

HIV-infection: Epidemiology, provision of healthcare, social acceptability and outlook in Germany

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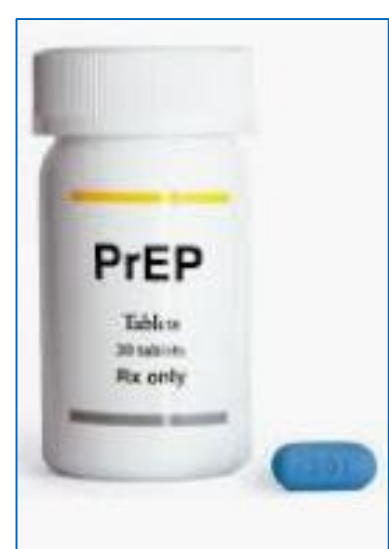
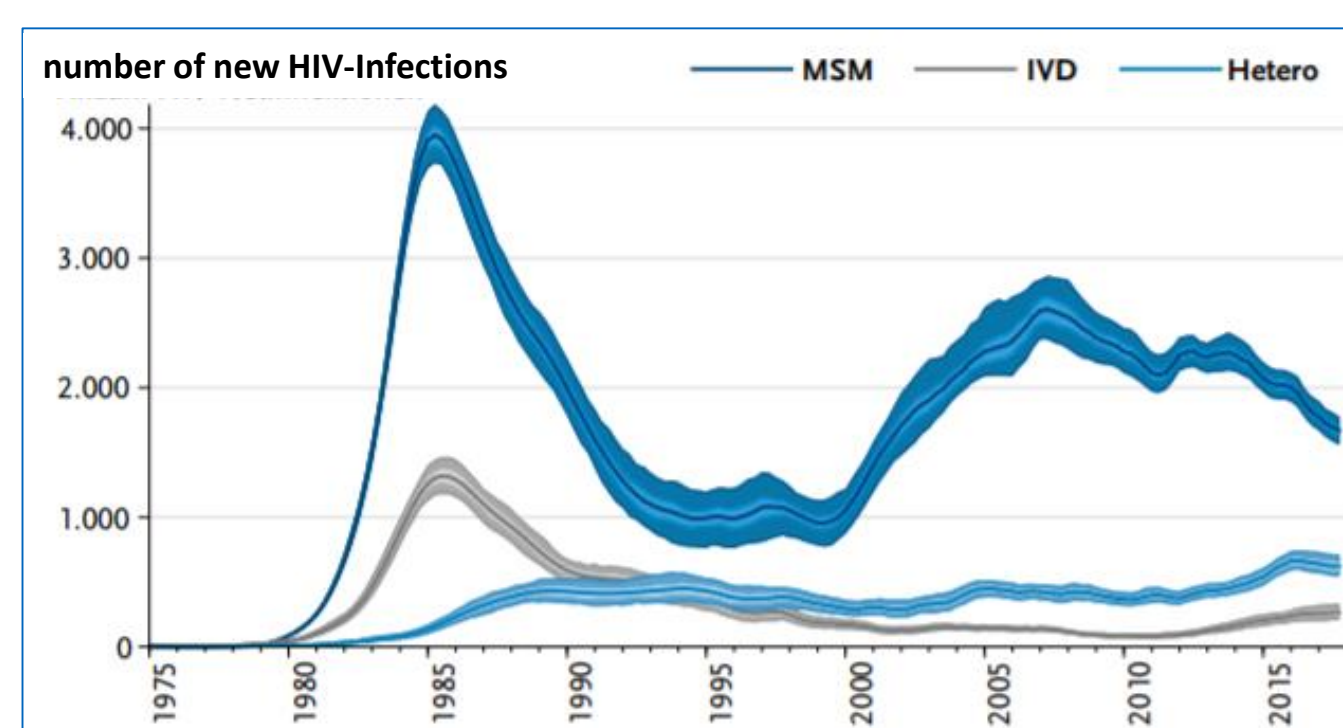
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Epidemiology

At the end of 2017, approximately 86,100 people were living with HIV in Germany¹:

- The largest afflicted group are still men who have sex with men (MSM). Among the 86,100 people with HIV are around 53,000 men who have sex with men, about 11,000 heterosexual men and women, and about 8,100 intravenous injecting drug users.
- The rate of new HIV-infection (around 2700 person/y) decreased significantly since introduction of PrEP. The estimated number of current PrEP user in Germany ranges between 4300 and 4800 persons
- About one sixth of them has AIDS at the time point of HIV diagnosis. Around 450 people died of HIV in 2017.



Provision of healthcare

- German health care is characterized by a principle that is stated in the European social charter: It provides all citizens access to comprehensive health care - regardless of income and state of health.
- The statutory health insurance (SHI) plays an important role in the German health care system: Germany is the EU country that spends the most on health, allocating 11.1% of its GDP to health expenditure in 2015.
- HIV- treatment is fully covered by the German health insurance companies. Antiretroviral treatment constitutes the major cost factor. In average, annual total costs (SD) are around 22,000 € per patient².



Social acceptability

At least when compared to many other, less liberal countries, social acceptability of people living with HIV in Germany can be described as good. In recent years there have been campaigns that were aimed at a better understanding of the disease and further destigmatizing HIV infected individuals.

Nevertheless there is a significant difference in social acceptability depending on the region someone lives in (large cities vs rural areas), the manner of how the virus was acquired, which job that person has and on the specific peer-group (e.g. higher social acceptability in MSM).

All in all there is still a lot room for improvements and further campaigns to educate the whole population in general and, more specifically, medical professionals.



Outlook



Germany is one of the European countries with the lowest HIV- infection rate. However, to reach the 90-90-90 UNAIDS targets we still need improvement in some areas:

- Reduce the rate of new infections: promote the use of PrEP, expand syringe use programmes
- Reduce the rate of late presenters: make the HIV-test more accessible (the hometest has been available since Autumn 2018)
- Make treatment available for all patients (including migrants and those without a medical insurance)
- Decrease stigmatisation

¹ Epidemiologisches Bulletin 47/2018. Robert Koch Institut, Berlin. Germany

² Treskova, M..Analysis of contemporary HIV/AIDS health care costs in Germany.Medicine.2016