

Afro-Caribbean community HIV rapid testing in France: an opportunity for untested population?

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Background and objectives

- Community-based HIV testing initiatives has been launched in France since 2010. They target most-at-risk populations, including the Afro-Caribbean community and people who have never been tested.
- We aimed to evaluate how a mobile programme promoting and offering rapid HIV testing in outdoor can attract untested persons.

Methods

- Afrique Avenir offers free and anonymous rapid HIV testing in the Paris metropolitan area to the Afro-Caribbean community.
- The van is always located near railway stations, markets and streets with high pedestrian traffic.
- For each participant, an anonymous questionnaire about sociodemographic characteristics, sexual behaviour and history of HIV testing is completed.
- After the counselling, the HIV test is performed by taking a capillary blood sample from the tip of a finger.
- People with reactive results are referred to healthcare centres to have a confirmative test.



Statistical analysis

- Characteristics between untested and already tested persons were compared by Chi-squared or Fisher tests for qualitative variables and by t-tests for quantitative variables.
- Logistic regression model has been used to analyse factors associated with being tested for the first time.
- All analyses were stratified by sex and were conducted using STATA 13.

Results

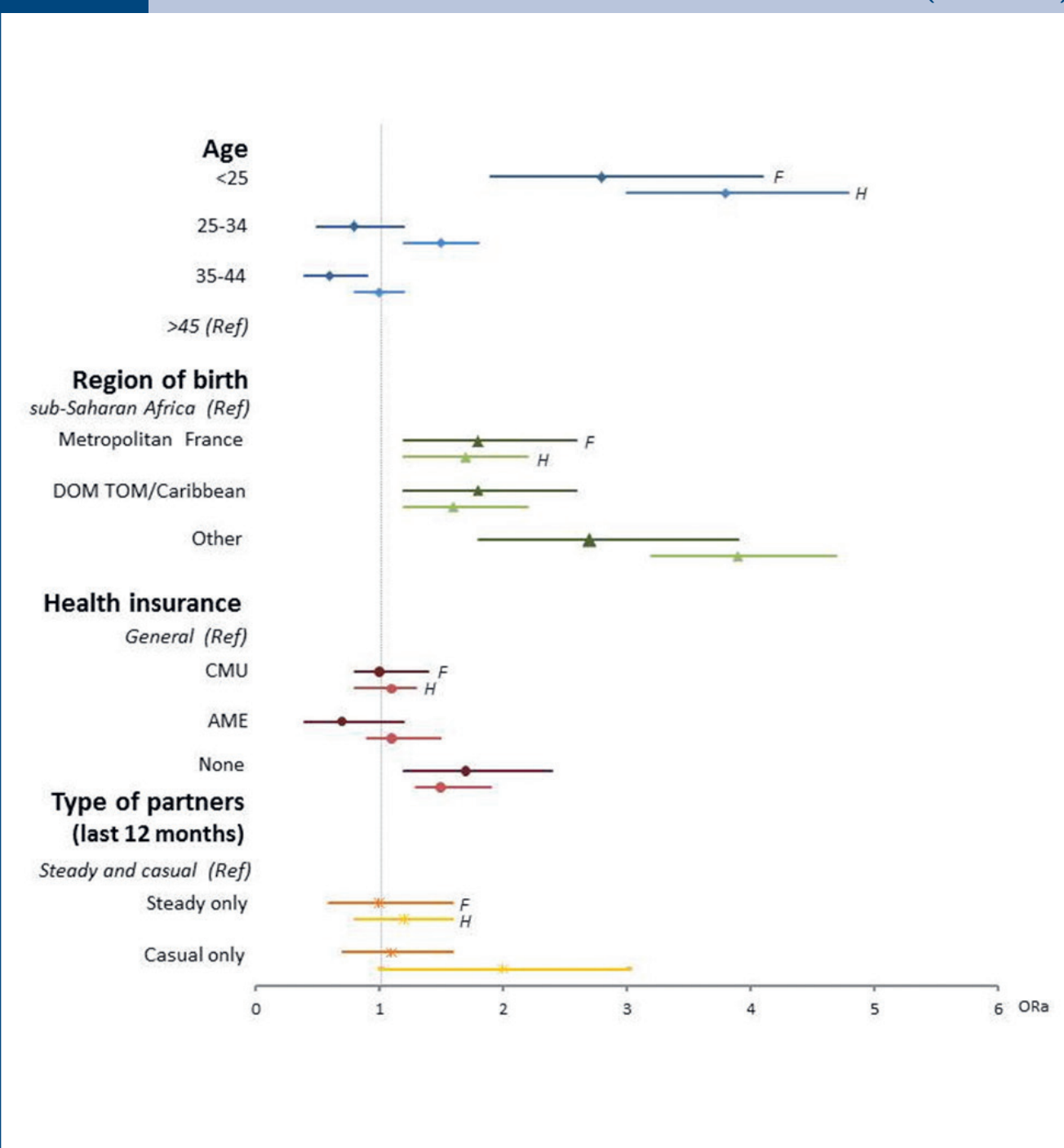
In 2014 and 2015, the programme served 6565 persons:

- 70% were men;
- Mean age: 35 years;
- 58% were born in sub-Saharan Africa;
- 19% had no health insurance;
- 4% declared having had same sex partner;
- More men than women declared two partners or more in the last 12 months (64% vs 30%);
- 16% of men and women declared to have never used condom with casual partner in the last 12 months.

HIV testing

- 28% of the participants had never undergone an HIV test before, more men (30%) than women (23%).
- First-time testers declared more often to have decided to be tested when they passed by the mobile unit.
- Factors associated with being tested for the first time is illustrated in figure 1:
 - age <25 years for women and under 34 years for men;
 - born outside sub-Saharan Africa for both;
 - lack of health insurance for both;
 - having had only relationship with casual partners in the last year for men.

FIGURE 1 ADJUSTED ASSOCIATION WITH FIRST TIME TESTED FOR HIV AMONG PARTICIPANTS IN A STREET-BASED RAPID HIV TESTING PROGRAMME IN PARIS AREA (2014-2015)



HIV positive rate

- Among the 6565 participants, 40 were positive (0,61%):
 - 22 were men;
 - 30 were born in sub-Saharan Africa;
 - 16 had no health insurance;
 - 16 were first-time testers.

Conclusion

- This street-based outreach rapid testing programme attracted a substantial number of persons who have never been tested.
- It increases access to HIV testing by persons unaware of their HIV serostatus and particularly those without health insurance.
- It highlights the necessity to offer attractive, accessible and convenient testing locations, in addition to conventional healthcare settings.

