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Mathilde Husson, Prescillia Piron, Christine Duteil, Elise de La Rochebrochard, Christophe Segouin, et al.. Risky sexual behaviors reported by patients in a free sexual health center in Paris (2017-2020). European Journal of Public Health, 2021, 31 (Supplement 3), pp.427-428. 10.1093/eurpub/ckab165.237 . hal-04205365

**HAL Id: hal-04205365**

**<https://hal.science/hal-04205365>**

Submitted on 12 Sep 2023

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Husson Mathilde, Piron Prescillia, Duteil Christelle, La Rochebrochard (de) Elise, Segouin Christophe, Troude Pénélope, **2023**, « Risky sexual behaviors reported by patients in a free sexual health center in Paris (2017-2020) », *European Journal of Public Health*, 2021, 31, Suppl. 3, 427-428. DOI: 10.1093/eurpub/ckab165.237.

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## **Risky sexual behaviors reported by patients in a free sexual health center in Paris (2017-2020)**

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## **BACKGROUND.**

In France, a national network of free sexual health centers offers prevention, diagnosis and treatment for STI and HIV. These centers help socially disadvantaged and high-risk populations to access STI/HIV testing but few detailed data are available on patients' sexual behaviors. This study aims to describe sexual behaviors among attendees of a Parisian free sexual health center for STI/HIV screening.

## **METHODS.**

This observational study included 5130 patients who attended the center for STI/HIV testing from August 2017 through January 2020 and completed a self-administered electronic questionnaire. Data obtained from the consultation database and the questionnaire included STI results, sociodemographic characteristics and sexual behaviors. Criteria reported in the literature to define "high-risk sexual behavior (HRSB)" were used to describe sexual practices.

## **RESULTS.**

Median age of patients was 26 years [Q1-Q3:23-32] and 8% had no health insurance. Slightly less than one third of patients were women who had sex with men, 37% were men who had sex exclusively with women and 18% were men who had sex with men; 22% had never had HIV testing before the consultation. Regarding sexual practices, 76% reported unprotected sexual intercourse, 3% transactional sex and 8% a history of sexual violence. Depending on the threshold used to define multiple partners ( 6 vs 2 partners during the previous year), the proportion of patients varied from

31% to 81%. Globally, the proportion of patients reporting at least one HRSB ranged from 87% to 95%. Eleven percent of patients had at least one STI (mostly chlamydia).

## **CONCLUSIONS.**

Our sexual health center fulfills its missions as most patients consulting for STI/HIV testing reported HRSB and almost one quarter had never previously had an HIV test. The next step will be to explore profiles including sexual behavior, sociodemographic characteristics and HIV knowledge to adapt our prevention strategy to patients' needs.

## **KEY MESSAGES.**

- Our sexual health center fulfills its missions as most patients consulting for STI/HIV testing reported HRSB and almost one quarter had never previously had an HIV test.
- The next step will be to explore profiles including sexual behavior, sociodemographic characteristics and HIV knowledge to adapt our prevention strategy to patients' needs.