

Final report form

Date of sending out the form:

Wednesday, July 6, 2022

Contact person/applicant:

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Country

Latvia

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Title of the granted project

Contraception among HIV-positive women-
knowledge, experience and factors that influence
the choice

Amount granted by the ESC (in euro)

3500

Project number:

P-2018-B-02

Allocated mentor:

Peter Erard

Date project actually started:

Monday, April 1, 2019

Date of completion:

Thursday, February 17, 2022

Please provide a report of your findings and data.

Objectives: Latvia has one of the highest numbers of new HIV cases in the EU. The latest SRH national survey confirmed low effective contraceptive prevalence in the general population, no data were available about women living with HIV (WLHIV). The study aimed to assess knowledge on the use of different contraceptives, to identify factors in choosing contraception, to assess the availability of family planning health care services, and to investigate

contraception habits.

Materials and methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among WLHIV aged 18 to 49, who were recruited with the assistance of non-governmental organisations addressing HIV issues. Interviews in Latvian and Russian languages were based on a pre-tested questionnaire. Data were processed and analysed using IBM SPSS 22.0.

Results: In total 102 WLHIV were interviewed, 99 met the inclusion criteria (18 to 49 years old, HIV-positive women) and their responses were used for further analysis. The mean age of the study group participants was 33 years with a range from 19 to 47 years. Most of the participants (81%, n=80) were sexually active during the last 12 months, having sexual intercourse from more than once a week (61.2%, n=60) to more than once a month (15.3%, n=15). Some responders had sexual intercourse less than once a month (11.3%, n=11). When asked about what contraceptive methods women were aware of, 91.9% (n=91) of responders mentioned male condoms, 69.7% (n=69) coitus interruptus, 68.7% (n=68) hormonal contraceptive pills, 54.5% (n=54) non-hormonal IUD, 42.4% (n=42) hormonal IUD, 47.5% (n=47) calendar method, 40.4% (n=40) male sterilisation, 41.4% (n=41) female sterilisation and 54.5% (n=54) were aware of emergency contraception. Around half of WLHIV had misconceptions about hormonal methods. Most of the women were able to evaluate the effectiveness of contraceptives. Sexually active women usually used male condoms (76.3%, n=61) although around 40% did not use them permanently especially if their partner was HIV-positive. Women who reported sexual relationships with HIV-negative partner were significantly more likely to use condoms consistently (33.3%) than those who reported their partner to be HIV-positive (5.1%), $p=0.015$. Contraceptive choices before and after diagnosis of HIV were compared. Study participants reported significant changes in the methods of contraception they used. More women used combined oral contraceptive pills and other reversible hormonal contraception methods (hormonal IUDs, injections, rings) before they were diagnosed with HIV. The same tendency was seen in the use of emergency contraception, withdrawal and vaginal douching. Significantly fewer women used dual contraception (male condom with other method) after diagnosis of HIV. We could not determine which factors contributed to decreased condom use after HIV was diagnosed. Women mainly trusted medical professionals with the information provided about contraceptives.

The main source of information about contraception was a gynaecologist (59.6%, n=59), followed by friends (56.5%, n=56) and the internet (53.5%, n=53). WLHIV would prefer to receive information from a gynaecologist (75.8%, n=75), the internet (53.5%, n=53) and from a general practitioner (46.5%, n=46).

More than half of WLHIV of the study group attend gynaecologist at least once a year (67.7%, n=67). Unfortunately, 60.5% (n=58) of them noted having a situation where they could not afford a visit to a gynaecologist and 54.3% (n=52) a visit to a general practitioner. Additionally, 53.8% (n=49) of women have had occasions when they could not afford contraceptives.

Conclusions: WLHIV in Latvia are informed about different contraceptives. They are not fully aware of the efficiency of the methods. There is a high level of contraceptive use among sexually active WLHIV, however, every fifth uses contraception with low effectiveness and there is a high rate of condom users who does not use condoms permanently. Our survey showed the wide prevalence of misconceptions and prejudice about hormonal contraceptives. Contraceptive use after HIV infection decreased, but the reasons require further studies. Important factors influencing the choice of contraception are price, ease of use, no need for a prescription and agreement of partner, as well as partners' wishes. WLHIV in Latvia experience situations when SRH care services are not available and face financial difficulties in obtaining contraception. There is a need for health education including sexuality education and financial support to make effective contraception available and affordable for every WLHIV in Latvia.

Full Research Article:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13625187.2022.2088730>

Please provide a final detailed budget on how much you have spent. Was any money not spent? Receipts may be requested.

Until June 15, 2022, we have spent 1151.49 euro (for gift cards to facilitate the involvement of respondents 110 x 10 euro= 1100 euro, printing expenses 51.49 euro) + 300 euro to organize meeting with the NGOs. In total: 1451.49 euro.

From the 1st part of the grant (2625 euro), we still have 1173.51 euro because we were not able to involve 200 respondents as we planned due to Covid-19 restrictions. We have not received the 2nd part of the grant (875 euro).

Our publication costs will be 3010 euro, therefore the remaining part of the grant would be of great help.

How will your findings be presented?

Publication in journal

Presentation

Online meeting with Latvian NGOs providing support for WLHIV (happened on November 12, 2021)

Was your paper published? Indicate journal and acceptance date

Our study named "Contraception among HIV-positive women in Latvia- knowledge, experience and factors influencing the choice" was accepted to be published in The European Journal of Contraception & Reproductive Health Care (accepted June 2, 2022).

Presentation – note meeting organisation and date

Poster presentation at the 16th ESC Congress in Ghent, Belgium: "Knowledge, attitude and use of effective contraception by women living with HIV in Latvia", May 26, 2022.

Please let us know whether having a mentor has been helpful or not

Having a mentor was a great help as we could solve the difficulties that arose due to Covid-19, we received advice and reminders on when to submit report forms and were consulted about financial matters.

Full Name

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Date

Wednesday, July 6, 2022

Questions? ESC Central Office: info@escrh.eu

Type a question

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