

# Migrants: From research object to research partner

Stephan Dressler  
Julian Hows  
Warsaw  
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## 3) Epidemiological Research

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## Outline

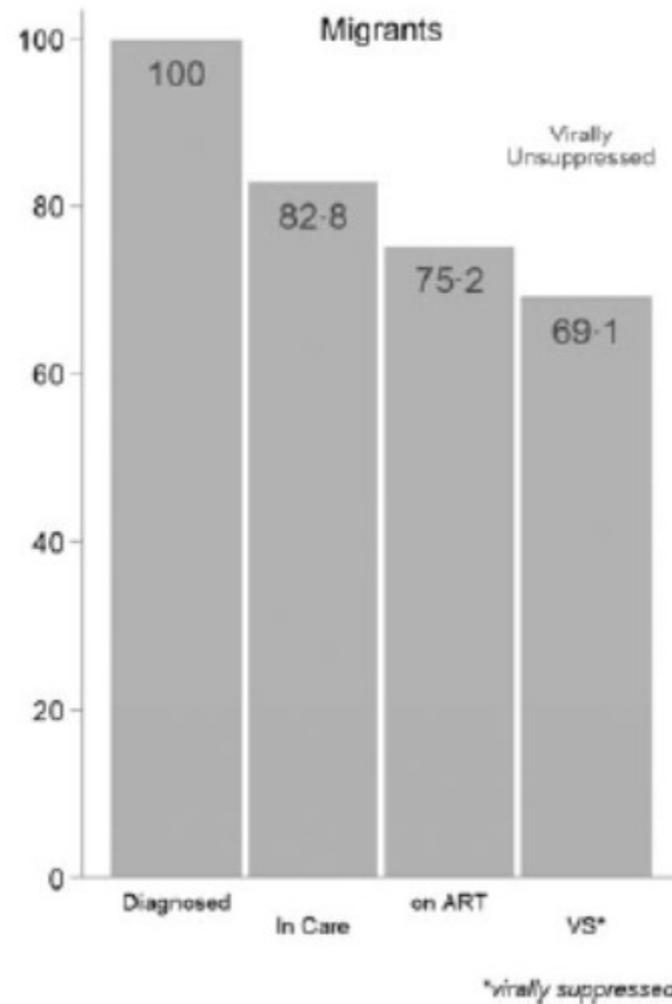
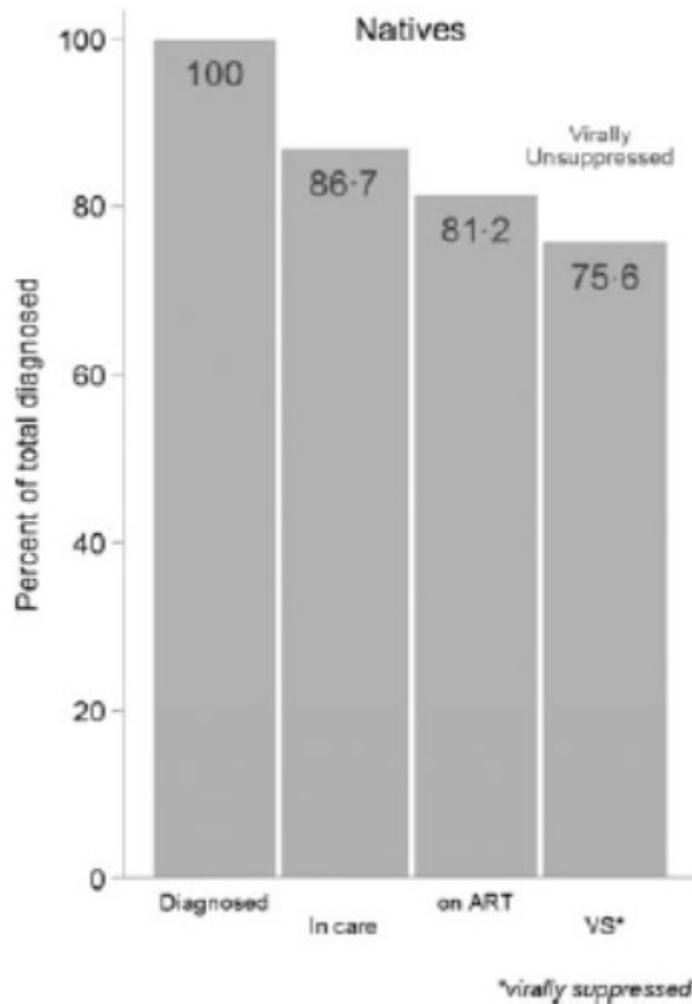
- Importance of epidemiological research for advocacy for migrant communities
  - Magnitude of the HIV epidemic
  - Pre and post-migration HIV acquisition
  - Access to HIV testing & treatment in the EU
  - Responses to ART in the EU
- What role can migrant communities play in improving epidemiological data on migrants
- Role of communities in the monitoring of Dublin Declaration

# Factors underlying high rates of HIV infection

Those driving  
HIV in  
countries of  
origin

Risk behaviors  
and risk  
contexts during  
migration  
transit

Risk behaviors  
and risk contexts  
in countries of  
destination



HIV healthcare cascade comparing the Spanish-born population with migrants, Catalonia – Sp

## Abstract

We launched a community-based HIV rapid testing project in Brussels for SAM. We were able to conduct 250 HIV tests in 2017 using 4 different strategies (Fixed, Bus, Partners, Appointment). We showed that demedicalised and decentralised HIV testing is efficient for the SAM communities in Brussels. Moreover, each strategy seems to reach a different type of population.

## **Demedicalised and decentralised HIV testing**

Recommended in national HIV plan 2014-2019 [1], combined with classic testing

Must be addressed towards key populations, namely MSM and SAM, which had the highest incidence in Belgium in 2015

Epidemiology / epidemiological research:

How often does a condition / disease occur?

Who is affected? (Certain individuals? Specific groups?  
Populations?)

What influences / determines a health-related status?

„Epidemiological information is used to plan and evaluate strategies to prevent illness and as a guide to the management of patients in whom disease has already developed.“ BMJ

<https://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-readers/publications/epidemiology-uninitiated/1-what-epidemiology>

Issues to be considered in (epidemiological) research involving migrants:

Legal status of study participants

Cross-cultural boundaries and language barriers (informed consent!)

Investigator-participant relationship

Are the methods chosen (for example, in order to obtain sufficient data) culturally appropriate for the participants?

Selection of the study design / research methodology

Are self-identified needs of participants being considered?

- Collaboration is key
- Boldness in Advocacy
- Importance of Support groups
- The Irony of the situation
  - Undocumented people as driving forces in states
  - Community based organizations as a threat → interferes with sustainability
- Southern Mediterranean as a focus area
- Diaspora working together
- People stepping out to talk for others & themselves
  - Ex: SSA organizations for sex workers
  - Coming together to fight for human rights
- Contributions (mis)used to what extend?
- How can migrants get involved in more than events (Sustainable involvement)

Please answer the following questions from your personal point of view:

- What are in your opinion the most urgently needed epidemiological studies with regard to migrants (esp. from SSA)?
- What are the most relevant barriers to epidemiological research in migrant populations?
- Who could be potential partners in advocating for improving epidemiological research which includes migrants?
- What should be the role of organizations that support migrants in epidemiological research?

Please answer the following questions **AS A GROUP**:

- What are in your opinion the most urgently needed research activities (biomedical, psychosocial, epidemiological) with regard to migrants (esp. from SSA)?
- What are the most relevant barriers to this research?
- Who could be potential partners in advocating for improving research which includes migrants?
- What should be the role of organizations that support migrants in research?
- What resources or trainings / capacity building is needed in order to achieve the above mentioned?