

GMHS22



THE ANNUAL REPORT 2014 GAY MEN'S HEALTH SERVICE, HSE

The Gay Men's Health Service (GMHS) HSE reached its 22nd year of operation on October 6th 2014 and continues to be the only statutory Public Health Service in Ireland for Gay, Bisexual Men and Men who have Sex with Men (MSM).

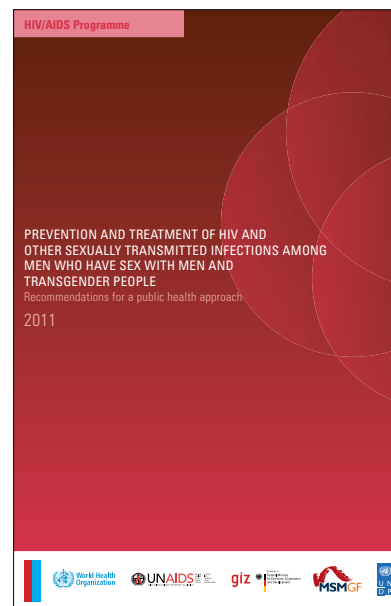
In Ireland, of the new HIV cases in first half of 2014, MSM accounted for 46%. According to the HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) "sex between men is the predominant mode of transmission in Ireland"¹. The high rates of HIV for MSM along with the significant increase in other STIs such as Gonorrhoea, Chlamydia, LGV and Syphilis, 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 already outlined in the National Strategy for HIV, the Healthy Ireland Framework of Actions - Empowering People and Communities, Partnerships and Cross-Sectoral Work and Research and Evidence² and the forthcoming National Sexual Health Strategy. Much of this approach is outlined in the World Health Organisation (WHO) published³ guidelines 2011.

WHO GUIDELINES FOR SERVICES FOR MSM

'On prevention of sexual transmission via access to testing and promotion of behavioural interventions, information, education, communication by';

- Offering HIV testing and counselling, including community-based settings
- MSM with symptomatic STIs should be offered syndromic management and treatment.
- Offered periodic testing for asymptomatic urethral and rectal
- Offered periodic serological testing for asymptomatic syphilis infection
- Offered HBV immunisation
- Implementing individual-level and community behavioural interventions for the prevention of HIV and STIs
- Promoting the use of condoms
- Offering targeted internet-based information to decrease risky sexual behaviours and increase uptake of HIV testing and counselling
- Using social marketing strategies to increase the uptake of HIV/STI testing
- Implementing sex venue-based outreach strategies to decrease risky sexual behaviour and increase uptake of HIV testing

GMHS has promoted and delivered on the above guidelines with access to testing, promotion of HIV and sexual health education and prevention, training and research and partnership.



GMHS has a vital role in Public Health and partakes in the Outbreak control teams HSE East for Gonorrhoea and LGV. It is also a member of the 'Sexual Health Communications Network' led by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme. This 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 Strategy. Important is the high numbers of men attending GMHS who have never tested for HIV or STIs⁴, showing that the continuation of and 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.

As a HSE service, GMHS values the partnership with the Gay Health Network (GHN), individuals and members across Ireland, Outhouse (LGBT Community Centre), Gay Switchboard Ireland and BeLonG To Youth Service amongst others and sees the continued sustainability of the man2man programme as vital for a national response to HIV and sexual health education and prevention for MSM in Ireland.

GMHS annual reports are available at www.gmhs.ie

¹ <http://ndsc.newsweaver.ie/epiinsight/1oqqh2s05qn?a=1&p=43619675&t=17517774>

² <http://health.gov.ie/healthy-ireland/>

³ http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/guidelines/msm_guidelines2011/en/

⁴ In 2014 of 926 first time patients to GMHS never tested for HIV (42%) and STIs (55%) this is significantly higher than the EMIS 2010 of 37% and 40% respectively. <http://www.gayhealthnetwork.ie/assets/files/pdfs/reports/web%20-%20A5-man2man%20-%20Report%204%20-%20Access.pdf>

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2014

STI CHECKPOINT AT BAGGOT ST.

GMHS run STI Checkpoint at Baggot St Hospital, Dublin 4⁵ 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 110 men highlights the popularity and need for such a service.

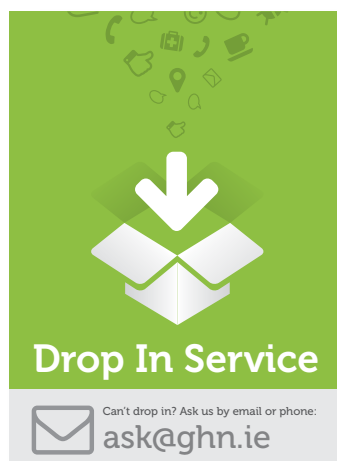
Over 12,000 MSM have registered at GMHS since 1997 with 4,021 between 2010 and 2014 which was an increase of 40% over the previous five years. Over 18% reside outside Dublin city and county⁶.



STI CHECKPOINT 2014

In 2014 the demands on GMHS continued to increase with over 6,050 men attending (926 were first time to GMHS).

- Doctors provided over 3,600 assessments.
- Nurses provided 5,097 patient contacts.
- 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 and ongoing counselling to 76 people with over 680 sessions at Outhouse LGBT Community Centre, Capel Street, Dublin 1.



DIAGNOSIS AT GMHS 2014

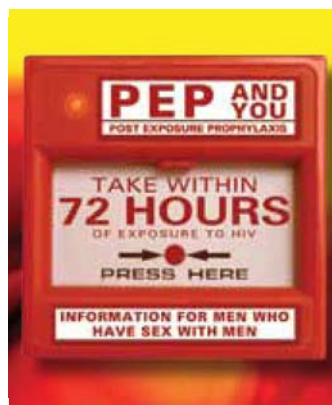
There were over 850 diagnoses in GMHS in 2014, summarised as follows:

- 338 Gonorrhoea - a 17% increase over 2013 (38% were first time patients to GMHS).
- 214 Chlamydia - similar to 2013 (40% were first time patients to GMHS).
- 50 HIV⁷ – an increase of 30% over 2013 (58% were first time patients to GMHS).
- 84 Syphilis - an 18% increase over 2013 (62% were first time patients to GMHS).

There were further cases of: 19 HSV (genital herpes), 4 LGV, 3 Hepatitis C and approximately 250 treatments for HPV (genital warts).

PEP AT GMHS 2014

73 patients were prescribed Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) in 2014 (similar to 2013). 29 (40%) patients were first time to the clinic. 25% were aged 24 and younger rising to 48% for aged 29 and younger, 42% were in their 30s and 10% were aged 40 and older.



FIRST TIME PATIENTS TO GMHS 2014

There were 926 first time patients to GMHS an increase of 5% over 2013. Of these:

- 37% were aged 24 and younger, rising to 68% for those aged 29 and younger. This was a 3% increase for those aged 24 and younger and an increase of 13% for those aged 25-29.
- 51% were born abroad (57 other countries) - an increase of 23% over 2013.
- 22% did not identify as white - an increase of 47% over 2012.
- 388 (42%) men had never tested for HIV previously and 510 (55%) had never tested for STIs previously.

Over one in three first time patients (323) received some diagnosis. First time patients to GMHS represent a significant percentage (40 %) of those diagnosed with an STI infection or HIV (58%) or Syphilis (62%).

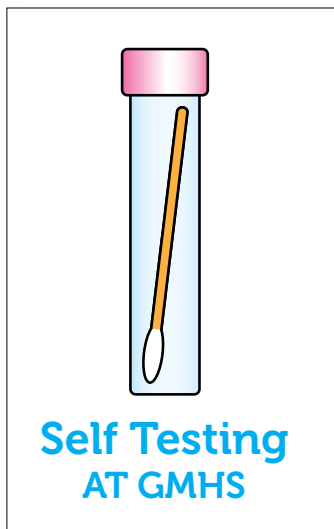
⁶ <http://hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/sexhealth/gmhs/research/menfromafar4.pdf>

⁷ 67 men were diagnosed with HIV and 17(25%) of these were transfer of care from other countries

ENHANCING ACCESS TO HIV AND STI TESTING 2014

In 2014 access was streamlined and increased at the STI checkpoint, Baggot St., with the introduction of self-testing for STIs among asymptomatic patients and the nurse led outreach service at Outhouse LGBT Community Centre, Capel St.

- A nurse led assessment for asymptomatic return patients that included a self-testing rectal swab was started in STI Checkpoint Baggot St. Hospital. Between September and end December 445 patients provided a self-taking rectal swab⁸ as part of the HIV and STI test. Just over one in eight (12%) patients had an un-suspected STI.
- In November 2014, as part of the European HIV Testing Week, a nurse led GMHS outreach service was established at Outhouse LGBT Community Centre, Capel St., Dublin 1⁹. This has continued on the third Saturday of each month to coincide with the sexual health information drop-in run by the Gay Switchboard Ireland. In 2014, Outreach clinics were held on the 22nd and 29th November and 20th December. Of the 38 men tested, 11% received a diagnosis of HIV, Syphilis and Chlamydia.



HIV PREVENTION & SEXUAL HEALTH AWARENESS 2014

A vital aspect of GMHS work is the promotion of HIV and sexual health awareness and prevention among MSM. This is carried out through strategic partnerships with the Gay Health Network (GHN) and other community groups as outlined in the GHN annual report 2014 (www.ghn.ie) Including the promotion of the Sexual Health Information Drop-In every Saturday 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. GMHS co-manages the HSE funded Man2Man programme www.man2man.ie launched since 2011. Other significant happenings for GMHS in 2014 were:

- Launch of 'Know the Score Get Tested' & online testing locator map¹⁰ for Irish AIDS Day



Rory O'Neil and Jerry Buttimer T.D.

- IT'S HARD IT'S EASY social media campaign.



- Published LUV Bug Leaflets on LGV, Gonorrhoea, Chlamydia, Syphilis, and the HIV, Hepatitis B and PEP information leaflets.

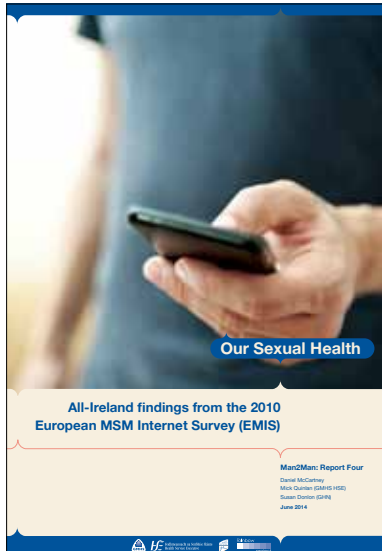


⁸ <http://hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/sexhealth/gmhs/research/selfswab.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.man2man.ie/services.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.man2man.ie/free-testing-map.html>

- Published EMIS Ireland Report: Man2man Report 4: Our Sexual Health.



- Published GMHS 21: The Annual Report 2013.
- Articles in EPI-Insight (www.hpsc.ie).
- Organised the 12th 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.
- Formulated the design of the man2man branded condoms and lube for 2015
- Promoted awareness of, and access, to HIV and STI testing services for MSM at LGBT Pride events and in the GCN magazine and social media.
- Testing at GMHS and Outhouse via social media HSE website, Gaydar and Facebook.



- Presented on Hepatitis C and MSM at Correlation Hep C and Drugs Conference, Berlin¹¹
- Member of the Dublin City Council World AIDS Day 2014 working group and launch of 'HIV Dublin Our Responsibility Building an Inclusive Society' at the Mansion House¹².

MSM INTERNET SURVEY IRELAND (MISI)

Research has had an impact on policy and practice in Ireland and the various reports highlighted the needs of MSM in Ireland by informing the strategy, raising awareness among health professionals, and helping deliver appropriate services at a local level. GMHS has led on research among MSM in Ireland. In September 2014, GMHS established a cross-sectoral research partnership to progress and sustain Gay Men's Sex Surveys in Ireland. "The partnership consists of statutory organisations and NGOs working in the area of HIV prevention and sexual health, including the HSE's Gay Men's Health Service (GMHS), Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC), and Crisis Pregnancy Programme (CPP), and the Gay Health Network (GHN). The research group is supported by an advisory group of international experts. The MSM Internet Survey Ireland (MISI) 2015 received ethical approval from the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland in December 2014 to go live 2015"¹³. MISI 2015 would also include a question on testing at GMHS.



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



¹¹ http://www.hepatitis-c-initiative.eu/images/conference_berlin/presentations/21_Quinlan_HCV%20Ireland.pdf

¹² <http://www.dublincity.ie/hiv-dublin-%E2%80%93-our-responsibility-building-inclusive-society>

¹³ <http://hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/sexhealth/gmhs/misi2015.pdf>