



MAPHM

MALTA ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH MEDICINE

PUBLIC HEALTH SYMPOSIUM NOVEMBER 2019



Abstract Title

Sexually transmitted infections testing, risk and needs of men who have sex with men (MSM) in Malta: results from the 2017 European MSM Internet Survey (EMIS)

Full Name

Raquel Medialdea Carrera, Dr

Institution / Company

Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit (IDCU) – Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate, Malta

Other Authors Information

	Name	Company / Institution	E-mail
Author	Tanya Melillo	Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit (IDCU) – Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate, Malta	Tanya.melillo@gov.mt
Author	Alastair Donachie	Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit (IDCU) – Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate, Malta	adonachie@hotmail.co.uk
Author	Jackie Melillo	Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit (IDCU) – Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate, Malta	jackie.m.melillo@gov.mt
Author	Maria Louise Borg	Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit (IDCU) – Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate, Malta	maria-louise.borg@gov.mt

Abstract

Background:

In the last decade, an increase in sexual risk behaviours and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among men who have sex with men (MSM) has been reported in Europe. We analyse behaviours that might contribute to acquisition of STIs among MSM in Malta to improve the STI prevention strategy for this population.

Methods:

In 2017, the European MSM Internet Survey collected data from MSM from 49 countries through an anonymous multilingual online questionnaire. We analysed the data from participants living in Malta (n=301) and examined the proportions of reported STIs, attitudes and risks among them.

Results:

During the previous 12 months, 141 MSM reported carrying out at least one STI test (47%) and 48 of them (16%) reported being diagnosed with at least one STI including gonorrhoea (5.7%), chlamydia(4.0%), syphilis (3.0%) and genital warts(2.4%). Twenty-three individuals reported being HIV positive (7.7%). During the previous year, respondents reported consuming alcohol(94%) and/or drugs (58%), engaging in condomless sexual intercourse (30%) and consumption of drugs to facilitate sexual activity (9.5%). Sixty percent reported current mild to severe anxiety and/or depression and 24% reported having suicidal thoughts during the previous week.

Conclusions:

A 3 to 6 monthly STIs testing interval should be promoted for MSM who engage in high-risk sexual behaviours. Our results emphasise the need for further research to better understand and support mental health for MSM in Malta. We recommend training for healthcare workers for counseling and/or refer MSM with mental health issues and promoting early diagnosis for prevention of STIs.

Key Message 1

Increased STIs testing should be promoted for MSM who engage in high-risk behaviours

Key Message 2

Further research to better understand and support mental health for MSM in Malta is needed