

# Examination of the increased rate of new HIV notifications in Cork and Kerry (2012 – 2022)

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## Introduction

Ireland has seen a significant increase in immigration from regions with a high prevalence of *Human Immunodeficiency Virus* (HIV) in the past year. The number of new notifications of HIV made to the Health Protection Surveillance Centre increased by more than 65% in 2022 compared to any year in the last decade.

Significant increases in immigration, international disruptions to HIV services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and community transmission has likely played a part in this increase in HIV notifications.

## Objective

The aim of this work was to examine how the epidemiology of HIV has changed in Cork and Kerry between 2012 and 2022 using routine surveillance data in order to inform service planning and public health response.

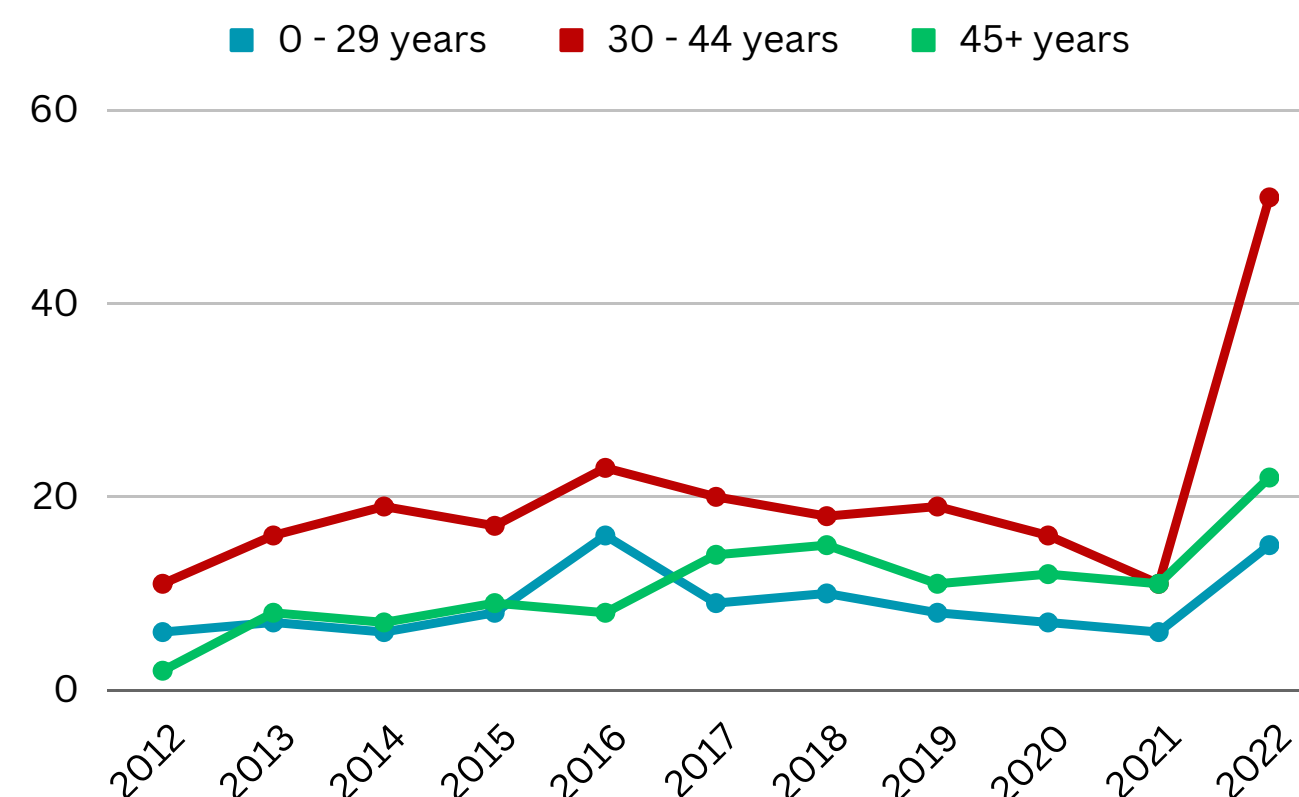
## Methods

Data relating to HIV notifications within Cork and Kerry from 2012 to 2022 was extracted from the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting system on 08/03/2023. Additional data on HIV viral load was extracted from the local laboratory system. Migration status for individuals was assigned based on patient ethnicity and addresses of known Direct Provision Centres and Ukrainian Accommodation Centres.

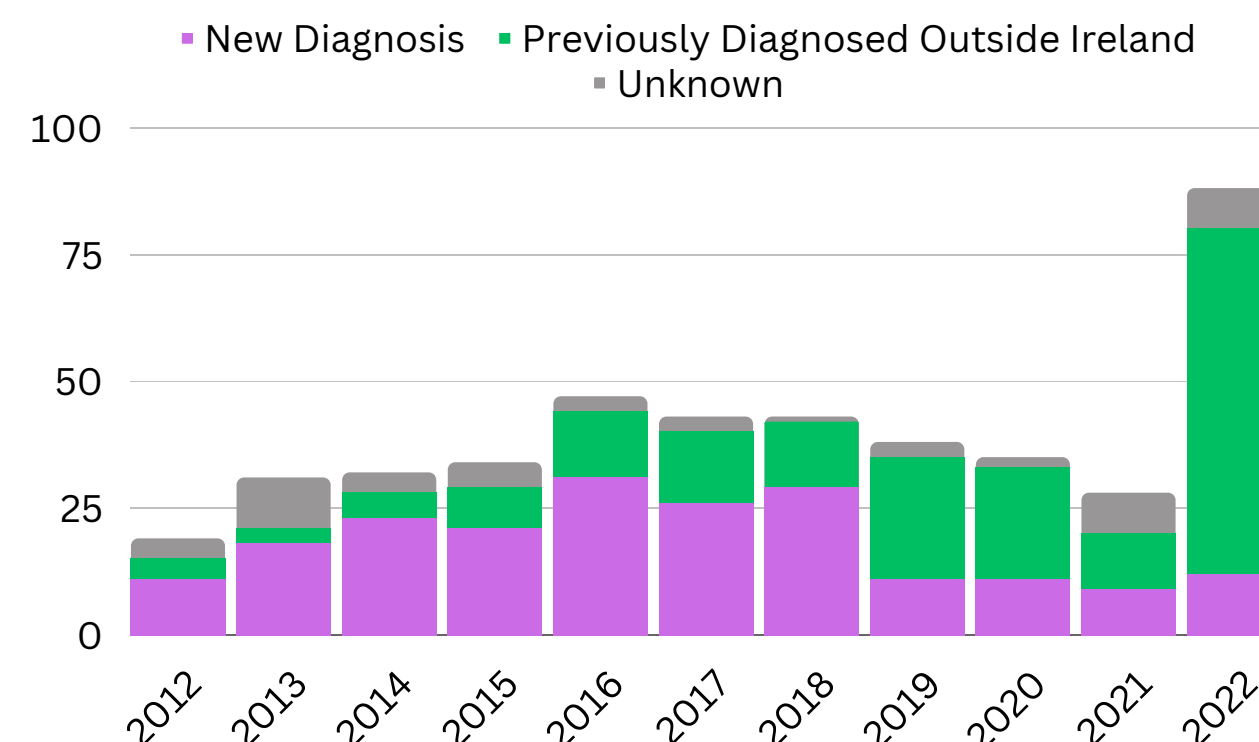
## Results

88 cases of HIV were notified within Cork & Kerry in 2022. This represents a 3.1 fold increase in notifications compared to 2021 and a 2.3 fold increase compared to 2019.

**Figure 1. HIV Notifications per year by age group (2012 - 2022)**



**Figure 2. HIV Notifications per year by history of previous diagnosis (2012 - 2022)**



HIV rates were highest in 2022 compared to any year in the past decade

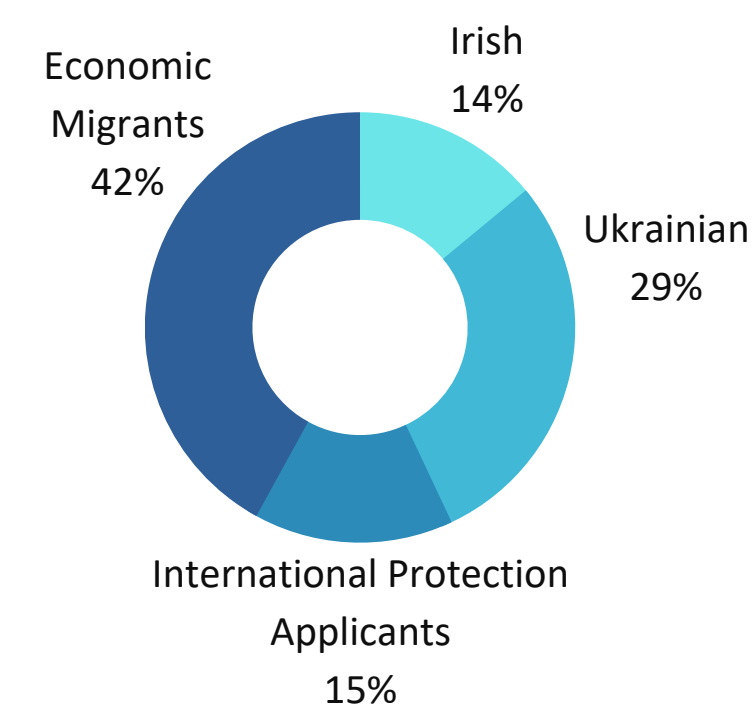
The largest increase was seen among those aged 30 - 44 years

Females accounted for 41% of HIV notifications in 2022 compared to 26% in 2019 and 16% in 2012

85% of cases had previously been diagnosed outside of Ireland (where known) in 2022

82% of those previously diagnosed abroad presented with an undetectable/low viral load

**Figure 3. HIV Notifications by Migrant Status (2022)**



## Key Findings

- The number of HIV notifications increased significantly in 2022.
- The greatest increase was seen among those aged 30 - 44 years (Figure 1).
- There has been a significant increase in notifications among females.
- The majority of new cases that are notified were previously diagnosed outside of Ireland and are already on anti-retroviral treatment (Figure 2).
- Community transmission of HIV within Cork & Kerry is likely to be decreasing based on declining number of new HIV diagnoses being reported (Figure 2).

## Conclusions

- The epidemiology of HIV has changed.
- This change is largely driven by increased immigration of people from regions with higher prevalences of HIV.
- Efforts to reduce community transmission of HIV appear to be having a positive effect.
- Many migrants who come to Ireland with HIV know their status and are already on treatment.
- As time goes on, the HIV care for an aging cohort will become more complex.
- It is important to ensure that HIV services are able to cope with the ever increasing level of demand.