

Success Stories Profile

SER+ Associação Portuguesa para a Prevenção e Desafio à Sida (Portuguese Association for AIDS Challenge and Prevention), Portugal



Associação Portuguesa para a Prevenção e Desafio à Sida
Learning and Growing With All People Who Lives With HIV and AIDS

HIV in Portugal

In Western Europe, Portugal has one of the highest prevalence rates of HIV infection.¹ In 2011, the main transmission mode in Portugal is through heterosexual contact, followed by sex between men (MSM), people who inject drugs (PWID) and mother-to-child transmission. HIV testing is systematically offered only to pregnant women, PWID, military recruits and prisoners.²

SER+ is an organization that promotes an integrated response at the level of prevention, diagnosis, treatment, discrimination and social support in the area of HIV and viral hepatitis by involving and empowering affected populations. SER+ provides social and psychological support, harm reduction programmes, legal support, educational and awareness programmes, support for scientific evidence, rapid testing for HIV and viral hepatitis and campaigns.



SER+ mobile unit providing outreach for testing week.

European Testing Week 2016

Although SER+ primarily targets vulnerable groups, for Testing Week, their primary goal was to raise awareness on the importance of early diagnosis in the general population and health care professionals to promote implementation of rapid HIV, viral hepatitis and syphilis testing. During Testing Week, SER+ worked in the main centres of Cascais and in primary care centres in Oeiras with their Mobile Health Unit, distributing condoms, informative flyers and providing anonymous, confidential and free rapid testing.

Innovation during European Testing Week

NGOs and formal health care organizations typically operate independently and isolated from one another in Portugal. However, with the partnership that SER+ established with the primary care centres in Oeiras, they formulated a new integrated strategy for testing. By closing the gap between NGOs and primary care providers, they can expect to improve linkage to care.

Impact of European Testing Week

Raising awareness in primary health care professionals for early screening was an important step to start implementing common strategies to promote early diagnosis of HIV infection, both in the general and vulnerable populations.

¹ SER+ Associação Portuguesa para a Prevenção e Desafio à Sida, 2017. <http://www.sermais.pt>

² WHO. Key facts on HIV epidemic in Portugal and progress in 2011. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2013.



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The close collaborations between SER+ and the local health care community ensures that the gaps between HIV testing and care will close and that more people providing health care promote testing within their practice.