

# Trends in HCV Testing and Data Reporting Across EECA: Insights from the COBATEST Network (2017–2023)



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## Background

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of Hepatitis C (HCV) testing are essential for informed decision-making and improving intervention effectiveness. Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) are experiencing rising HCV incidence, driven by factors like injection drug use and limited harm reduction services. Fragmented data collection hinders accurate tracking of prevalence and intervention impact. Strengthening data processes is crucial for understanding the epidemic and targeting interventions. **The COBATEST network**, a European network of community testing centers, supports standardized data collection in EECA. This study highlights the progress of network members in reporting HCV data and presents key findings from the data reported.

## Methods

Only COBATEST member centers from EECA that submitted data from 2017 to 2023 were included. Persons aged <16, previously diagnosed, or with missing test results were excluded. Only the most recent record per client each year was kept. Descriptive analysis of the data and key indicators was performed.

## Results

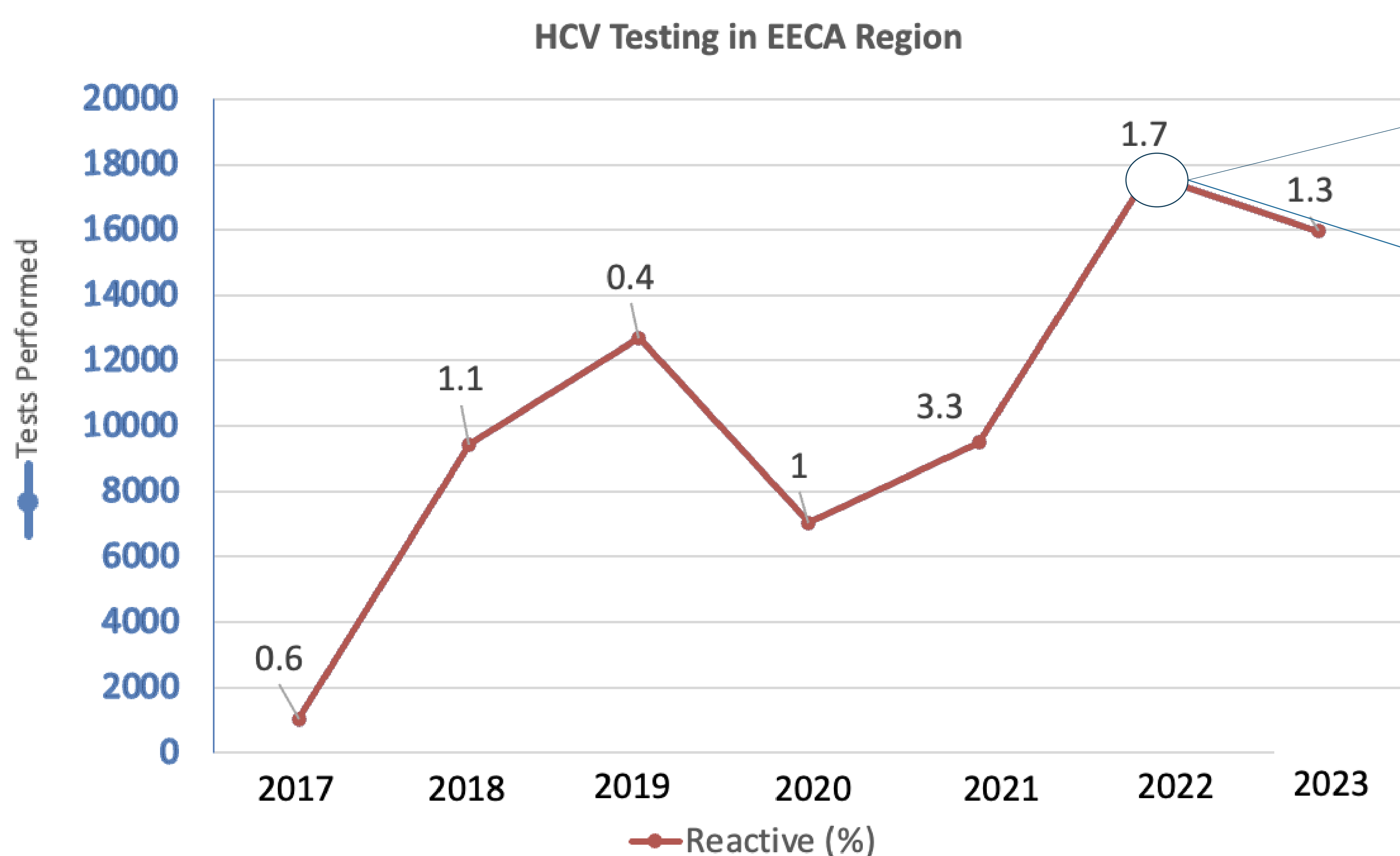
### HCV Testing in EECA Region (2017–2023)

- 📍 26 COBATEST member centers from 17 Countries reported data on HCV testing.
- 🌐 Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Ukraine.

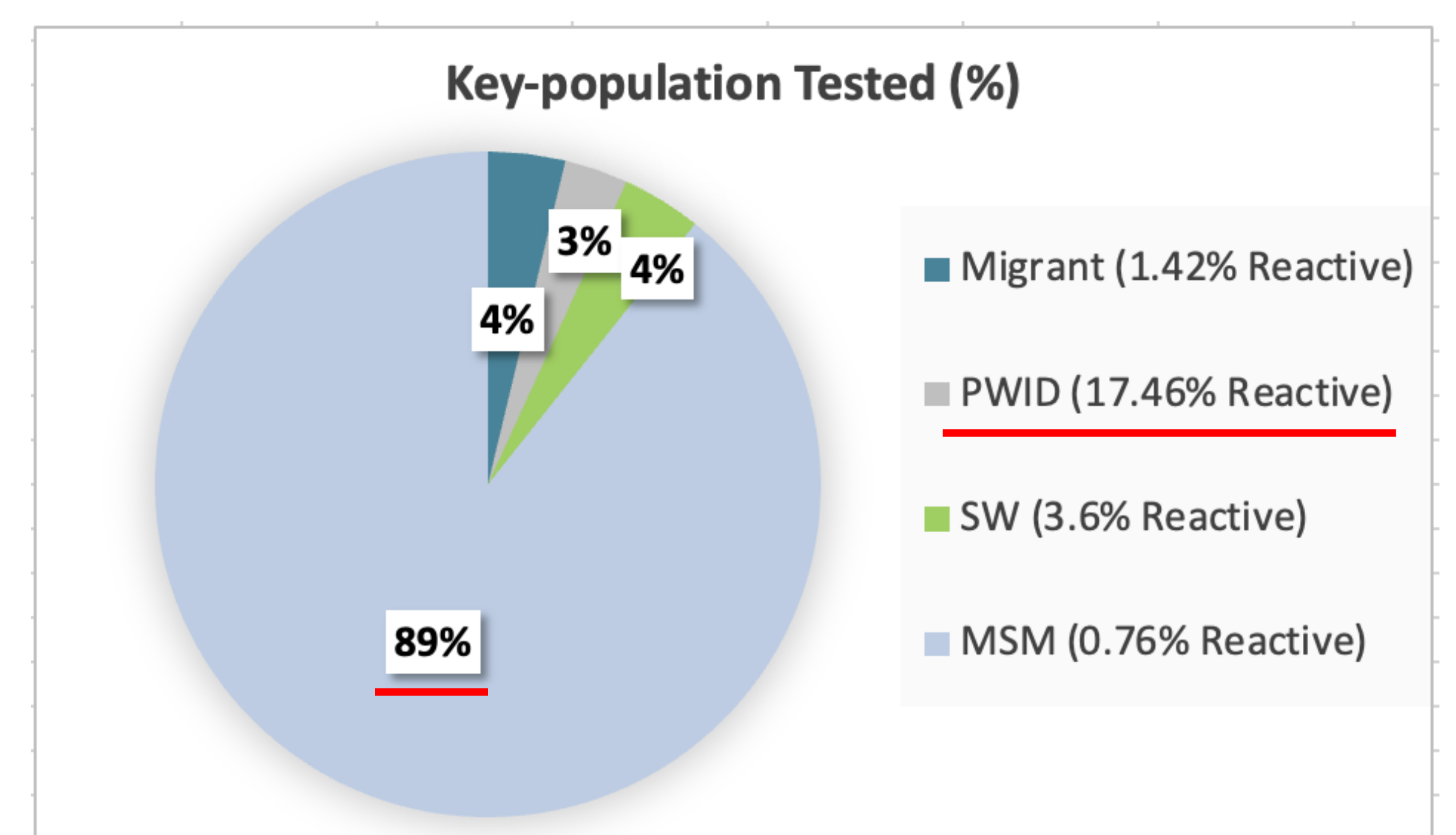
Except for 2017, when only 3 centers submitted data, between 7 and 11 centers reported annually. However, only same 7 centers consistently reported data every year throughout the 2017–2023 period.

### Key Findings

📊 Total HCV Tests Performed: 73,290 tests, 1.6% reactive.



▲ The highest number of tests done: 17,646n in 2022



▼ Excluding 2017, the lowest number of tests performed was in 2020 (7,032n), after which upward trend has been found.

Specifically, tests performed dropped by 44.5% in 2020 but increased by 34.8% in 2021.

In 2023, there was a 9.7% decline in the tests performed compared to the previous year.

73,83% of total tested were male, 25.41% female, and 0.66% transgender.

90.12% of all participants were aged ≥25 (2.19% reactive).

## Conclusions

- While testing numbers fluctuated, with a significant decline in 2020 and recovery in 2021, the data emphasizes the need for consistent HCV testing.
- Despite a decrease in reported tests in 2023, the proportion of reactive tests increased, suggesting more individuals at risk are being identified.
- Only a few members consistently report data, highlighting the need for stronger support in data collection.
- Strengthening data reporting is essential for targeted interventions and improving HCV prevention and treatment strategies in the region.