VHPB

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Main expertise (1-2 lines): Joint Infectious Diseases, Project Management, Programme Management, Refugee Health

HBV and HCV in migrant and refugee population – examples from Poland

World Health Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Europe**

VHPB Regional meeting "Elimination of Viral Hepatitis in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia: Lessons Learnt and the Way Forward"

Prague, 29-30th of October 2024

Context

UKRAINE

One of the highest HCV prevalence levels in the world (3.1% in 2020) facilitated primarily by prevalent injection drug use (IDU).

Prevalence of chronic HBV (HBsAg+) (%) – 1,27% in 2022.

POLAND

Presence of HCV-RNA is detected in about 0.5% (165,000 infected people) of population. Anti-HCV antibodies are detected in 1.1% of the general population.

The number of chronically infected HBV patients is estimated at about 1% of the population. More than 90% of detected cases are chronic hepatitis B cases.

Context

Migration to Poland

According to UNHCR data, 1 866 605 Ukranians applied for asylum, TP or similar national protection schemes in Poland (as of 10.10.2024).

Applying HCV and HBV prevalence in Ukrainian population, among the above mentioned population we could expect ~57 000 HCV cases.

WHO partners in Poland with regards to VH testing

Social AIDS Committee – the biggest VCT point in Warsaw and in Poland

Foundation for Social Education – 2 VCT points and 1 harm reduction mobile point in Warsaw

Carmellian Welfare Mission – health counselling point at Warsaw West railway station

Positive in the Rainbow – VCT point in Warsaw, focused mainly on LGBTQI+ community

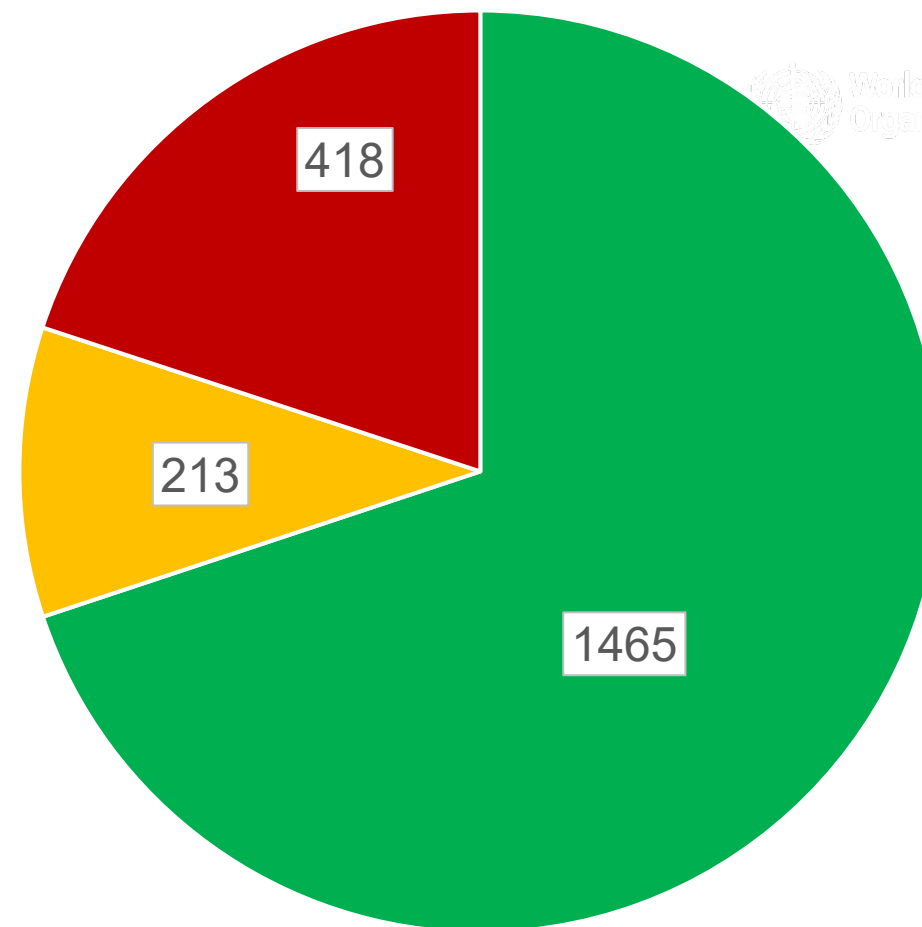Be With Us – community-led NGO in Warsaw, testing on community duties

ECEE – HCV testing of women during the visit to gynecologist (Mazovian voi.)

Podwale Siedem – comprehensive VCT, ART, OST center in Wroclaw + outreach to UKR community

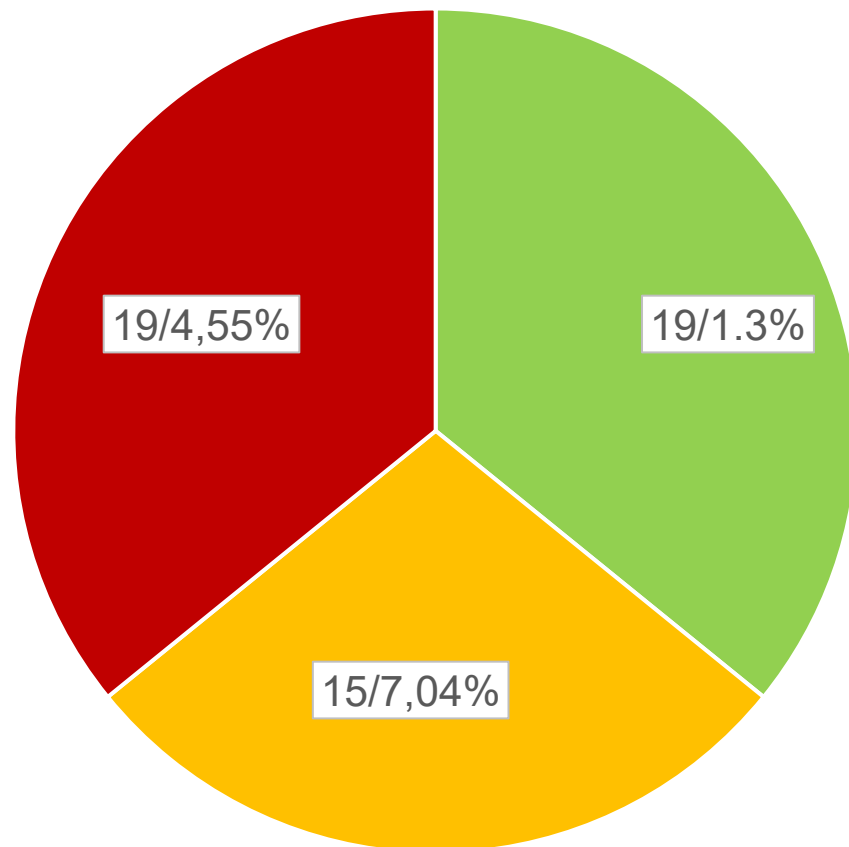# Key observations - testing in VCT centers and railway station

Total number of HCV rapid tests performed (n=2096), March-June 2024

- Number of tests for Polish citizens

- Number of tests performed for foreigners (non-UKR)

- Number of tests performed for Ukrainians

Key observations - testing in VCT centers and railway station

Number of reactive HCV rapid tests results (n=53; 2,53%), March-June 2024

- Number of tests for Polish citizens
- Number of tests performed for foreigners (non-UKR)
- Number of tests performed for Ukrainians

Pie chart labels: 19/1.3%, 15/7,04%, 19/4,55%

Shortening diagnostics pathway

- WHO donated GeneXpert machines to 3 Polish NGOs

- This allowed to shorten diagnostic pathway, as confirmation test is performed at the same place and within short time (up to 2 hours)

- However, current pathway of the patient with reactive HCV test and PCR conformation is unclear and not standardized (most often the referral is made to GP with further referral to ID doctor/hepatological outpatient clinic).

Key observations: ECEE project - HCV testing among women

Number of HCV tests performed (including for UKR women)	606 (116)
Number of reactive test results	14
Positivity rate	2,3%

Key observations: Podwale Siedem - HCV outreach testing at construction plants

Number of HCV tests performed	110
Number of reactive test results	7
Positivity rate	6,3%

Conclusions

HCV testing among migrants and refugees is an effective strategy

Confirmation of diagnosis should be performed ASAP, and ideally – in the same setting as the first screening test was performed

Patients should have clear standardized fast-track pathways of linkage to treatment

Treatment of HCV should be free-of-charge for all, irrespectively of nationality/citizenship/insurance status

Thanks for your attention!

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