An audit of new diagnoses of HIV in a deprived local authority – are we detecting HIV too late?
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INTRODUCTION
• People with HIV may live without symptoms for years before progression to late-stage HIV and development of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)
• Early HIV detection is beneficial
  - Improves patient survival
  - Reduced risk of serious illness
  - Late diagnosis carries increased risk of short-term mortality (death within 1 year of diagnosis) by as much as 10-fold

AIM
• To ascertain at what stage of disease health services in Sandwell are diagnosing people with HIV from 2019 to 2022.

METHODS
• Sexual health centre databases were searched for patients whose files were coded for ‘New HIV Diagnosis' from 1/1/2019 to 26/1/2022
• People with new HIV diagnoses made in Sandwell were identified
• Stage of diagnosis was categorized as follows:
  - EARLY: CD4 Count ≥ 350
  - LATE: CD4 Count <350 and ≥ 200
  - VERY LATE: CD4 Count < 200 or AIDS Defining Illness

RESULTS
• 39 new HIV diagnoses were identified
• 74% of new HIV diagnoses were late or very late
• The most common setting for new diagnosis was hospital inpatient at 46%, compared to 18% in sexual health clinics and 3% in general practice
• 44% of the people with new HIV diagnoses were born in the UK and 41% were born in an African nation
• The most common transmission route (79%) was sex between men and women

CONCLUSIONS
The majority of HIV diagnoses were made at late or very late-stage disease and the most common setting for diagnosis was hospital inpatient
→ Primary care and sexual health services in Sandwell are failing to detect HIV early and patients are not started on treatment until late-stage disease when morbidity and mortality are higher
→ Sandwell is one of the most deprived boroughs in England, and the findings of this study may be generalisable to other deprived areas within the UK

PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS
• HIV testing for all people registering in a general practice and for all general medical hospital admissions in areas with high HIV prevalence
• Public education that accesses but is not targeted specifically toward underserved groups, with the aim to promote widespread testing and reduce stigma