Living with HIV:
Some results from a survey among 400 HIV positive people in Brussels and Wallonia

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1/ Context and partnerships

• 2008: GRECOS
• Collaboration between Plate-forme Prévention Sida, Observatoire du sida et des sexualités & Centre d’études sociologiques (Saint-Louis University)
• Partnerships:
  • 4 ARC: CHU Saint-Pierre, CHU Liège, CHU Erasme, CHU Charleroi
  • 6 hospitals: CHIREC/ Cavell, CH Iris Sud/ Ettebeek-Ixelles, Grands Hôpitaux de Charleroi, CHU A. Paré (Mons), CH Peltzer-La Tourelle (Verviers), CHR de Namur
  • 8 associations: Coordination Provinciale Sida Assuétudes (Namur), Ex æquo, Lhiving, Nyampinga, SES Huy-Waremme & Service Soins de Santé Prisons (SPF Justice), SIREAS/Sid’Aids-migrants, Topaz, Warning-Bruxelles
2/ Methodology

- Who? PLHIV + 18 years-old, diagnosed for 1 year at last, living or being medically treated in Brussels or Wallonia

- 2 methods according to institutions

- Participation: anonymous, voluntary & deliberate
  => approved by Ethics committees

- One-on-one interview with trained interviewers

- Questionnaire: 4 parts
3/ Results

a) Limits to this presentation
b) Global profile
c) Medical knowledge & satisfaction
d) Sex and love life
e) Socio-economic situation
3/ a) Limits to this presentation

- Preliminary results
- 2 separate groups?
  - 25% of MSM are not Belgian
  - +25% of Africans are also Belgian
  - Belgian/ others Europeans/ Africans
3/ b) Global profile

- 343 completed questionnaires
- Nationalities: 15% cited at least 2
- Top 10 of nationalities
3/ Nationalities

Nationalities: Top 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>% of respondents who answered this nationality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marocce</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroun</td>
<td>5.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo (RDC)</td>
<td>9.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>53.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3/ b) Sexual orientation

Sexual orientations of all respondents
- Heterosexual: 66%
- Homosexual: 26%
- Bisexual: 6%
- Don't know: 1%
- No answer: 1%

Sexual orientation among Belgians
- Heterosexual: 54%
- Homosexual: 37%
- Bisexual: 8%
- Don't know: 1%
- No answer: 0%

Sexual orientations among Africans
- Heterosexual: 97%
- Homosexual: 1%
- Bisexual: 1%
- Don't know: 1%
- No answer: 0%
3/ b) Sex and sexual orientation

Sexual orientation according to sex

- Men
  - Heterosexual
  - Homosexual
  - Bisexual
  - Don't know

- Women
  - Heterosexual
  - Homosexual
  - Bisexual
  - Don't know
3/ b) Sex and nationality

Sex according to nationality

- Belgians:
  - Women: 42.50%
  - Men: 57.50%

- Africans:
  - Women: 68.90%
  - Men: 31.10%
3/ b) Average age

- Average age of all respondents: ~44
- Belgians + 46 years-old
- Africans + 41 years-old
3/ c) Medical knowledge & satisfaction

Is your viral load detectable or undetectable?

- +22% of Africans do not know; 8.2% of Belgians
- +18% of heterosexuals; 3.5% of homosexuals
3/ c) Medical knowledge & satisfaction

- AIDS Diagnosis: +12% of Africans do not know; -5% Belgians & others Europeans

=> Difficult to explain

- Very high satisfaction rates towards doctors:
  - almost 88% are very satisfied
  - 94% satisfied by the quality of medical care
  - Especially Africans
3/ d) Sex & love life

- **Partnership**
  - 57.2% are in a stable relationship
    => Vary according to the income level
  - 60.4% of those partners are HIV+
  - For 89.7%, their partner know their serostatus
  - 24.5% experienced a break-up of relationship because of HIV:
    => 1/3 of homosexuals, 23% heterosexuals
### 3/ d) Sex & love life

- **Modifications of sexual practices since the diagnosis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use condoms more or systematically</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have less risky sexual practices</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have reduced the number of partners</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek exclusively HIV+ partners</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have renounced their sexual life</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have always fear to transmit HIV during sexual intercourse</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3/ d) Sex & love life

• Sexual life and use of condoms
  – +20% did not have any sexual relation for the past 12 months
    => 26.7% of heterosexuals, 6.8% of homosexuals
    => 25.5% of Africans, 15% of Belgians
  – Use of condoms
3/ d) Sex & love life

Use of condom according to partner

- Always: 65% (Stable partner), 57.9% (Occasional partner)
- Sometimes/often: 16% (Stable partner), 25.6% (Occasional partner)
- Never: 17.2% (Stable partner), 7.1% (Occasional partner)
3/ d) Sex & love life

- Never use condom with the stable partner (17.2%):
  - 30.1% if the partner is HIV+, 10% if the partner is HIV-
  - 20.8% if viral load is undetectable, 6.6% if detectable

- Rate is more important among homosexuals (30% # 10% hetero) and among Belgians (22.8% # 11.3% Africans) BUT decrease with occasional partner (11% homo # 0 Africans)
4/ Socio-economic situation

a) Education

• Almost half of homosexuals have a higher degree, whereas a quarter of Africans have.

b) Access to health insurance

• Almost 13% of Africans do not have health insurance (#1% Belgians)

• The financial difficulties to cope with health expenditure account for around 30% of all respondents, +35% of Africans and almost 40% of women.
4/ Socio-economic situation

c) Economic situation

Income according to nationality

- Belgians
- Africans
Conclusion

• Critical issue: the economic and educational situation
• Risk reduction strategies
• Stigma and discrimination

=>necessary to create a supportive environment
Many thanks to:

- All the respondents
- All the interviewers
- All the partners
- The GRECOS
- The ISSP
- Special thanks to: Dr Gennotte, Dr Goffart and Dr Demanet

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