

SCREENING FOR HIV IN PATIENTS DIAGNOSED WITH HERPES ZOSTER IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

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Background and importance

In May 2021, an HIV screening programme was implemented in the Emergency Department (ED) of a tertiary hospital for patients diagnosed with specific conditions, including community-acquired pneumonia, mononucleosis syndrome, sexually transmitted infections, chemsex practice, post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV, or herpes zoster (HZ). The indication for HIV testing in HZ patients is limited to those aged 18-65.

Aim and objectives

To analyse the trend in HIV screening among patients diagnosed with HZ in the ED of a tertiary hospital following the implementation of the screening programme.



Materials and methods

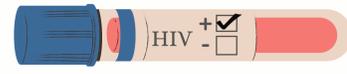
Cross-sectional, retrospective observational study.

-  All episodes with a primary diagnosis of HZ in the ED of a tertiary hospital between 2020 and 2023 were included, using data from the ELCANO electronic medical record system (HCIS). Episodes of other types of herpes (e.g., gladiatorum, labial, vaginal) were excluded.
-  Serological tests requested from the Microbiology Department and the results for HIV infection were reviewed.

A chi-square trend test was used to analyse the screening trend.



Results

	 HZ episodes	 HIV tests requested	 Test-to-episode ratio	 New HIV diagnosis
2020	367	49	13.35%	0
2021	458	65	14.19%	0
2022	523	108	20.65%	1
2023	434	91	20.97%	1

A p-value of 0.0004 indicated a positive trend in increasing HIV screening among HZ patients attending the Emergency Department.



Conclusion and relevance

Between 2020 and 2023, there was an increasing trend in HIV screening among patients diagnosed with HZ in the ED of a tertiary hospital following the implementation of a targeted screening programme. However, overall screening remains low.

