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Baltic Public Health Conference 2010 – Accomplishments and Challenges

23–25 September 2010

Tartu, Dorpat Hotel Conference Centre

Estonia



HIV Testing in Estonian Defence Forces

Ljudmilla Priimägi^{1,2}, Oleg Novikov³

Estonian Association Anti-AIDS¹, National Institute for Health Development², Medical Service of Estonian Defence Forces³

The study was carried out in the frame of the United States DHAPP Program (DoD HIV / AIDS Prevention Program) under the financial support of U.S. Department of the Navy.

Purpose:

To develop independent capacity of HIV rapid testing and diagnostics in the Estonian Defence Forces (EDF) and to obtain an overview of HIV infection prevalence in the EDF.

Materials and Methods

INSTI HIV 1 / 2 rapid tests were acquired and HIV Rapid Test training was conducted for the medical staff of the EDF. The training consisted of two parts: the 1st part included laboratory training conducted in HIV reference laboratory, part 2 consisted of medical personnel training in HIV testing counselling.



HIV testing of personnel was carried out in ten structural units of the EDF over Estonia in November and December 2009. Testing was preceded by elaborating of an instruction for HIV testing of military personnel and its validation by the medical service commander/chief consultant of Defence Forces.

Results

Altogether, there were 790 persons from the EDF tested for HIV infection by rapid testing, of whom nobody was proved initially positive for HIV infection.

Discussion

There is no obligation to test the persons eligible to be drafted for HIV in the EDF. In the majority of the EDF structural units up to one-third of staff or at least 1000-1500 persons had already been tested for HIV infection before the start of the study during the Donors' Days organized by the blood centres.

The confidence of the study results were also proved by the data of the last decade: the average number of HIV-positive persons detected in the EDF during the Donors' Days was in general less than 1 case per year.

