

News

Barcelona opens Europe's first centre specializing in the HIV preventive pill



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Author: FCVS



Spain leads the ranking of infections in Europe. Source: Pixabay.

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The presentation of the first centre specializing in the HIV preventive pill. Source: Europa Press.

PrEP has proven to be effective in reducing new HIV infections and has been approved by the European Medicines Agency, but is not yet regularized in Spain.

Barcelona opens Europe's first centre specializing in the Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis pill (PrEP) to prevent HIV. PrEP has an **efficacy of almost 100%** and is an HIV prevention strategy consisting in the administration of antiretroviral drugs to **people at risk** so as to reduce the possibilities of becoming infected.

The initiative for the new centre, the BarcelonaPrEP Point, is promoted by the **BCN Checkpoint community centre**, which diagnoses 40% of cases detected in Catalonia. As well as providing information and advice, this new facility will carry out a **control and follow-up of persons using PrEP**, a drug that has been approved by the European Medicines Agency, but which is **not yet regularized in Spain**.

The centre will also participate in **studies on the use of this pill**, such as the international clinical trial Discover, that will be promoted in Spain jointly by BCN Checkpoint, the Bellvitge Hospital and the Sandoval Medical Centre in Madrid; it will also participate in other **research projects** that are in the process of being approved by the **Catalan Ministry of Health**. Furthermore, once the Spanish Ministry of Health approves the pill, the centre will become a **distribution point of the pill**.

The director of BCN Checkpoint, Ferran Pujol, acknowledged that this is a **private initiative**, although he is hopeful that the Catalan Ministry of Health and the City Council of Barcelona will actively engage to end the HIV epidemic.

Pressure for approval

Those responsible for the project **have blamed Spain and the Government for not allowing the distribution of this pill**, whereas in many European countries, Australia and the US, its efficacy has been proven in reducing the transmission of the infection; once administered, the pill is effective immediately.

BCN Checkpoint alerts that every day that passes without approval of PrEP, "two people are diagnosed in

Catalonia and ten in Spain", which leads them to be hopeful that the pill will be approved and can start being administered the sooner the better, because the majority of these cases would be **avoidable**.

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