**Characterization of attendances carried out in a Center of Testing and Counseling***Caracterização dos atendimentos realizados em um Centro de Testagem e Aconselhamento**Caracterización de las atenciones realizadas en un Centro de Pruebas y Asesoramiento*

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to characterize the epidemiological profile of the population served at the Testing and Counseling Center of a state in the Northeast of Brazil. **Method:** this is a descriptive, cross-sectional study of retrospective collection, using secondary data from the information system of the testing and counseling center of the state of Piauí. The study population consisted of patients who sought care to know their HIV status in the year 2015. **Results:** prevalence was observed in the age group of 25 to 39 years. Of the 3,548 patients tested, 220 cases were positive for HIV. The characterization of the positive patients showed a predominance of brown breed (73.2%), single marital status (73.2%) and 8 to 11 years of schooling (40.70%). **Conclusion:** the majority of users were men, adults between 25 and 39 years of age, pardos, unmarried, who studied from 8 to 11 years old, who sought CTA because they had been exposed to some type of risk, by indication of friends and service users.

Descriptors: HIV; Aids; Serologic Tests.

RESUMO

Objetivo: caracterizar o perfil epidemiológico da população atendida em Centro de Testagem e Aconselhamento de um estado do Nordeste do Brasil. **Método:** trata-se de um estudo descritivo, transversal, de coleta retrospectiva, utilizando dados secundários do sistema de informação do centro de testagem e aconselhamento do estado do Piauí. A população estudada foi constituída por pacientes que buscaram atendimento para conhecer seu estado sorológico para o HIV no ano de 2015. **Resultados:** a predominância foi observada na faixa etária de 25 a 39 anos. Dentre os 3.548 pacientes testados, 220 casos foram positivos para o HIV. A caracterização dos pacientes positivos evidenciou predomínio da raça parda (73,2%), estado civil solteiro (73,2%) e 8 a 11 anos de estudo (40,70%). **Conclusão:** a maioria dos usuários eram homens, adultos na faixa etária entre 25 a 39 anos, pardos, solteiros, que estudaram de 8 a 11 anos, que buscaram o CTA por terem se exposto a algum tipo de risco, por indicação de amigos e usuários antigos do serviço.

Descritores: HIV; Aids; Testes Sorológicos

RESUMÉN

Objetivo: caracterizar el perfil epidemiológico de la población atendida en Centro de Testagem y Asesoramiento de un estado del Nordeste de Brasil. **Método:** se trata de un estudio descriptivo, transversal, de recolección retrospectiva, utilizando datos secundarios del sistema de información del centro de testación y asesoramiento del estado de Piauí. La población estudiada fue constituída por pacientes que buscaron atención para conocer su estado serológico para el VIH en el año 2015. **Resultados:** la predominancia se observó en el grupo de edad de 25 a 39 años. Entre los 3.548 pacientes probados, 220 casos fueron positivos para el VIH. La caracterización de los pacientes positivos evidenció predomínio de la raza parda (73,2%), estado civil soltero (73,2%) y 8 a 11 años de estudio (40,70%). **Conclusión:** la mayoría de los usuarios eran hombres, adultos en el grupo de edad entre 25 y 39 años, pardos, solteros, que estudiaron de 8 a 11 años, que buscaron el CTA por haberse expuesto a algún tipo de riesgo, por indicación de amigos y amigos, usuarios antiguos del servicio.

Descriptores: HIV; Aids; Pruebas Serológicas

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INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the AIDS pandemic around the world, more than 78 million people have been infected with HIV and 39 million have died since then. It is also estimated that 19 of the 35 million people living with HIV infection (PLHA) are unaware of their serological status of positivity¹.

Around 830,000 cases of people living with HIV infection (PLWHA) have been recorded by 2015, Brazil being the only country in Latin America that has experienced an increase in the number of new infections in the last decade, at around 11%. The country is the most affected by the epidemic in Latin America, with a third of cases, since from the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in 1980 until June 2014, 757,042 cases were registered. The proportional distribution points to the northeastern region of Brazil with 44,112 cases (5.8%). In the state of Piauí, according to epidemiological data from the State Department of Health (SDH) up to 2010, 1,991 cases of infected men and 818 of women were registered, such as a total of 2,809 people infected with HIV/aids¹⁻².

It is also estimated that more than 150,000 PLWHA in Brazil are unaware of their serological condition and only 313,000 are on continuous antiretroviral treatment. Data from the country's Ministry of Health still point to some populations that are more vulnerable, such as men who have sex with men, sex workers, transgender people, transvestites and injecting drug users, who are more likely to be unaware of the serological status due to the difficulty health services in capturing this population¹⁻³.

In this sense, Testing and Counseling Centers (TCC) are health services that carry out diagnostic and preventive measures for sexually transmitted diseases by performing tests for HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B and C, free of charge⁴. All tests are performed according to the standard defined by the Ministry of Health and with products registered in the National Agency of Sanitary

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Surveillance (Anvisa) and controlled by it⁵. TCCs generally have a qualified health team, where counseling takes place before (pre-test) and after (post-test) testing, always in a confidential manner. Depending on the outcome, the patient is referred to the reference units to start treatment and indicated for support groups⁶.

Based on this, the objective was to characterize the epidemiological profile of the population served in a Testing and Counseling Center of a state in the Northeast of Brazil.

METHODS

This is a descriptive, cross-sectional study of retrospective collection, using secondary data from the information system of the testing and counseling center of the state of Piauí.

The study population consisted of patients who sought care to know their HIV status, either spontaneously or referenced, and who performed the test in the year 2015. The population consisted of 3,548 users.

The Center of Testing and Counseling studied meets the demand of the general public, however it has been focusing its actions on vulnerable populations, especially drug users, street people, LGBT people, sex workers, and so on. It runs from Monday to Friday, on the morning shift, from 7:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The same offer for free counseling and testing for HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis B and C, being rapid and serological tests.

The data were collected directly in the information system, with authorization from the Coordinator of Communicable Diseases of the State Health Department of Piauí, to which the TCC is bound, using a form previously prepared and validated in a pilot test. The variables studied were: socio-demographic, serological data, sexual practice, situations of vulnerabilities most experienced by the population affected by HIV and the origin of the patient.

The data were organized, typed and later analyzed through simple descriptive statistics, the main results were presented in the form of tables and graphs.

The study obeyed all the national and international ethical precepts related to human research.

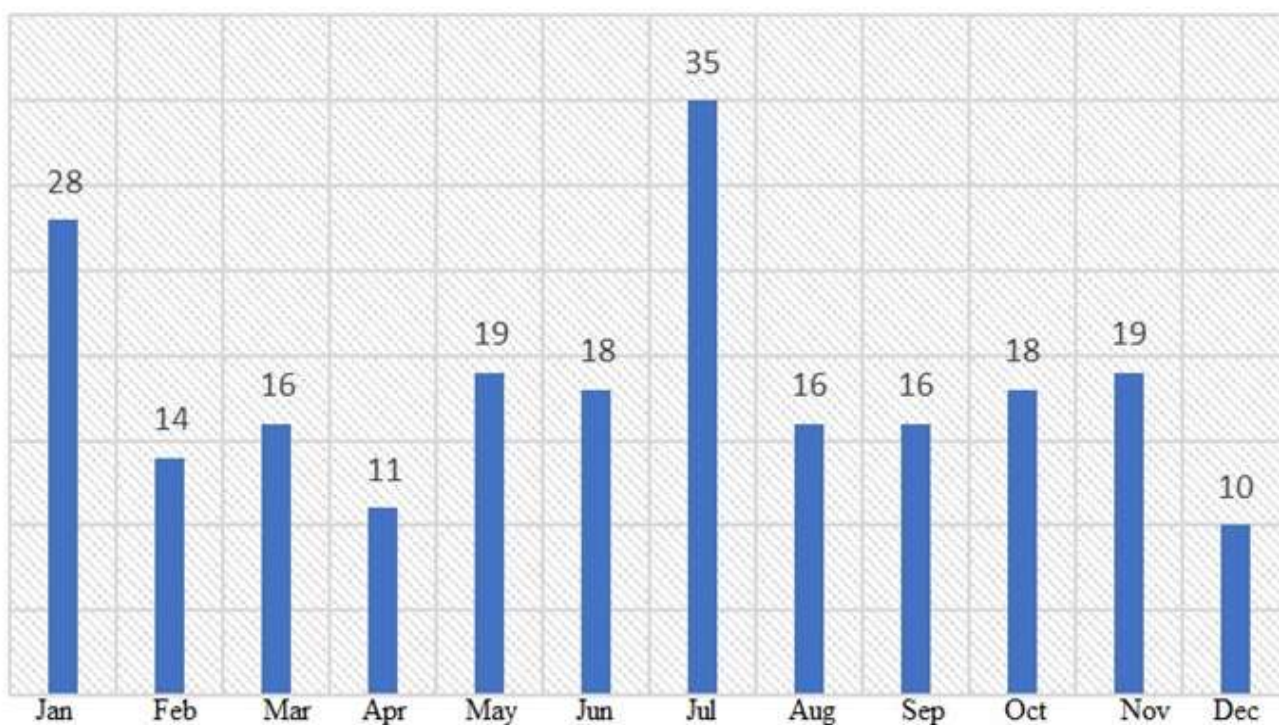
RESULTS

Table 1 shows the prevalence of HIV in the population of service users, which in the year studied was 6.2%. The predominance was observed in the age group of 25 to 39 years.

Table 01. Distribution of HIV prevalence by age of TCC users, 2015. (n=3.548)

Age	Have been tested for HIV	Reagent Result
13 to 24 years	1032 (29 %)	53 (24 %)
25 to 39 years	1747 (49 %)	117 (53 %)
40 to 59 years	658 (18,5%)	45 (20%)
60 years or older	111 (3,5%)	5 (3%)
Total	3.548	220 (6,20%)

Graph 01 shows the distribution of positivity (220) per month in which the examination was performed in the TCC studied. Concentration is observed in the month of January and July (Graph 1).



The characterization of the positive users showed a predominance of males (75), brown race (73.2%), single civil status (73.2%) and elementary school (40.70%).

Also, we tried to evaluate the use of condoms among users diagnosed as positive for HIV, and it was found that those with a fixed partner did not use condoms in all relations.

Table 02. Epidemiological profile of users of an HIV/STD Testing and Counseling Center with positive serology for HIV. Teresina, Piauí, 2015.

Variable	N	(%)
Sex		
Male	165	75,0
Female	55	25,0
Education		
Ignored	12	5,4
Illiterate	52	23,6
Elementary School	90	40,9
High School	45	20,4
College education	21	9,5
Marital status		
Single	161	73.3
Stable relationship	18	8.2
Married	19	8.6
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	22	10.0
Color		
Ignored	0	-
Brown	161	73.3
Black	43	19.5
White	14	6.4
Yellow	0	-
Other	2	0.9
How did you find the service?		
Internet	15	6.8
Television	12	5.4
Educational propaganda	08	3.6
Friend recommendation	182	82.7
Other	03	1.4
Reason for searching the TCC		
Suspicion of exposure	171	77.7
Forwarding of other services	36	16.4
Seek to know the serological status	07	3.2
Other	04	1.8
Rather not to say	02	0.9

Table 03. Sexual partnership and condom use in the past 12 months among users of an HIV / STD Testing and Counseling Center with positive HIV serology. Teresina, Piauí, 2015.

Condom use	Stable partner	Casual partner
	n	n
Always	38	129
Sometimes	13	22
Never	08	10

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research indicate that the majority of users attended in the TCC studied were men, adults in the age group between 25 and 39 years. Among the individuals with a positive diagnosis for HIV, brown, unmarried, with elementary school (8 to 11 years old), who sought the TCC for having exposed themselves to some type of risk, by indication of friends and old users of the service.

Regarding the demand rate, higher intensity can be observed in months related to school holidays (January and July) and extended holidays (May and June). Such findings may be related to the season in which the population most frequently searches for health services.

Regarding schooling, the results are in agreement with a similar study carried out in a TCC in Santa Catarina, Brazil, in which the range of 8 to 11 years of schooling (elementary school) were the ones that sought the most from their serological status and that more there were positive results. From this, the researchers hypothesized that schooling is a variable of social stratification, since individuals with lower income tend to have low levels of schooling and little access to health information⁷.

Regarding the marital status of the study population it was realized that singles predominated. The proportions related to this finding are in accordance with a similar survey in São Paulo⁸. The finding regarding the single marital status reinforces the hypothesis that "being single" and having high turnover of partners can interfere in sexual behaviors and consequently in the rates of positivity⁹.

Regarding the way this population found the service, it is noticed that the majority was by means of indicating of friends who use the service of the TCC, followed of the educative disclosure. This finding makes it clear that this service could be much more publicized for the population to

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seek more, contributing to the population's awareness of the importance of continually testing, reducing risks and diagnosing those who have had contact with viruses, raising awareness about their serological status and forwarding as soon as possible⁸.

Regarding the reasons that led this individual to seek the TCC, the highest indexes on search were those that were exposed to risk. This finding corroborated with a study done in São Paulo, Brazil. In fact, fear of exposure leads subjects to seek such health services more often¹⁰.

A major finding is related to the low frequency of condom use between steady and casual partners. It is believed that the cultural factor contributes to this, since there is a social pressure that cultivates the requirement of fidelity, exposing the partners to greater situations of vulnerabilities for sexually transmitted infections⁹⁻¹¹.

This research has limitations. The fact that it is documentary and retrospective can cause and contribute to the imprecision of the data. It is further believed that similar follow-up research would be interesting to identify risk and protective factors.

CONCLUSION

The population attended at the Center for Testing and Counseling studied was composed mostly of men, adults, in the age group between 25 and 39 years. Among the individuals with a positive HIV diagnosis, browns, single, with elementary school, who sought the service because they had been exposed to some type of risk.

This work can contribute to the elaboration of plans that improve the quality of the service, as well as to reinforce the maintenance and intensification of strategies and extra-mural activity, thus contributing to the minimization of vulnerabilities.

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COLABORAÇÕES

Todos os autores contribuíram igualmente na coleta e interpretação dos resultados obtidos e ainda, na elaboração e organização das ideias e nas revisões sucessivas até a aprovação final.

CONFLITOS DE INTERESSE

Não há conflitos de interesse a declarar

CORRESPONDENCIA

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