countries which previously had reported very high rates. These declines are probably due to changes in healthcare systems, diagnostic capacity and reporting rather than true changes in the incidence. However, dramatic increases were noted in other countries and—based on the information from the male-to-female ratio—this is most likely due to recent increases of syphilis among MSM. The overall trend in chlamydia showed a continuously increasing trend, reflecting an increase in testing and screening practices across countries. These trends must be interpreted with caution due to the heterogeneity in reporting and healthcare systems. A further limitation to the interpretation is that many diagnoses are either not made or under-reported. Diagnoses from certain countries cannot be included in trend analyses as they do not have comprehensive surveillance for STI.

**Conclusion** Enhanced surveillance of STI in Europe is essential to provide the information that is necessary to monitor the distribution of disease and to evaluate the public health response to control the transmission of infections. Collaborating within the European STI expert networks provides the platform for sharing best practices and expert knowledge across Europe.

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**S15.3** EUROPEAN MSM INTERNET SURVEY (EMIS): DIFFERENCES IN SEXUALLY TRANSMISSIBLE INFECTION TESTING IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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**Background** Comparing rates of sexually transmissible infections (STIs) among men who have sex with men (MSM) in different European countries is challenging due to national differences in reporting systems, healthcare systems, infectious disease surveillance methods, quality of data, and/or levels of social acceptance of homosexual behaviours and openness about homosexuality.

**Methods** From June through August 2010, the European MSM Internet Survey (EMIS) mobilised more than 180,000 respondents from 38 European countries to complete an online questionnaire in one of 25 languages. The questionnaire covered sexual happiness, HIV and STI-testing and diagnoses, unmet prevention needs, inter-personal, HIV-related stigma and gay-related discrimination. Recruitment was organised predominantly online, through gay social media, and links and banners on more than 100 websites for MSM all over Europe.

**Results** Perceptions on access to free/affordable STI-testing differed across Europe (median: 80%; range: 40–95%); and was substantially correlated with reported recent STI-testing (R² = 0.27). Quality of STI-testing was highly diverse: While blood-testing was common in all participating countries, only Ireland, Malta, and the UK seem to offer penile or particularly anal examinations as standard of care. In all participating countries HIV-positive respondents reported higher rates of both STI-testing and diagnosis. Self-reported STI-screening among men without HIV diagnosis ranged from 10% (Turkey) to 37% (Netherlands). Substantial correlations between rates of testing procedures appropriate for MSM (such as anal or genital swabs) and diagnosed gonorrhoea (R² HIV-pos = 0.24) or Chlamydia infections were observed (R² HIV-pos = 0.50; R² others = 0.29).

**Conclusion** Self-reported testing and diagnosis rates for bacterial STIs suggest high levels of under-diagnosis and unmet sexual healthcare needs in most European countries. In Europe, there is an urgent need to implement or improve sexual healthcare tailored to MSM-specific needs.

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**S15.4** RE-EMERGENCE OF LYMPHOGRANULOMA VENEREUM IN EUROPE AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

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**Background** In January 2004, public health officials in the Netherlands noted an outbreak of cases of lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV) among men who have sex with men (MSM). Since then a number of outbreaks and cases have been reported from European countries, North America and Australia. The re-emergence of LGV in
this population remains poorly understood yet may have important health consequences.

**Methods** Several EU countries have reported newly diagnosed cases of LGV to The European Surveillance System and a number of additional countries have reported LGV cases to the Epidemiological Information System on STI (hosted by ECDC). We have synthesised evidence from these surveillance reports together with results of clinical and epidemiological studies to better describe transmission and inform the public health response.

**Results** An increasing trend of LGV has been reported in several Western European countries. In areas with well-established surveillance, LGV has become a significant and persistent infection in MSM. In the UK, there was a rapid rise in cases from 2009 to 2010, while in Amsterdam numbers continue to fluctuate. The European outbreaks appear to be caused by a single LGV variant (L2b) that has been around for several decades, having been detected in rectal swabs from MSM in San Francisco in 1981. The resurgence of LGV over the past decade is closely linked to the overlapping HIV epidemic which it may in turn fuel. A systematic review of 13 descriptive studies showed the prevalence of HIV in LGV cases ranging from 67% to 100%; compared to MSM with non-LGV chlamydia, there was a significant association between HIV and LGV (OR 8.19, 95% CI 4.68 to 14.33). It is likely that changes in sexual behaviour, including serosorting and unprotected anal sex, and an increase in the size of the HIV positive population, may have created the conditions for an explosive LGV outbreak after decades of quiescence.

**Conclusion** The on-going LGV epidemic shows no signs of waning and requires a robust public health response. Primary prevention should be developed for MSM with HIV, together with awareness campaigns for the wide range of clinicians who may see men with symptoms. In addition, improved diagnostic methods are needed to allow widespread screening could reduce the infectious pool; they would also allow a better picture of the epidemic to be obtained from countries with limited diagnostic facilities.