

# LOST OPPORTUNITIES AND POTENTIAL OF HCV TEST AND TREATMENT AMONG PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS IN UKRAINE

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## BACKGROUND:

Ukraine is facing one of the fastest growing HCV epidemics among people who inject drugs in Europe with stable HCV prevalence around 60%. Harm reduction program to prevent new HIV cases and other blood-borne infections among PWIDs are implemented in Ukraine since 2000. Recently, programmatic focus of harm reduction activities was shifted to the finding of new HIV cases in this population and linkage to care. However, HCV test and treat approach was not a priority.

## METHODS:

We used unique client code database which track services provided to PWIDs during 2013-2017 to measure HCV testing uptake and results. To estimate the program needs in reaching the PWIDs through prevention services in different regions we estimated the number of HCV cases among PWIDs used HCV prevalence data and population size estimate.

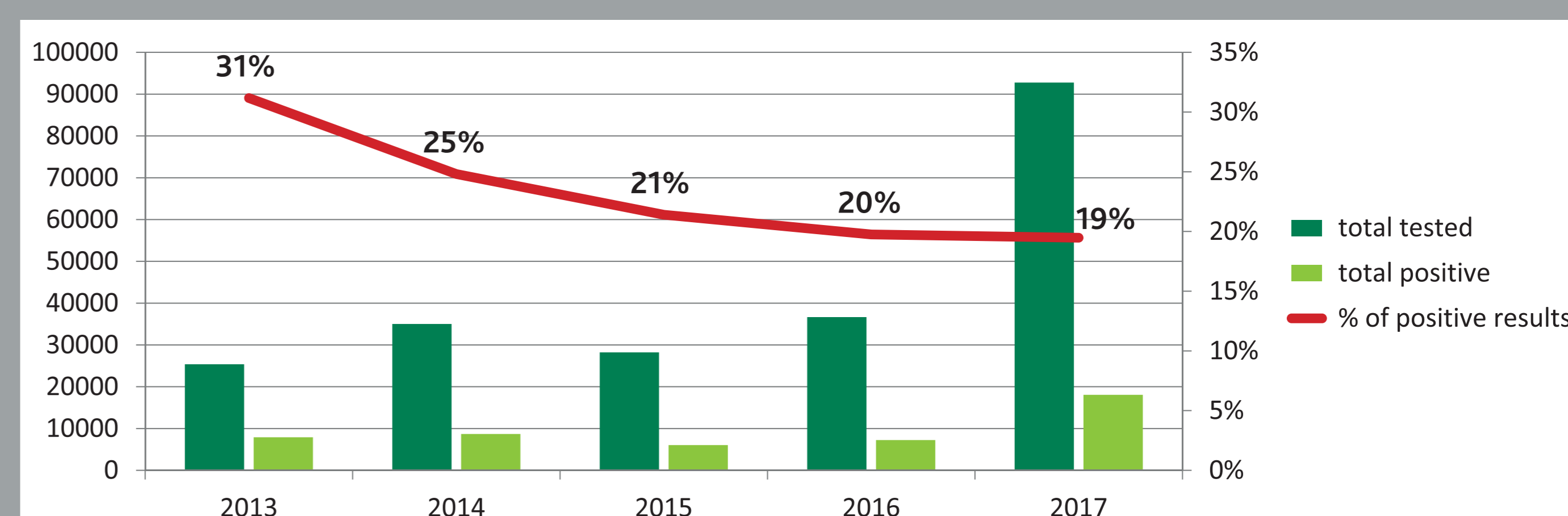
## CONCLUSIONS:

Coverage of PWID by HCV testing and yield of HCV positive results is very low. The potential of harm reduction services implemented by NGOs is sufficiently underutilized and can be improved by focusing at selected cities/regions and proper target setting. With reduction of price for HCV treatment the role of NGOs is crucial in eliminating HCV in this population. Due to the lower stigma towards HCV in comparison to HIV, offering the HCV test at first place may be used as the mean of building the trust for further medical interventions including HCV and HIV treatment.

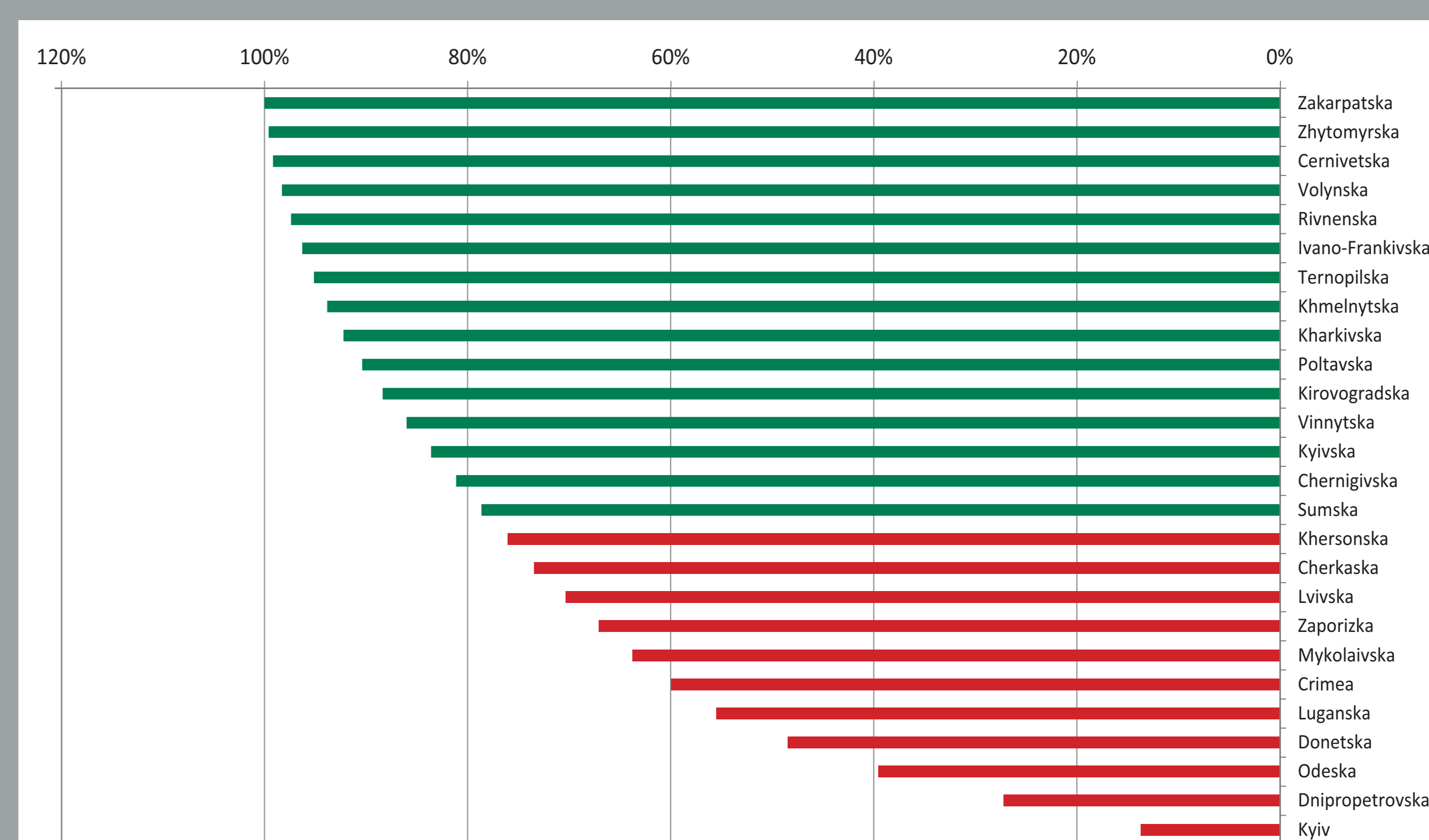
## RESULTS:

- From 2013 to 2017 harm reduction programs covered 453144 unique clients among which only 167930 (37%) were tested for HCV. During five years 38495 unique client were found with HCV (23%). Annual detection yield has been decreasing from 31% in 2013 to 19% in 2017 (Graph 1).
- According to the estimates, about 200000 PWID had HCV in Ukraine (including Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk regions), what suggest that prevention services were able to identify around 20% of HCV cases. Regional distribution of HCV cases shows that 75 percent of estimated cases are located in core 11 regions (Graph 2).
- The coverage of HCV testing in these regions varies from 7% in Crimea to 33% in Kiev.
- The majority of undetected cases are concentrated in 8 regions and account for about 110000 cases (Graph 3).

**Graph 1.** HCV testing and yield among PWIDs (clients of harm reduction program), Ukraine, 5 years



**Graph 2.** The cumulative percentage of estimated number of HCV cases among PWIDs and treatment needs in Ukraine. (Total number of HCV cases is about 200,000 cases)



**Graph 3.** Estimated number of undetected HCV cases among PWID in Ukraine

