMHS clinic and as part of HIV prevention initiatives.
- Installation of condom and lubricant dispensers at key social venues, pubs, social clubs, saunas and sex on premises venues. Regular maintenance and supply of condoms to same.
- Promoted awareness of HIV and STI testing services for MSM at LGBT Pride events and in GCN magazine and on social media.
- European HIV and Hepatitis Testing Week.
- World AIDS Day 2016 promotion and extra community testing.
- Delivery of Chemsex training to HSE and NGO staff

GMHS CLINIC OPENING TIMES:

Monday 2pm – 4pm	(asymptomatic nurse led clinic)
Tuesday from 4pm	(limited numbers allocated from 4pm, Doctor reviews start 6pm)
Wednesday from 4pm	(limited numbers allocated from 4pm, Doctor reviews start 6pm)

HPV vaccination service as per immunisation guidelines.

Outreach services - details available in clinic.

Psychotherapy services – details available in clinic.

Chemsex information and support services details available in clinic.

Outhouse STI checkpoint clinic 3rd Saturday of every month.

GMHS NEW MONDAY CLINIC 2PM - 4PM



BAGGOT ST. HOSPITAL, DUBLIN 4

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STARTING FROM
MONDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER



RAPID HIV TEST
RESULT WHILE YOU WAIT



NO SYMPTOMS
GET YOUR ROUTINE STI TESTS



NO APPOINTMENT
IT'S FREE - JUST DROP IN



FREE DROP-IN SERVICE 2PM - 4PM
FOR MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN

 Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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