BORDERNET

Project supported by the EC Public Health Programme

KAP Survey among selected target groups

Research protocol

BORDERNET is a project of the EC Public Health Programme (DG Health and Consumer Protection) for HIV/AIDS and STIs prevention, diagnostic and therapy in border regions across the old and new EC outer borders, coordinated by the SPI Research gGmbH, Berlin, Germany. It started in January 2005 with participation of 13 partners from 6 countries, divided in 4 model crossing-border regions (two among Germany and Poland, one among Austria and Slovakia, one among Italy and Slovenia) in the first phase until December 2007. Tandem regions in the new EC-outer borders will be involved in a second phase.

Aim of the project is to improve the prevention and diagnostic of HIV/AIDS and the various sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in several European border regions. Therefore we would like to gain knowledge and understanding about the risks at which different groups of the population in these regions are exposed.

The KAP survey at issue of this research protocol is part of the project’s action plan, that will be carried out in all 6 partner countries in the period January – October 2006. In xxxxxxxx (country’s name) it will be coordinated and administrated by by xxxxxxxx (partner’s name).

1. Research objectives:

   - To carry out a quantitative survey among selected target groups in each model region determining living and social conditions, health related behaviour, knowledge and attitudes related to HIV/STIs;
   
   - To elicit trends in risk taking and exposure to HIV/STIs among certain target groups in the crossing-border regions of BORDERNET related to patterns of transnational mobility;
   
   - To compile a set of indicators and recommendations for policy makers and health professionals from service sector aiming at more effective HIV/STIs prevention and risk reduction,

2. Definition of sample and target groups

As a result of the consultation process in each model region there are two types of target groups outlined for the survey:

2.1. One common target group, identified as a priority in all 4 regions  – young people – 18 to 25 years old;
2.2. **Three specific target groups**, identified as a priority in one or more regions – HIV positive men (HIV+ men); female sex workers (FSW), men who have sex with men (MSM)

The crossing-border partners in each region will have same target groups, in order to allow comparison of mobility patterns and related risk exposure to HIV/AIDS/STIs. The first target group in each region will be the young people, whereas each national partner in the region will address 90 respondents from that group (180 for the region). The second, special target group will comprise of 45 respondent at each side of the border in the respective region (90 for the whole region).

2.3. **Overall sample** will comprise of:

- 720 young people - from 4 model regions (Germany, Poland, Austria, Slovakia, Italy, Slovenia),
- 180 men who have sex with other men (MSM) – from two model regions (Austria, Slovakia, Italy, Slovenia),
- 90 female sex workers (FSW) – from one model region (Germany, Poland);
- 90 HIV+ men - from one model region (Germany, Poland);

**Total sample size – 1 080 respondents**

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<th>MR I</th>
<th>Poland</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Young people</th>
<th>HIV + men</th>
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3. Selection criteria and recruitment of respondents

3.1. Age – will be specified only by the group of young people – 18 to 25 years of age (no permission of the parents for the respondents will be necessary);

3.2. Sex – will be balanced only by the group of young people; two special target groups will comprise only men (MSM and HIV+ men) and one, only women (FSW)

3.3. Setting of respondents' recruitment

There will be various settings of recruitment explored according to the target group and the country infrastructure context:

– study setting - school, university, youth hostel/dormitory,
– leisure time scene - discos, bars, cafes, meeting point for MSM, etc.
– work place – brothels, locals, motels, out-door work places for sex workers, etc.
– health care /psychosocial support setting – outreach contacts, mobile units, counselling centres, self-help groups etc.

4. Methodology and administration modalities

The survey will be based on a quantitative research method:

4.1. Self-administration questionnaires – in combination with structured face-to-face interview, where self-administration is completely impossible;

4.2. Distribution and collection of the questionnaires – in most of the cases the questionnaires will be distributed directly in the setting of recruitment after a preliminary introduction to the project and its objectives and after agreement of the respondents to take part at the survey. After filling out the questionnaires will be also collected on the spot, in an completely anonymous form (in a small box etc.).

4.3. Languages of the questionnaires – they will be translated into the 6 national languages and will be offered to the respondents in their mother tongue. In one of the target groups (FSW), there will be also respondents belonging to other nationalities (migrants in the country of surves). In this case the questionnaires will be preliminary translated into the languages needed (e.g. Russian).

In some of the cases with migrant respondents the help of cultural mediators might be needed where the questionnaire will be filled out in the form of a structured face-to-face interview.

4.4. Research assistants – the BORDERNET project partners in the 6 countries are responsible for the organisation and the survey’s administration on the spot. They will contract, train and monitor the work of the selected interviewers/questionnaire administrators in cases those will be additionally involved in the survey. Cultural mediators will be also contracted based on local demand and refunded for their interpreter services.

4.5. Respondents' incentives – there are no incentives foreseen for the respondents (member of each survey’s target groups), as far as the self-administration questionnaire is not lengthy and time-consuming task).
There will be support in kind offered as HIV/STIs information and education materials and preventive tools.

5. Ethical dimensions of the survey

The survey will start in each of the countries after the respective BORDERNET partner receives the corresponding approval and permission of the ethical commission or the personal data protection reference point. As far as the survey is not a nationally representative survey, this may be a national or regional type of permission in each country, according to the actual regulations.

As explicitly stated in the address letter (cover page of each questionnaire) to the survey’s respondents the survey is anonymous, there will be no personal data collected (name, address etc.) for the individual respondents. All answers will be kept under full confidentiality, the collected filled-out questionnaires will be sent from each BORDERNET partner to SPI Research gGmbH (project co-ordinator), where after the data entry and analysis is finished they will be erased.

This anonymous character of the survey will be explained to each respondent before their consent for participation is received. At the end of the introduction additional information and addresses for contacts will be offered to each respondent, despite of the fact whether they will take part at the survey or not.

Offers for an anonymous and free-of-charge HIV counselling and testing will be also made at the places they are available.

6. Instruments – closed/multiple-choice questions questionnaires

6.1. General part – common for all target groups – 28 items providing data on several topics:

- Life and social situation;
- Mobility;
- HIV/AIDS and STIs knowledge and subjective risk perception

6.2. Special part – a separate battery of questions for each target group – 4 batteries with between 10 and 20 items, providing data on:

- Sexual practices/level of HIV/STIs risk exposure;
- Preventive measures and risk reduction strategies

7. Data analysis

The questionnaires will be collected and sent to the co-ordinator, SPI Research gGmbH. There the data entry and analysis will proceed with the help of statistic programmes, such as SPSS. National, regional (cross-border) and cross-country (among the 6 project partner countries) evaluation will be carried out and comparisons will draw out patterns and tendencies in the studied variables (knowledge, attitudes, practices)
8. Survey’s action frame

- **Instrument finalisation** – end of January 2006, responsible – SPI Research;

- **Consultation and approval by the respective ethical commissions** – end of February 2006; responsible – each partner;

- **Administration (data collection)** – March–June 2006, responsible – each partner;

- **Data entry** – July–September 2006, responsible – SPI;

- **Analysis and report** – September–October 2006, responsible – SPI

The draft report of the survey will be presented to all partners and discussed at the next project international steering committee meeting, to take place in Berlin in October 2006.
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