



Tervise Arengu Instituut
National Institute for Health Development

HIV/AIDS-RELATED RISK BEHAVIOUR AND KNOWLEDGE OF NEEDLE EXCHANGE SERVICE VISITORS

Comparative Analysis of First-time and Recurring Clients 2006

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INTRODUCTION

Four non-governmental organisations (NGO) are supported for providing needle exchange and counselling services within the framework of Estonian Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria program in the National Institute for Health Development. These organisations are:

- Narva Rehabilitation Centre for Drug Addicts and Alcoholics (hereinafter NRCDA) in Ida-Viru County (East-Estonia),
- NGO “We Help You” (hereinafter WHY) in Ida-Viru County (East-Estonia),
- Convictus Estonia (hereinafter CE) in Tallinn,
- AIDS Information and Support Centre (hereinafter AISC) in Tallinn.

At the needle exchange sites (NES), the following services are being offered: counselling of injecting drug users (IDUs) regarding infectious diseases, risk behaviour and drug addiction; distribution of clean syringes and needles; receipt of used syringes; distribution of condoms and information materials.

In 2006, a survey of needle exchange service clients was conducted for the fourth time, in order to compare the data of first-time and recurring visitors. The following report provides an overview of the data regarding NES clients in Tallinn and Ida-Viru County collected in 2006. In addition the values of most significant indicators are compared to the data from previous years.

The data collection took place from January to September 2006. In all 24 needle exchange sites were in operation in 2006. Of these 12 were managed by NRCDA, 5 by WHY, 4 by CE and 3 by AISC. In the first three quarters of 2006 more than 1,126,000 syringes and 371,000 condoms were distributed through the needle exchange sites. In all, NES were visited on 107,351 occasions and of these 1,898 were first-time visits.

Self-administered questionnaire based survey of first-time visitors was conducted in all 24 NES and recurring visitors surveyed in 18 needle exchange sites. The analysis is based on the data of 1,665 first-time and 401 recurring visitors. The objective of the survey was to investigate if the level of knowledge on HIV transmission and risk behaviour in injecting and in sexual relations differs when comparing new and recurring visitors. Continuous collection and analysis of data in this field assists in further development of needle exchange services and evaluation of the results achieved.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE SURVEY

Sample and Data Collection

All drug users who visited NES for the first time and agreed to participate in the survey were considered as first-time visitors. The survey was conducted by all four service providers in all of the 24 NES. In this report data regarding first-time visitors collected within nine months (from January to September 2006) has been used. First-time visitors have been constantly surveyed in the course of the daily work of NES since the second quarter of 2003.

Recurring visitors have been surveyed since 2003 for one month per year (in autumn). In 2006 the data collection took place in September. A separate quota sample was determined for each NES participating in the survey. Upon calculation of sample volumes by NES, the number of recurring visitors in the first half-year of 2006 was used as the basic value. Composition of the sample's gender and age structure was based on distribution of the first-time visitors surveyed in the first half-year of 2006. Upon data collection all clients who had at least once visited needle exchange site were considered as recurring visitors.

Recurring clients were surveyed by all four service providers, but not all needle exchange sites were involved due to the small number of recurring visitors in some NES. In all 18 NES took part in the data collection. Each NES used its own sample for data collection which included the required number of respondents by gender and age group. Before the data collection NES personnel were instructed and the sample framework, manual and questionnaires handed out to them.

The objective was to cover 400 recurring visitors. The sample volumes by organisation were as follows: NRCDA – 95, WHY – 142, AISC – 85, and CE – 78 recurring visitors. The general gender and age structure of the sample is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Gender and age of the quota sample of recurring visitors (n)

| <i>Age group</i> | <i>male</i> | <i>female</i> | <i>TOTAL</i> |
|----------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| 19 years and younger | 54 | 19 | 73 |
| 20-24 years | 137 | 45 | 182 |
| 25 years and older | 125 | 20 | 145 |
| TOTAL | 316 | 84 | 400 |

In the case of both first-time and recurring visitors, data collection was based on self administered questionnaires. The questionnaire for first-time visitors consisted of 15 questions and for recurring visitors of 23 questions. Both of the questionings were carried out by NES personnel.

Respondents

In the first three quarters of 2006 1,665 first-time visitors were surveyed, which amounts to 88% of the total number of new NES clients in the given period. The number of respondents by organisation has been provided in Table 2. All of the filled-in questionnaires proved to be suitable for analysis.

Table 2: Surveyed first-time clients by service provider

| <i>Organisation</i> | <i>n</i> | <i>%</i> |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------|
| AISC | 207 | 12.4 |
| CE | 285 | 17.1 |
| NRCDA | 898 | 54.0 |
| WHY | 275 | 16.5 |
| TOTAL | 1665 | 100.0 |

In the course of the recurring visitor survey, data of 401 IDUs were collected. For organisation, age group and gender-based distribution of the respondents, see Table 3.

Table 3: Gender and age of recurring visitors surveyed as compared to quota sample (n)

| <i>Organisation</i> | <i>Age group</i> | <i>male</i> | | <i>female</i> | | <i>TOTAL</i> | |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | <i>sample</i> | <i>result</i> | <i>sample</i> | <i>result</i> | <i>sample</i> | <i>result</i> |
| AISC | 19 years and younger | 14 | 14 | 3 | 3 | 17 | 17 |
| | 20-24 years | 20 | 20 | 9 | 9 | 29 | 29 |
| | 25 years and older | 33 | 33 | 6 | 6 | 39 | 39 |
| CE | 19 years and younger | 11 | 11 | 4 | 4 | 15 | 15 |
| | 20-24 years | 19 | 19 | 8 | 8 | 27 | 27 |
| | 25 years and older | 30 | 30 | 6 | 6 | 36 | 36 |
| NRCDA | 19 years and younger | 17 | 17 | 7 | 7 | 24 | 24 |
| | 20-24 years | 24 | 24 | 7 | 7 | 31 | 31 |
| | 25 years and older | 33 | 33 | 7* | 8 | 40 | 41 |
| WHY | 19 years and younger | 12 | 12 | 5 | 5 | 17 | 17 |
| | 20-24 years | 74 | 74 | 21 | 21 | 95 | 95 |
| | 25 years and older | 29 | 29 | 1 | 1 | 30 | 30 |
| TOTAL | | 316 | 316 | 84 | 85 | 400 | 401 |

* Differences found between the sample and survey results have been shown on grey background.

Data Analysis

Data has mainly been analysed by first-time and recurring visitors. In the case of important differences, data has also been provided by gender, age and nationality and on regional basis.

For analysis by age groups respondents were divided into three groups:

- 1) 19 years and younger,
- 2) 20-24 years,
- 3) 25 years and older.

As concerns data analysis by nationality, the respondents have been divided into two groups:

- 1) Estonians,
- 2) non-Estonians (Russians and representatives of other nationalities).

For data analysis by region, the respondents were divided into two groups based on the location of service providers:

- 1) Tallinn (clients of AISC and CE),

2) Ida-Viru County (clients of NRCDA and WHY).

Comparative analysis of first-time and recurring NES visitors was carried out for the first time based on data collected in 2003. Methods of data collections and principal questions of the questionnaire have remained the same over the survey years. Because of this, the report also discusses most significant differences between the data collected in the four years. When analysing data on annual basis, it is necessary to take into account that in 2004 only 20 recurring visitors were surveyed at the AISC needle exchange sites because of the small number of recurring visits. In the case of CE recurring visitors were surveyed for the first time in 2004, since the organisation commenced with needle exchange services provision in October 2003.

Statistical software SPSS10.0 has been used for data analysis. For data description, distribution of characteristics is used, described with the help of frequency tables and average indicator. Common distributions of several characteristics have been described with the help of cross tables. χ^2 (chi-square), t-test and Wilcoxon's Mann-Whitney test have been used for evaluation of intergroup differences. A difference was considered significant if the significance level $\alpha \leq 0.05$.

2. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The second chapter of the Report provides an overview of the sample's composition by gender, age and nationality and of their relationship with work and/or studies.

Gender and Age

Men constitute the majority of NES clients. Women amounted to one-fifth of the respondents. An average NES client is a little over 24 years old. As compared to men, female clients are approximately 2 years younger (see Tables 4 and 5). Since the sample of recurring clients has been formed based on the gender and age distribution of first-time visitors, the said distribution is the same in the case of both type of clients (see Tables 4 and 5). 21 first-time visitors did not indicate their age or gender in the questionnaire.

Table 4: Gender and age of first-time clients

| <i>Age group</i> | <i>men</i> | | <i>women</i> | | <i>TOTAL</i> | |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------|
| | <i>n</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>n</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>n</i> | <i>% of sample</i> |
| 19 years and younger | 232 | 71.4 | 93 | 28.6 | 325 | 19.8 |
| 20-24 years | 486 | 76.1 | 153 | 23.9 | 639 | 38.9 |
| 25 years and older | 585 | 86.0 | 95 | 14.0 | 680 | 41.3 |
| average age | 24.6 | | 22.6 | | 24.2 | |
| TOTAL | 1303 | 79.3 | 341 | 20.7 | 1644 | 100.0 |

Table 5: Gender and age of recurring clients

| Age group | men | | women | | TOTAL | |
|----------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | of sample |
| 19 years and younger | 54 | 74.0 | 19 | 26.0 | 73 | 18.2 |
| 20-24 years | 135 | 75.4 | 44 | 24.6 | 179 | 44.6 |
| 25 years and older | 127 | 85.2 | 22 | 14.8 | 149 | 37.2 |
| average age | 24.9 | | 22.8 | | 24.5 | |
| TOTAL | 316 | 78.8 | 85 | 21.2 | 401 | 100.0 |

Comparison with data from earlier surveys shows that the average age of NES clients has increased significantly in the year 2006 – by approx. 2 years as compared to 2003 (see Figure 1).

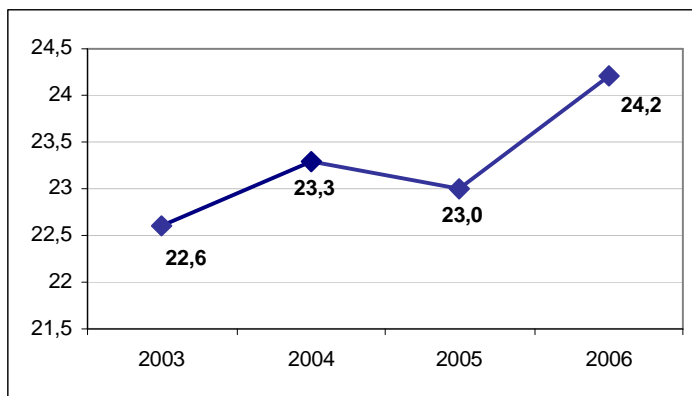


Figure 1: Average age of first-time clients 2003-2006

Nationality

Russians form the largest group (more than 80%) of NES clients. Approximately one-tenth of the clients are Estonians and 5% representatives of other nationalities (see Figure 2). Similar trends have been evident also in the previous years.

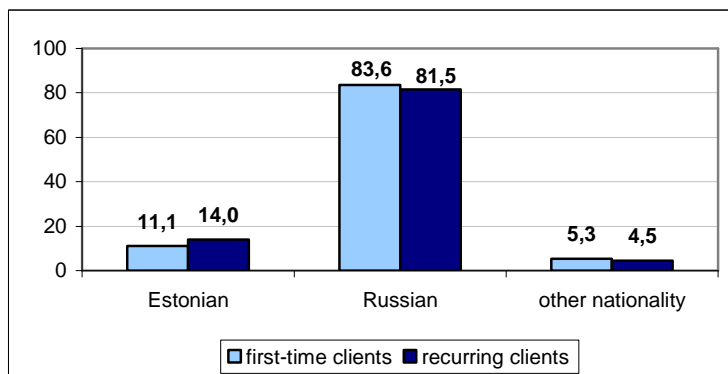


Figure 2: Distribution of clients by nationality (%)

Among the first-time visitors the following other nationalities were represented: Armenian (n=2), Azerbaijani (n=1), Georgian (n=1), Jew (n=4), Kazakh (n=3), Lithuanian (n=1), Latvian (n=1),

Gypsy (n=4), Pole (n=6), German (n=1), Finn (n=2), Tatar (n=2), Turk (n=1), Ukrainian (n=15) and Byelorussian (n=4). 43 new clients did not specify their nationality. Among the recurring visitors, the following other nationalities were represented: Jew (n=1), Kazakh (n=1), Finn (n=1), Tatar (n=3), Ukrainian (n=4), Uzbek (n=1) and Byelorussian (n=2). 5 recurring clients did not specify their nationality.

Similarly to the previous years, there are evident regional differences in the composition of clients by nationality. In Tallinn the percentage of Estonians among respondents is higher and this is especially noticeable in the case of first-time clients (see Table 6).

Table 6: Nationality-based structure of clients by region (%)

| Region | first-time clients | | recurring clients | |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | Estonians | non-Estonians | Estonians | non-Estonians |
| Tallinn | 13,9 | 86,1 | 20,9 | 79,1 |
| Ida-Viru County | 9,8 | 90,2 | 9,3 | 90,7 |

Area of Activity

Among recurring clients the largest group (approximately one-half) is formed by IDUs who neither work nor study, while approx. one-third go to work. Among first-time clients the shares of people belonging to both of these groups are equal – less than 50% of the respondents. Students make up a little more than one-tenth in both client groups and a couple of percents study and work at the same time (see Figure 3).

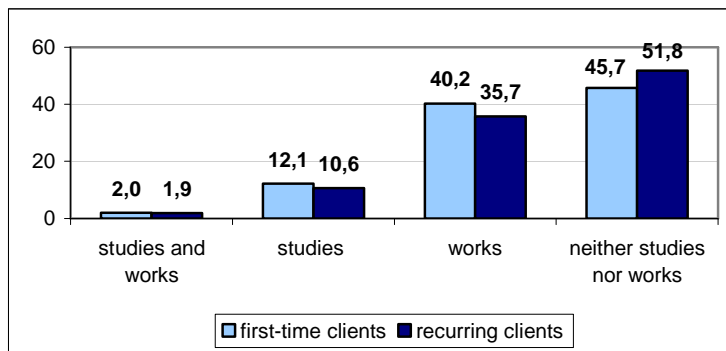


Figure 3: Areas of activity of clients (%)

Differences between employed and unemployed (neither study nor work) respondents become evident upon comparison by survey year. The share of employed NES clients has increased and the share of IDUs who neither work nor study decreased. This can be seen most clearly in the case of first-time clients, where the share of unemployed respondents has decreased by 8% and the share of employed respondents increased by 11% as compared to the year 2003 (see Figure 4).

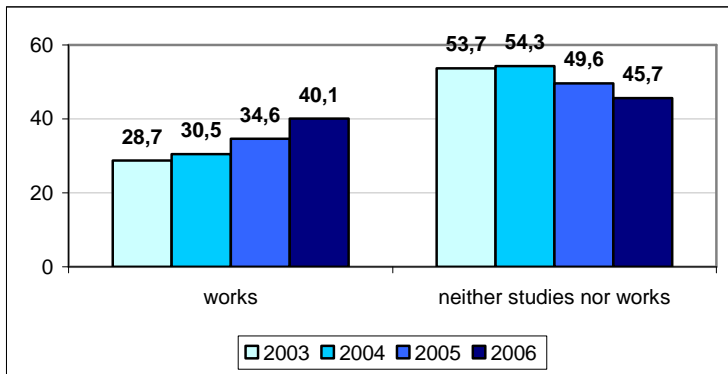


Figure 4: Employed and unemployed first-time clients, 2003-2006 (%)

In the case of male first-time clients, the share of persons employed is larger and the number of students and people unemployed smaller as compared to women (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: Area of activity of first-time clients by gender (%)

As compared to the two older groups, there are more students and fewer people employed among the age group '19 years and younger'. In the case of first-time NES visitors, the percentage of persons unemployed is also smaller in this age group. As compared to 20-24 year olds, the difference is significant (see Table 7).

Table 7: Area of activity of clients by age group (%)

| Age group | first-time clients | | | | recurring clients | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------|-------|---------------------------|-------------------|---------|-------|---------------------------|
| | studies and works | studies | works | neither studies nor works | studies and works | studies | works | neither studies nor works |
| 19 years and younger | 5.2 | 41.2 | 14.1 | 39.5 | 1.5 | 34.9 | 13.6 | 50.0 |
| 20-24 years | 1.2 | 8.4 | 42.8 | 47.6 | 2.4 | 6.6 | 39.2 | 51.8 |
| 25 years and older | 1.4 | 2.1 | 49.6 | 46.9 | 1.6 | 3.1 | 42.5 | 52.8 |

Among first-time clients the share of students is larger in the Ida-Viru County as compared to Tallinn – the respective shares being 6% and 15%. In the recurring clients group, there are evident regional differences in the case of both employed and unemployed (neither work nor study) respondents. In comparison with the Ida-Viru County in Tallinn the share of employed visitors is 10 % higher (respective percentages being 32 % and 42%) and the share of recurring visitors who neither work nor study is smaller (57% and 44%, respectively).

3. INTRAVENOUS DRUG USE

Next, the drug injecting period, frequency, and drugs injected by NES visitors will be described. Data regarding the first indicator were collected from the first-time clients and regarding the remaining two indicators from recurring clients.

Drug Injecting Period

Among first-time visitors the share of IDUs who have been using drugs intravenously for 2-4 years is prevailing – it amounts to more than one-third of the respondents. In the previous years the share of IDUs with such a drug use period record decreased by 5% each survey year. In 2006, however, there has been no such change. The share of respondents who had used drugs intravenously for less than one year has decreased by 7% in comparison with the previous year (to a level comparable to that of 2003 and 2004) (see Figure 6).

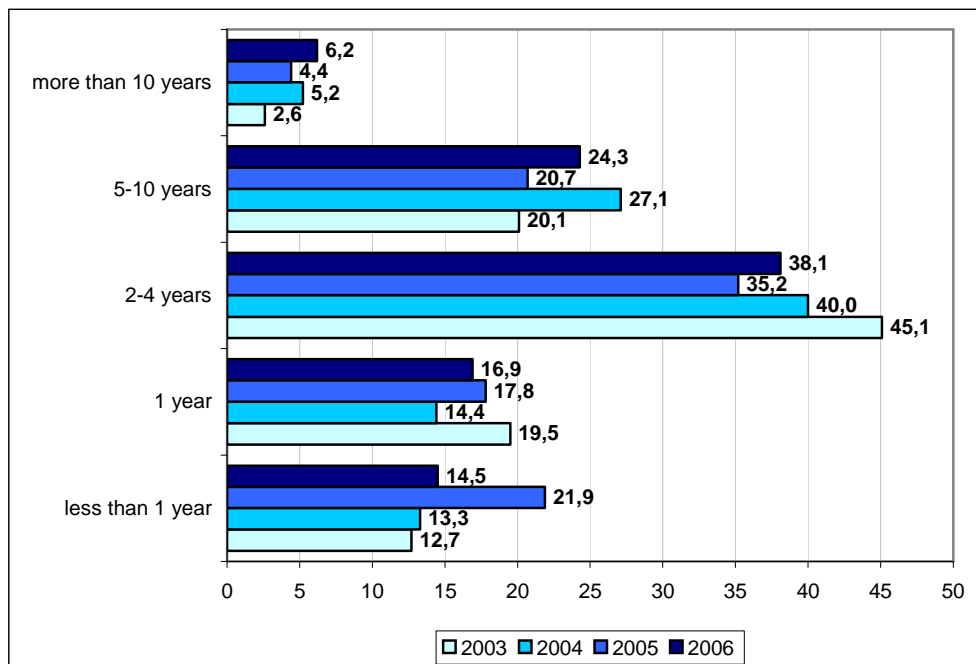


Figure 6: Drug injecting period of first-time clients, 2003-2006 (%)

Similarly to previous survey years the average drug injecting period among male first-time clients is longer. Among men, the share of IDUs who have been injecting drugs for 5 years or

more exceeds the respective share among women by 16%, while the share of clients with less than 1 year of injecting experience is 19% smaller (see Figure 7).

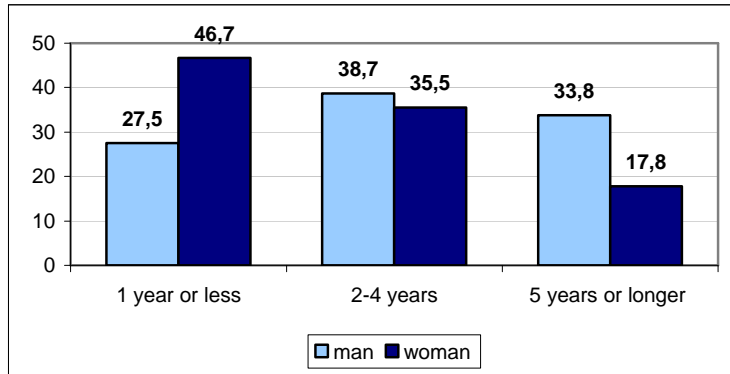


Figure 7: Drug injecting period of first-time clients, by gender (%)

Similarly to the previous survey years, the share of respondents who have been using drugs intravenously for a long time increases with age. In the age group '19 years and younger', the amount of first-time clients who have been injecting drugs for one year or less exceeds that of the age group '20-24 years' two times and that of the age group '25 years and older' four times. Of the 20-24 years old clients 50% have been injecting drugs for 2-4 years. This age group differs significantly from both younger and older respondents. In the oldest age group the share of IDUs who have been injecting drugs for more than 5 years clearly prevails (see Figure 8).

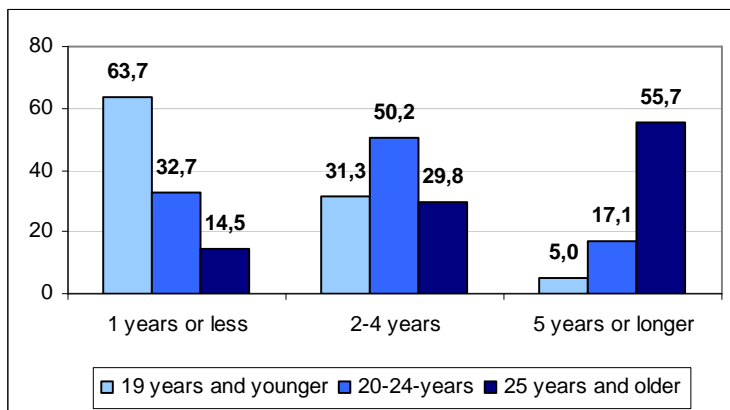


Figure 8: Drug injecting period of first-time clients, by age group (%)

As concerns nationality groups, it can be seen that in comparison to Estonians the drug-injecting period of first-time clients of other nationalities is longer. Most of Estonian respondents had used drugs intravenously for up to one year, while in the case of non-Estonians the prevalent groups were '2-4 years' and '5 years or more' (see Figure 9).

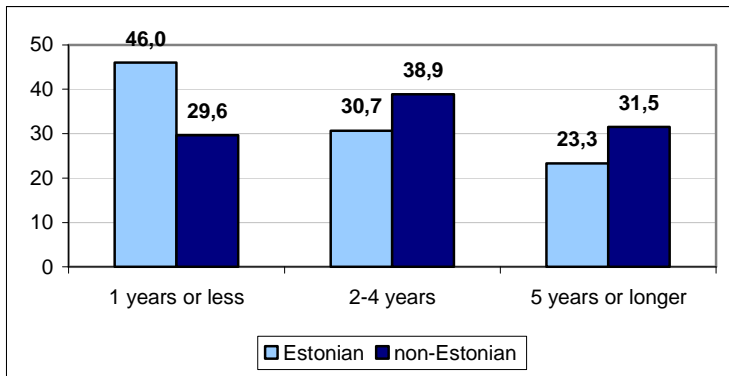


Figure 9: Drug injecting period of first-time clients, by nationality group (%)

Regional differences exist between respondents who have used drugs intravenously for 5 years or longer. As compared to the Ida-Viru County the share of such first-time clients is larger in Tallinn – the respective shares are 28% and 36%.

Drug Injecting Frequency

Until the year 2005 the drug injecting frequency among recurring NES visitors increased year by year. In 2006, however, no significant changes can be noticed as compared to the previous year. In the four weeks preceding the survey 53% of recurring clients had injected drugs at least once a day, 32% had done it a few times a week and 15% once a week or less (see Figure 10).

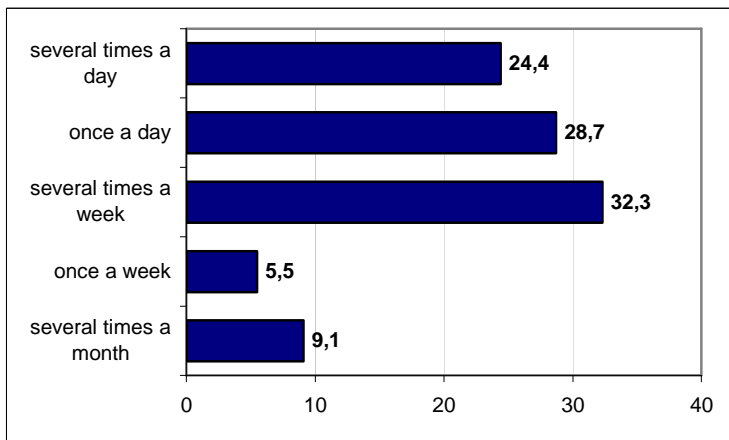


Figure 10: Drug injecting frequency of recurring clients in the last four weeks (%)

Data analysis by age shows differences in the case of 19 years and younger respondents. In this age group there are significantly more IDUs who inject drugs few times a week and less IDUs who do it once a day or more often compared to older respondents (see Figure 11).

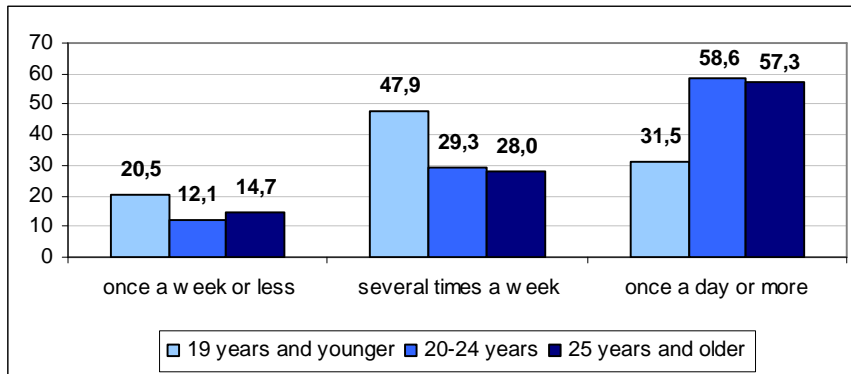


Figure 11: Drug injecting frequency of recurring clients in the last four weeks, by age group (%)

Similarly to 2005, regional data indicate that clients from the Ida-Viru County inject drugs more frequently. As compared to Tallinn, there were more first-time NES visitors who injected drugs a few times or less often in the Ida-Viru County (see Figure 12).

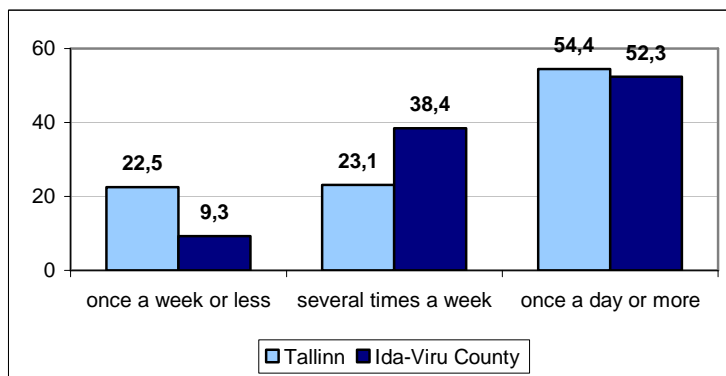


Figure 12: Drug injecting frequency of recurring clients in the last four weeks, by region (%)

Drugs Injected

The drug most commonly used by NES clients was amphetamine – more than one-half of the recurring clients had injected it in the last four weeks. Amphetamine is followed by heroin and poppy liquid – these have been used by approx. 40% of the visitors (see Figure 13). In comparison with the year 2005, the share of amphetamine users has increased by 10%. As concerns other drugs, there have been no changes.

The following were mentioned as other narcotic substances used: Desipex, Dimedrol, ecstasy, phentanyl ('White Chinaman', n=36, 9.1%), hashish (n=4), methadone (n=3), Radedorm, Reuatriil.

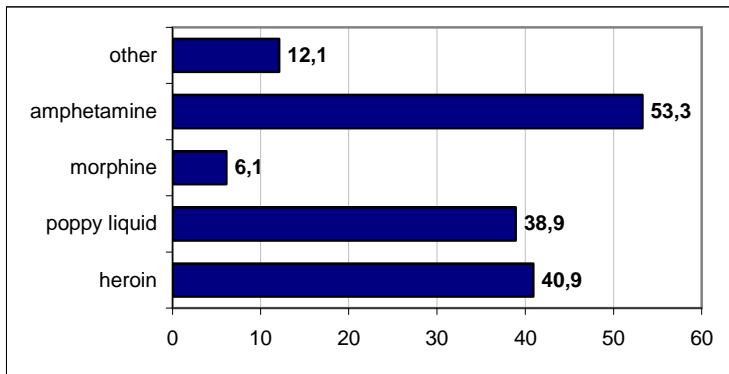


Figure 13: Drugs injected most often among recurring clients in the last four weeks (%)

Division of the mentioned narcotic substances into groups shows that 71% of recurring clients use opiates, 53% stimulants, 1% cannabis products and less than 1% medicines. In comparison with the previous year injecting of stimulants has increased by 9%, thereby reaching the level of 2003-2004. Use of cannabis products has decreased –4% of the recurring clients used them in 2005.

Similarly to the previous year the average number of different substances injected during the four weeks preceding the survey was 1.5. The most common substance combinations among recurring clients injecting several different substances were as follows:

- heroin and amphetamine (21%);
- heroin and poppy liquid (14%);
- poppy liquid and amphetamine (14%);
- heroin, poppy liquid and amphetamine (10%).

Figure 14 describes the drugs in the case of which differences between age groups become evident. Among recurring clients up to 19 years old the most common narcotic substance is amphetamine; it was injected by two-thirds of the respondents. In comparison with the two older groups, heroin is less popular – one-fourth of the 19 years old and younger respondents had injected it in the preceding four weeks. As concerns poppy liquid, differences can be seen between the two older age groups: compared to the age group '25 years and older', 20-24 year olds have used it more often.

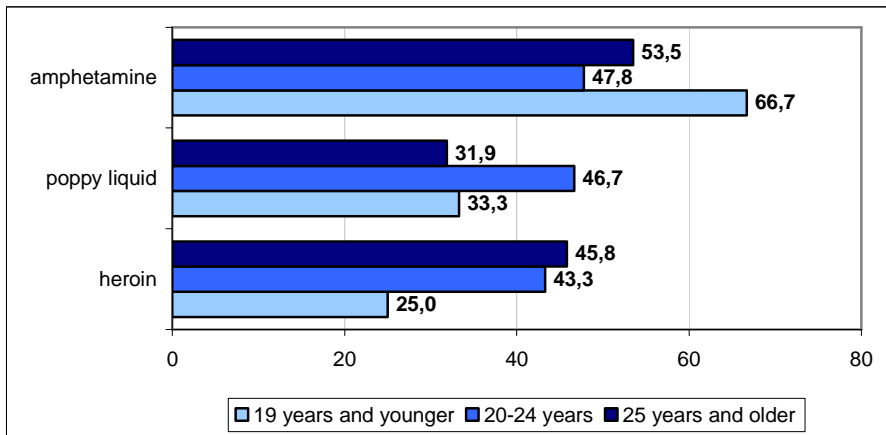


Figure 14: Drugs injected most often among recurring clients in the last four weeks, by age group (%)

In comparison with recurring clients of other nationalities, Estonians have injected amphetamine more often (50% and 76% respectively) and poppy liquid less often (25% and 41% respectively).

Regional differences are similar to those identified in the previous years. IDUs in Tallinn use amphetamine and heroin more often and in the Ida-Viru County poppy liquid and morphine are more common. The greatest regional difference (59%) is associated with poppy liquid (see Figure 15).

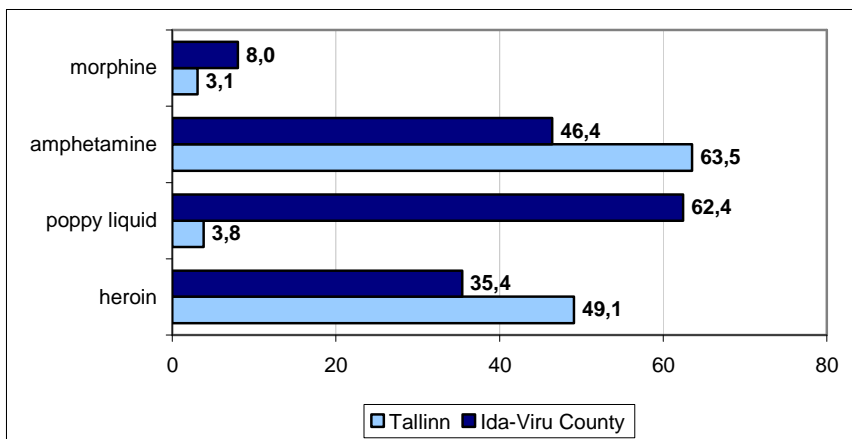


Figure 15: Drugs injected most often among recurring clients in the last four weeks, by region (%)

4. VISITING NEEDLE EXCHANGE SITES

Based on the data of first-time clients, an overview is provided on where IDUs have acquired information about needle exchange services. The data of recurring clients will be used in order to provide an overview of how long the respondents have been visiting NES, the frequency of their visits and the number of syringes and condoms handed out to them.

Information on Needle Exchange

Similarly to the previous years, the most important channel of needle exchange-related information is friends and acquaintances – this option was checked by approx. 3/4 of the first-time visitors. About one-fifth of the respondents had received information from dedicated materials and less than a tenth discovered a NES by accident. In addition to the information channels indicated on Figure 6, first-time clients stated that they had received information on needle exchange from a doctor, from prison, work, volunteers and rehabilitation centre.

Until 2005, the share of information materials increased and discovery of the needle exchange sites by accident decreased. In 2006, however, this tendency was reversed. While in 2005 31.5% of the first-time clients checked information materials as their source of information, in 2006 the respective value was 22%. In the case of accidental NES discovery, the indicators were 8% and 14% respectively.

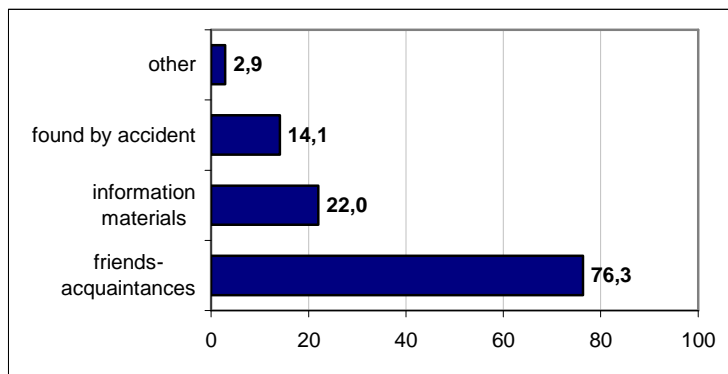


Figure 16: NES-related information channels of first-time clients (%)

As regards age groups 20-24 year olds differ from the rest. The majority of this age group (28%) read about needle exchange from information materials. In the two remaining age groups this indicator is 10% smaller. A NES was discovered by accident by 12% of the 20-24 year olds and there is a significant difference between that age group and those IDUs who are 25 years old or older (17%).

As compared to Estonians in the case of first-time clients of other nationality information spread to a greater extent via friends and acquaintances – the respective shares being 68% and 77%. Among Estonians, however, the share of respondents who discovered a NES by accident is larger than in case of non-Estonians (21% and 13%, respectively).

As compared to the Ida-Viru County, in Tallinn the information on NES is more often acquired through friends and acquaintances. First-time clients from Ida-Viru County have more often received information from information materials or discovered a NES by accident (see Figure 17).

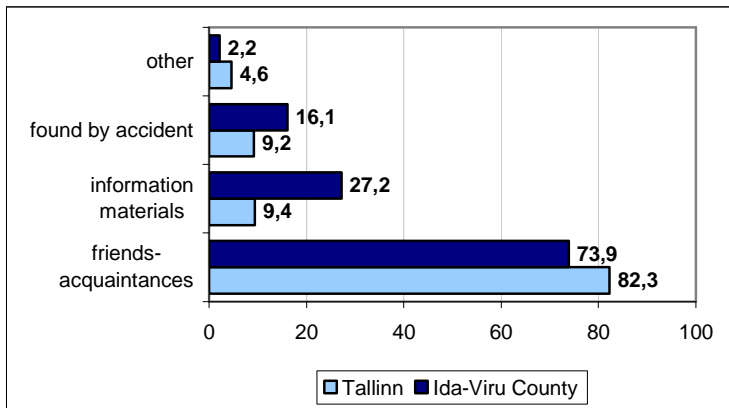


Figure 17: NES-related information channels of first-time clients, by region (%)

NES Visiting Period

Until 2005 the NES visiting period of recurring visitors increased year by year. This survey year the results remained on the last year's level. One-half of the recurring clients had visited the NES for more than one year, one-fourth for half a year to a year, less than a fifth for 1-6 months and less than a tenth for less than one month (see Figure 18).

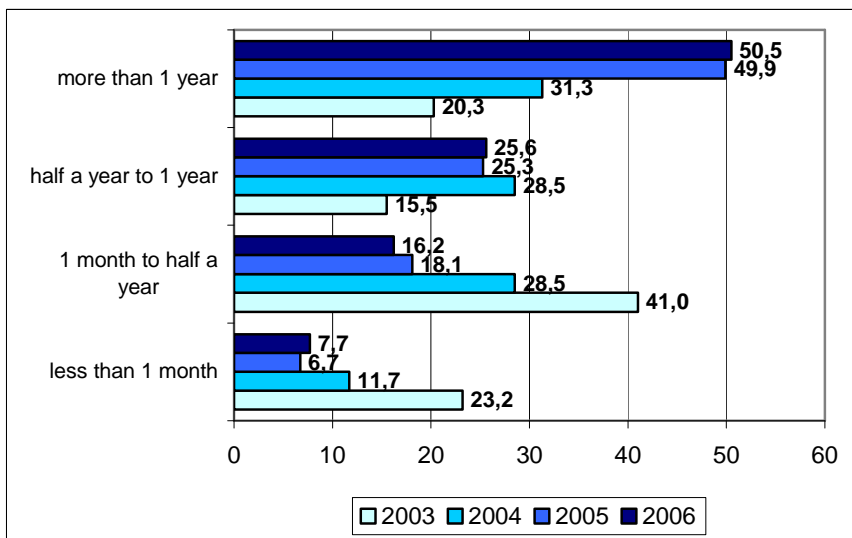


Figure 18: NES visiting period among recurring clients (%)

In the following analysis, three NES visiting periods are used. The periods 'less than one month' and '1-6 months' have been joined into a single group.

Older clients have visited NES for a longer period. More than one-third of 19 years old and younger respondents have been needle exchange clients for up to 6 months. In the two older age groups, approximately one-fifth checked the same option. A third of the representatives of the youngest group and more than 50% of older recurring visitors had visited NES for more than a year (see Figure 19).

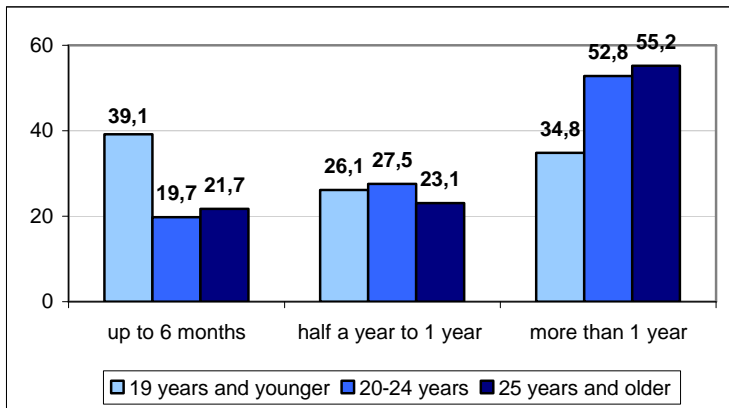


Figure 19: NES visiting period among recurring clients, by age group (%)

Analysis of the data by region indicates that clients from the Ida-Viru County have longer NES visiting records. While in Tallinn 33% of the clients have visited NES for up to six months, in the Ida-Viru County the respective share is 18%. The share of clients who have visited NES from half a year to one year amounts to 20% in Tallinn and 29% in the Ida-Viru County. No regional differences were discovered in the case of visiting periods exceeding one year.

NES Visiting Frequency

64% of recurring clients had visited NES at least once a week in the preceding four weeks and 39% had done it several times a week. One-fifth of the clients had visited NES a few times a month and less than one-fifth once a month (see Figure 20). Such visiting frequency is similar to that of the previous years.

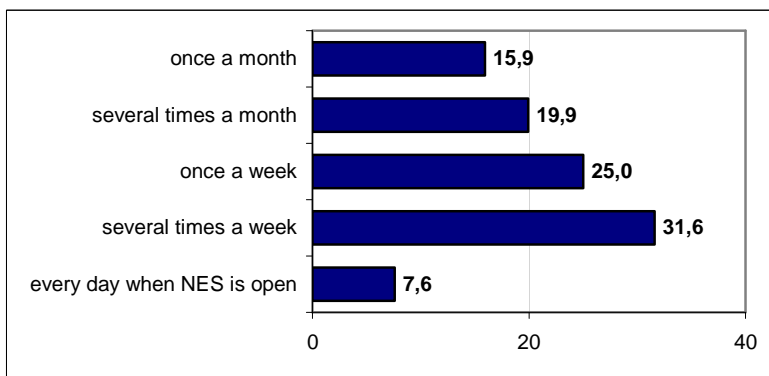


Figure 20: NES visiting frequency among recurring clients in the last four weeks (%)

Regional data indicate that the share of daily NES visitors is significantly larger in Tallinn. In the case of the Ida-Viru County the majority of clients visit NES once a week or several times a month (see Figure 21).

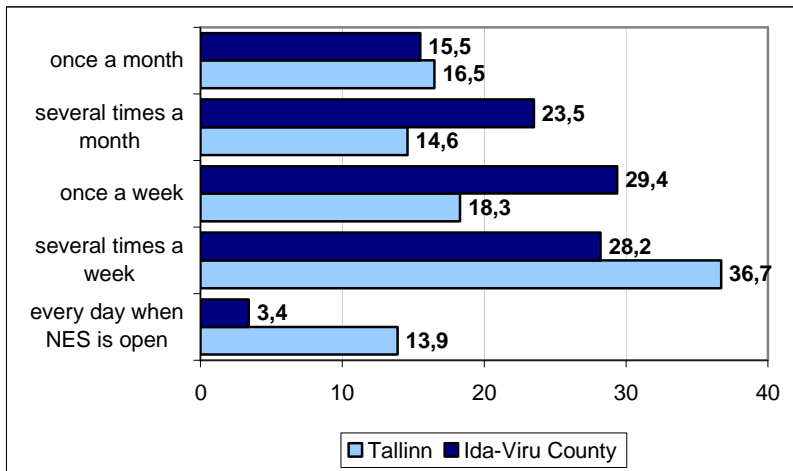


Figure 21: NES visiting frequency among recurring clients in the last four weeks, by region (%)

Number of Syringes Acquired from NES

In comparison with the first two survey years, in 2005, more syringes were issued to drug addicts visiting needle exchange sites at a time – approximately one-half of the recurring clients received more than 10 syringes per visit. In 2006 the share of IDUs who were issued more than 10 syringes per visit was more or less the same. However, in comparison with the previous survey year, the share of clients who were issued 6-10 syringes (about a fourth) per visit increased and the share of clients who received 2-5 syringes per visit decreased. Only a few percents of recurring NES visitors were issued one syringe per visit (see Figure 22).

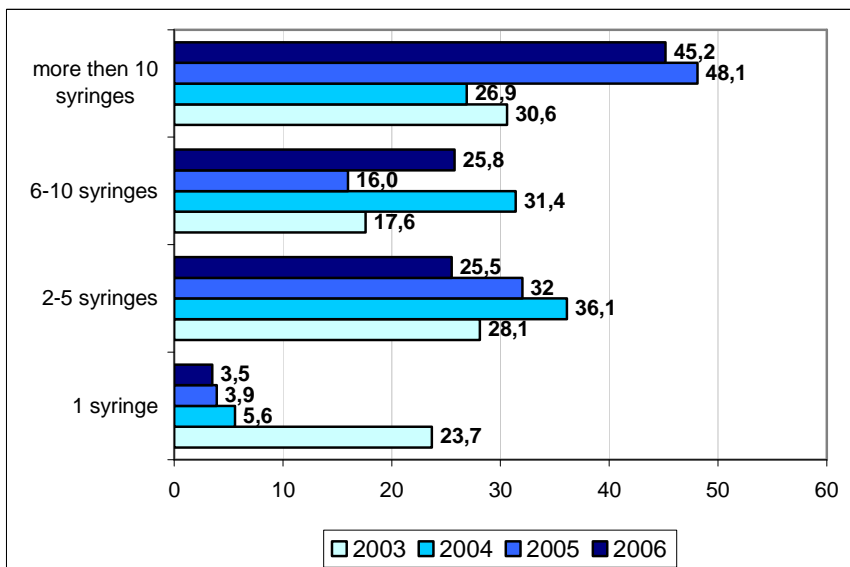


Figure 22: Number of syringes issued to recurring clients per visit in the last four weeks, 2003-2006 (%)

Older clients were issued somewhat more syringes per visit. More than one-half of 25 years old and older respondents were issued more than 10 syringes per visit. This indicator differs

significantly in comparison with up to 19 years olds, of whom a little more than one-third received more than 10 syringes. As compared to 20-24 year olds, the share of older clients who were issued 6-10 syringes per visit was smaller (see Figure 23).

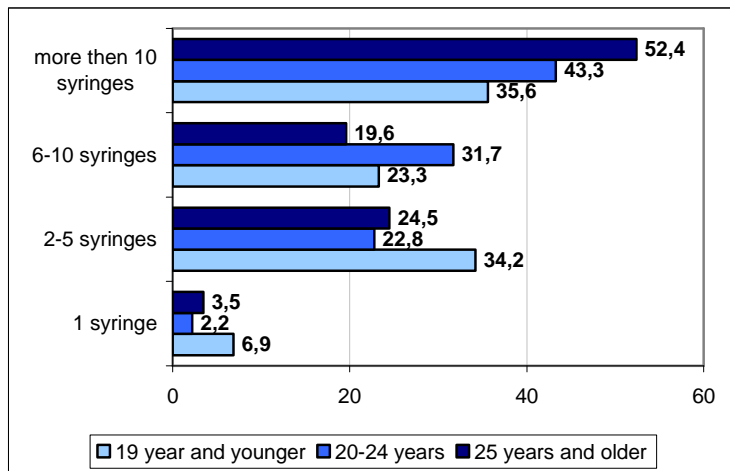


Figure 23: Number of syringes issued to recurring clients per visit in the last four weeks, by age group (%)

As compared to Tallinn, the visitors of NES in the Ida-Viru County were issued more syringes per visit. Among recurring clients from Tallinn, the share of respondents who received 1 syringe or 2-5 syringes per visit during the month preceding the survey was significantly larger. At the same time there are more visitors who were issued more than 10 syringes per visit in the Ida-Viru County (see Figure 24).

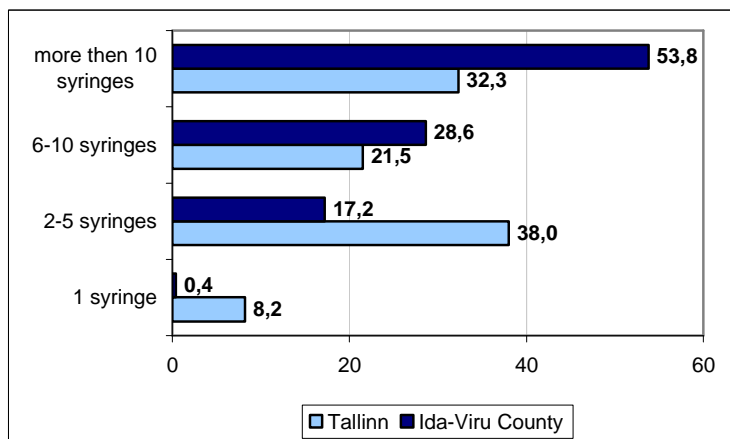


Figure 24: Number of syringes issued to recurring clients per visit in the last four weeks, by region (%)

Taking Syringes for Others

Similarly to the previous years 78% of recurring clients had taken syringes for their acquaintances within the four weeks preceding the survey. The majority of such clients did it rarely or on most occasions (see Figure 25).

In comparison with the year 2005, the share of recurring clients who took syringes for their acquaintances seldom decreased by 8% and the share of clients who did it on most occasions increased by 7%.

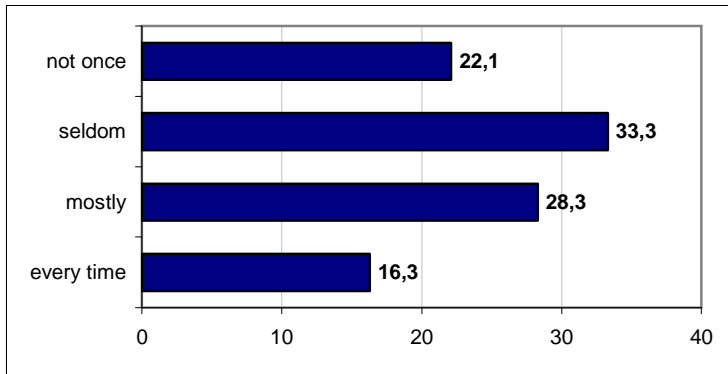


Figure 25: Frequency of taking syringes by recurring clients for their acquaintances in the last four weeks (%)

As compared to the Ida-Viru County, in Tallinn the share of clients who took syringes for their acquaintances each time they visited an NES was larger – 10% and 26% respectively.

Return of Used Syringes

Until the year 2005 the amount of recurring clients who always or in most cases returned used syringes to NES increased year by year. For example, in comparison with the first survey year (2003), the share of respondents who returned used syringes every time had increased by 9% by 2005. In 2006, however, the syringe return rate remained at a level comparable to that of the previous year. In all, 96% of visitors have returned used syringes to NES. Most of them did it every time (see Figure 26).

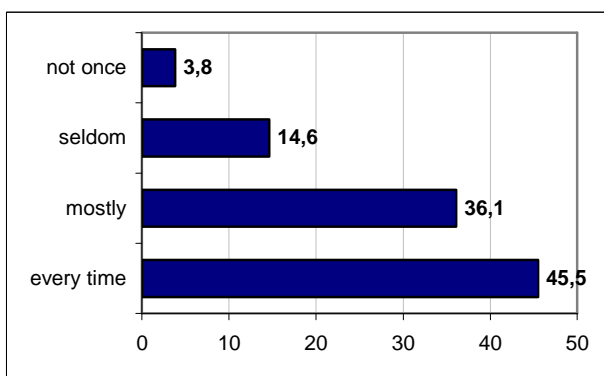


Figure 26: Frequency of returning used syringes by recurring clients in the last four weeks (%)

Recurring clients from Tallinn tend to return used syringes to NES more often than clients from the Ida-Viru County. In the capital, there are more respondents who returned syringes in each visit last month (16% difference as compared to the Ida-Viru County) and less respondents who did it in most cases or seldom (9.5% and 7.5% difference respectively) (see Figure 27).

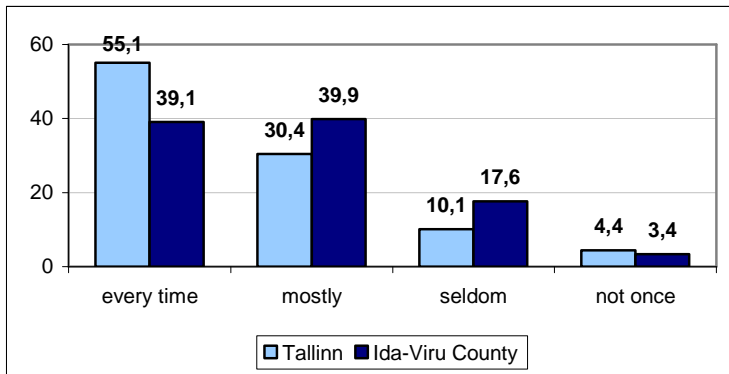


Figure 27: Frequency of returning used syringes by recurring clients in the last four weeks, by region (%)

Number of Condoms Acquired from NES

The number of condoms received per visit was inquired from recurring visitors for the first time in 2004. In comparison with that survey year the share of respondents who were issued from a NES more than 10 condoms at a time within the month preceding to the survey increased significantly in 2005, while the share of those who were issued 6-10 condoms decreased. In the year 2006 the condom amounts received remained on the same level as in 2005. The share of recurring clients who received from 2 to 5 condoms per visit was the greatest, exceeding one-third. More than one-tenth of the respondents claimed that they had no need for condoms in the preceding four weeks (see Figure 28).

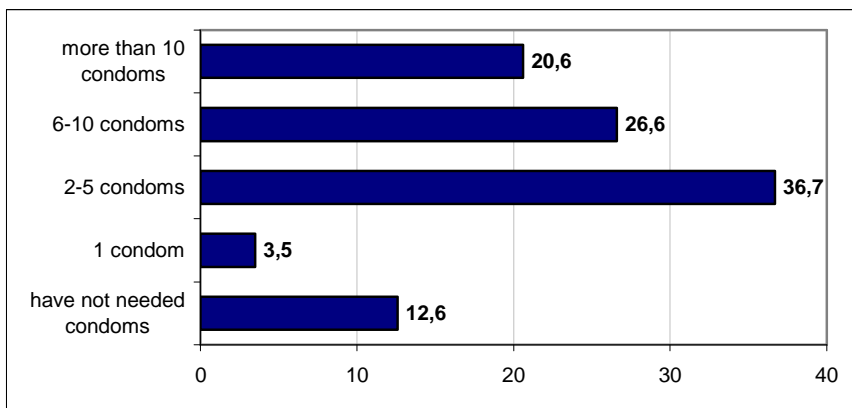


Figure 28: Number of condoms issued to recurring clients per visit in the last four weeks (%)

Comparison between the two regions shows that more condoms were issued to clients from the Ida-Viru County per visit. Among the clients of Tallinn's NES, the share of respondents who had no need for condoms within the month preceding the survey exceeds that of the Ida-Viru County by one-fifth and the amount of respondents who were usually issued one condom or 2-5 condoms per visit are larger. There are more visitors who have been issued 6-10 or more than 10 condoms per visit in the Ida-Viru County (see Figure 29).

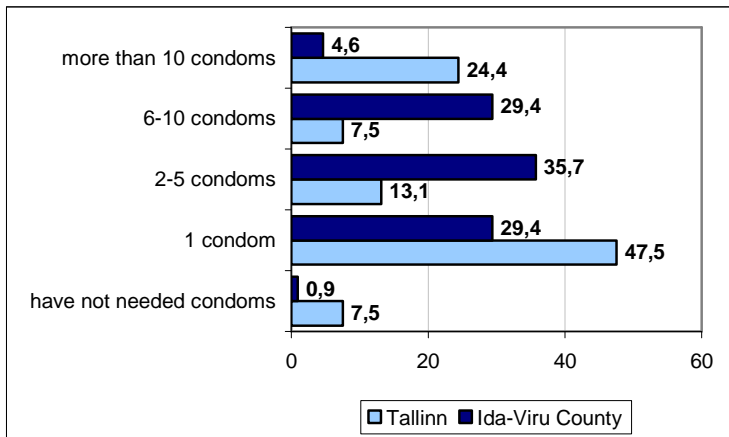


Figure 29: Number of condoms issued to recurring clients per visit in the last four weeks, by region (%)

Counselling at NES

In the year 2004 recurring clients were inquired for the first time regarding the subjects discussed by NES personnel. The questionnaire suggested four subjects seen in Figure 30. While there were no significant differences between the data collected regarding the two previous years, the data of 2006 shows that all of the subjects were discussed less with the clients. The greatest change concerns discussion of the subject of disinfection means (a 14% decrease).

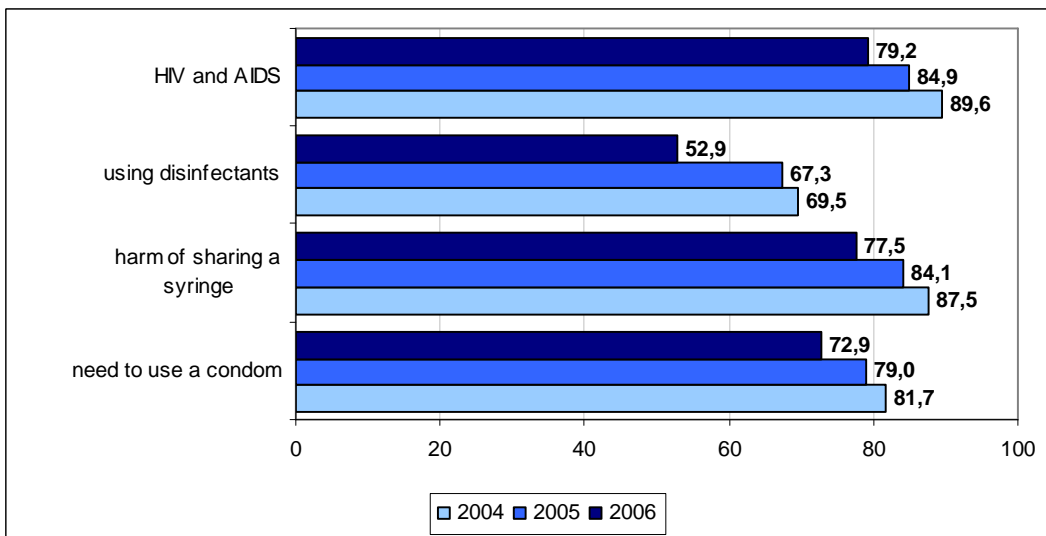


Figure 30: Subjects discussed with recurring clients by NES personnel, 2004-2006 (%)

As compared to Tallinn, the subjects suggested in the questionnaire have been discussed more often with the visitors of NES in the Ida-Viru County. There are no differences only in the case of the subject 'HIV and AIDS' (see Figure 31).

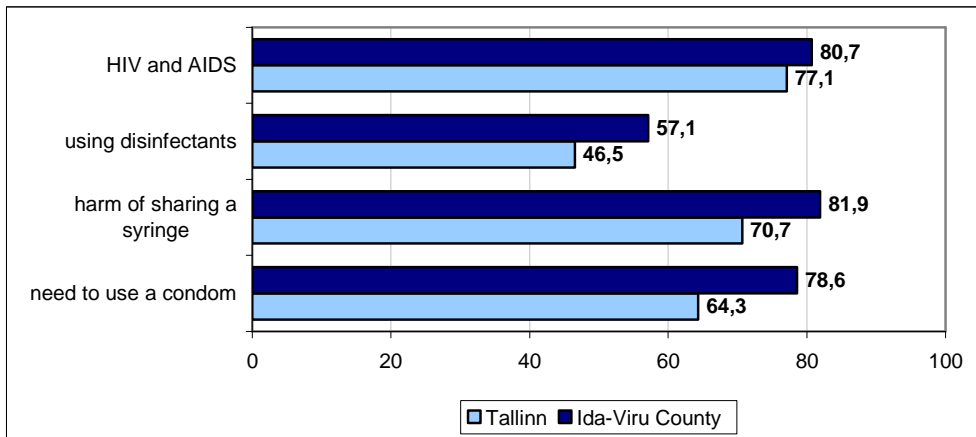


Figure 31: Subjects discussed by NES personnel with recurring clients, by region (%)

5. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HIV TRANSMISSION

Two questions were used for assessing the level of knowledge of IDUs on HIV transmission:

- Can a person catch HIV by injecting with a syringe used by someone else before? (correct answer: 'yes')
- Is it possible to reduce the risk of catching HIV by using a condom at each and every sexual intercourse? (correct answer: 'yes')

In calculating the indicator on correct knowledge, the respondents who answered both of the questions correctly were taken into account. In 2006 the wording of the question relating to condom use was changed in order to ensure improved comprehensibility. Because of this, the data of 2006 cannot be correctly compared to the data from earlier survey years.

More than 90% of both first-time and recurring visitors are aware that it is possible to get HIV by joint use of a syringe and that use of a condom upon each sexual intercourse allows reduction of the risk of HIV infection. In the case of both questions, the share of recurring clients that chose the correct answer exceeds that of the first-time clients by 3% (see Figure 32).

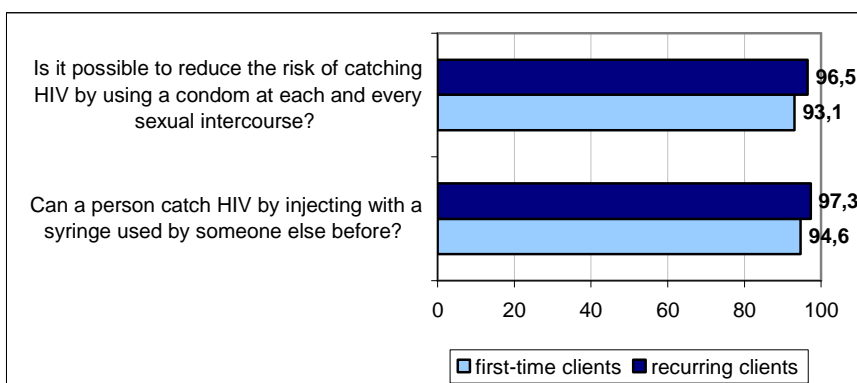


Figure 32: Clients that answered correctly to the knowledge related questions (%)

The level of the indicator calculated based on the two questions is 4% higher among recurring visitors as compared to the first-time visitors – 93% and 89% respectively.

As concerns age groups, a significant indicator-related difference can be noticed among first-time clients. The knowledge level of up to 19 year olds is lower as compared to that of the 20-24 year olds (difference 6%). When comparing first-time and recurring client data by age groups, a statistically significant change becomes evident in the youngest group, where the share of IDUs with correct knowledge is 9% larger among recurring clients (see Figure 33).

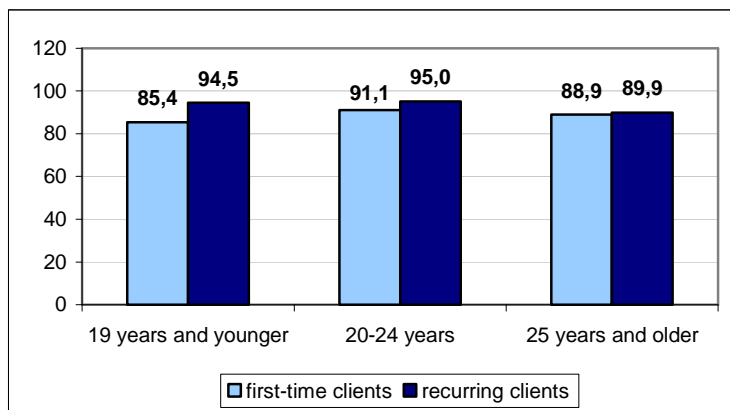


Figure 33: Clients with correct knowledge about HIV transmission, by age group (%)

In the case of nationality the indicator also shows intergroup differences among the first-time clients. The share of non-Estonian first-time visitors who answered correctly to both questions exceeds that of Estonians by 13%. In the case of recurring clients, a 15% positive change has occurred in the data of Estonian NES clients and nationality-based differences can no longer be noticed (see Figure 34).

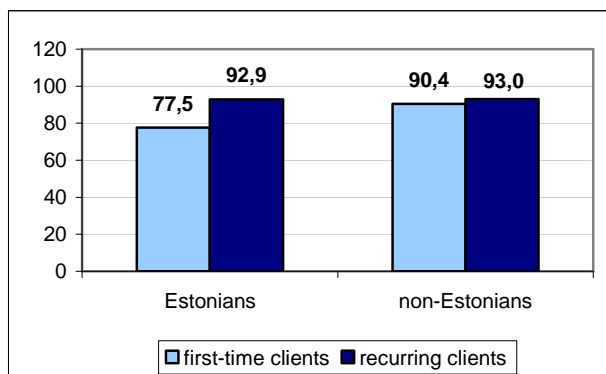


Figure 34: Clients with correct knowledge about HIV transmission, by nationality (%)

In the case of both first-time and recurring visitors, according to the indicator, the knowledge level of respondents from the Ida-Viru County is better than that of the clients of Tallinn's NES. In the time of needle exchange point visiting, the value of the indicator has improved by 5% among clients from the Ida-Viru County (see Figure 35).

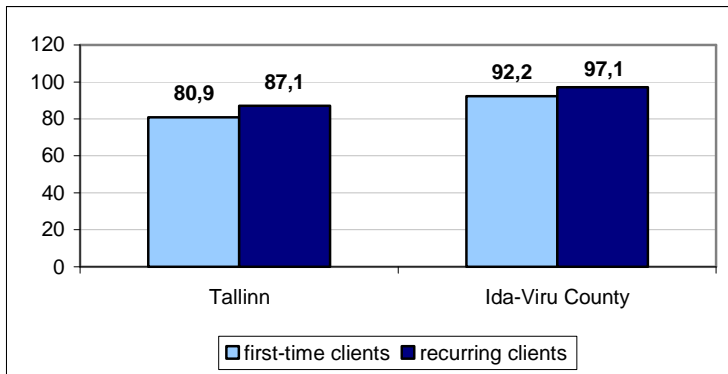


Figure 35: Clients with correct knowledge about HIV transmission, by region (%)

6. SYRINGE SHARING AND CLEANING

In the sixth chapter of the Report an overview is provided of whether NES clients clean their syringes, the means used for syringe cleaning and the percentage of clients that do not share their syringes with others when injecting.

Syringe Sharing

The extent of the risk behaviour associated with intravenous use of drugs has been measured among NES clients with the help of an indicator representing the amount of IDUs who never shared their syringes with others when injecting drugs in the last four weeks.

Similarly to the previous years the largest group is formed by NES clients who had not used a common syringe in the four weeks that preceded the survey. There are significant differences between the two client groups – among recurring clients the share of people behaving safely in that regard was 14% larger. The percentage of IDUs who shared syringes in most cases or rarely is higher among new clients (see Figure 36).

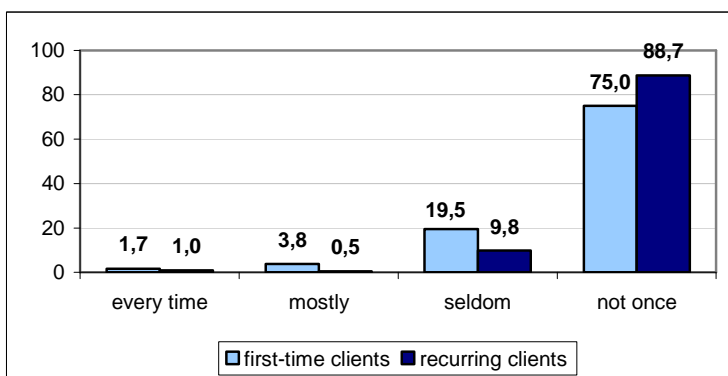


Figure 36: Syringe sharing frequency in the last four weeks (%)

Figure 37 shows the share of persons who never shared their syringes by client group in the four survey years. In the case of first-time clients the share of IDUs who had not shared their syringes has constantly increased since 2004. While in 2003-2004 the value of this indicator

amounted to approx. 60%, by 2006 it has increased by more than one-tenth. In the case of recurring clients the value of the indicator increased in 2004 and 2006 (by 13% as compared to 2005). A statistically significant difference among first-time and recurring clients became evident in 2004 and 2006.

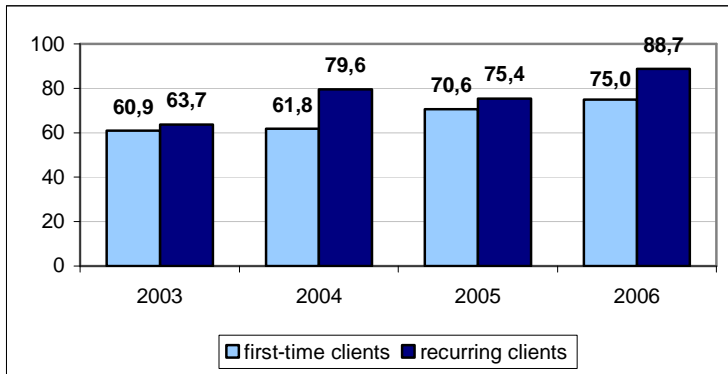


Figure 37: Clients who did not share syringes in the last four weeks, 2003-2006 (%)

As compared to non-Estonians, there are less Estonians who had not used a common syringe in the four weeks that preceded the survey. This difference can be seen in the case of both first-time and recurring clients. During the time of visiting NEs the injecting-related risk behaviour has decreased in both nationality groups – by 17% among Estonians and 14% among non-Estonians (see Figure 38).

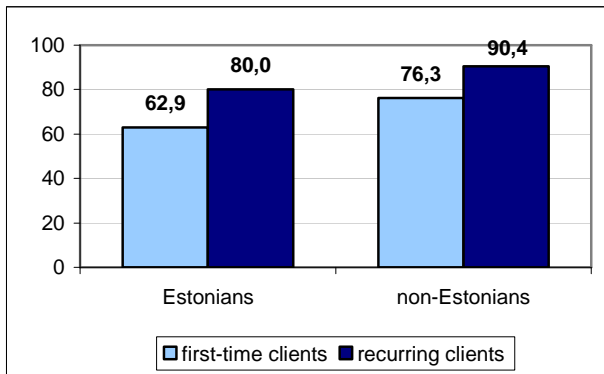


Figure 38: Clients who did not share syringes in the last four weeks, by nationality group (%)

Similarly to the previous years there are also evident regional differences. As compared to Tallinn, in the Ida-Viru County the share of IDUs who did not use same syringes with other IDUs was larger in the case of both first-time and recurring clients. In both of the regions the amount of respondents who never shared their syringes is larger in the recurring visitors group as compared to new visitors – by 21% in Tallinn and 12% in the Ida-Viru County (see Figure 39).

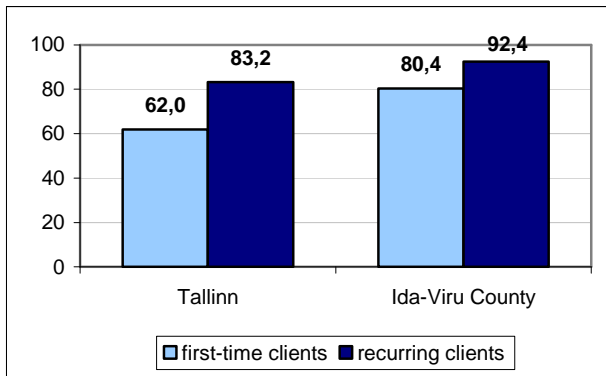


Figure 39: Clients who did not share syringes in the last four weeks, by region (%)

Syringe Cleaning

As compared to first-time visitors the share of recurring clients who cleaned their syringes during the month preceding the survey was approx. 10 % smaller. Comparison between survey years is possible since the year 2005. As compared to the previous year, the indicator has decreased significantly in both client groups – by 16% among first-time clients and 13.5% among recurring clients (see Figure 40).

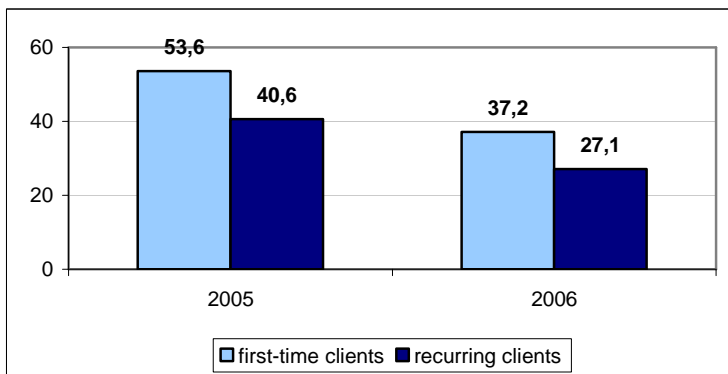


Figure 40: Clients who cleaned their syringes within the last four weeks, 2005-2006 (%)

As concerns nationality groups, the share of non-Estonian IDUs who cleaned their syringes during the month preceding the survey was smaller as compared to that of Estonians. During the period of needle exchange point visiting, a significant change has taken place in the data regarding non-Estonians: the share of recurring visitors who cleaned their syringes has decreased by 11% (see Figure 41).

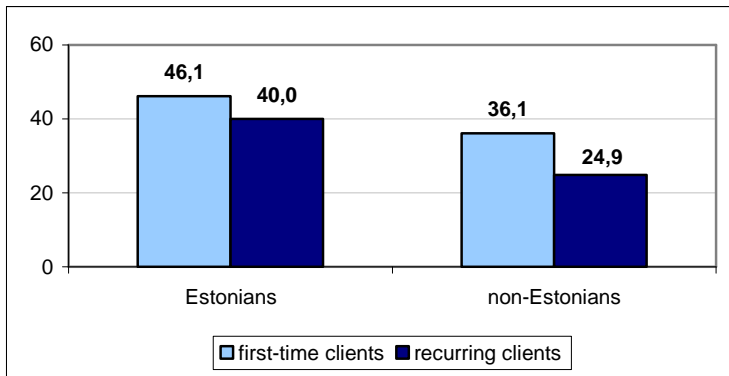


Figure 41: Clients who cleaned their syringes within the last four weeks, by nationality group (%)

The share of IDUs from the Ida-Viru County who cleaned their syringes during the month preceding the survey is significantly smaller than in Tallinn. As concerns comparison between client groups, the data collected from respondents in Tallinn shows that the amount of recurring clients who cleaned their syringes in the previous month is 38% smaller (see Figure 42).

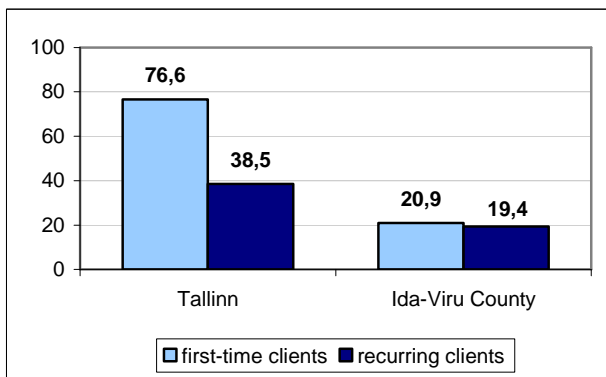


Figure 42: Clients who cleaned their syringes within the last four weeks, by region (%)

Similarly to the preceding years the overwhelming majority of clients cleaned their syringes by washing them in water. This is most common among recurring clients – more than 75% of the respondents cleaned their syringes using this method. New clients tend to prefer boiling of syringes over washing them in water (see Figure 43).

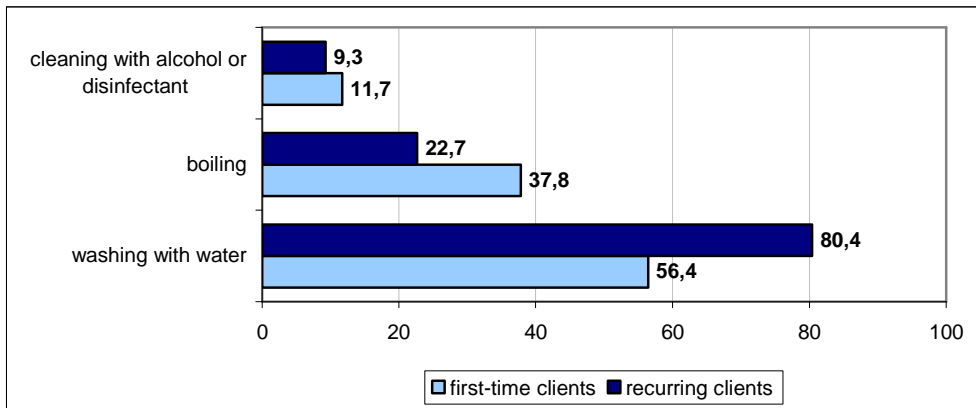


Figure 43: Means used for cleaning syringes within the last four weeks (% of those who cleaned syringes)

7. SEXUAL PARTNERS AND CONDOM USE

The following data concern sexual partners of NES visitors and practices of condom use. Recurring visitors were additionally asked if they have had sexual intercourse for money or other remuneration.

Sexual Partners

A fifth of the first-time visitors had not had sexual intercourse in the four weeks preceding the survey; among recurring visitors a little more than one-tenth checked the same option. The majority of respondents had sexual intercourse with a single partner – approximately one-half of the representatives of both client groups. As compared to the first-time clients, among recurring clients there were less respondents who had no partners in the last month and more respondents who had 2-4 sexual partners (see Figure 44).

Until the year 2005 the share of recurring visitors who had not had sexual intercourse decreased – in 2003 the share of such clients was 20%, in 2004 17% and in 2005 12%. In 2006, however, no significant changes took place in this regard as compared to the previous year.

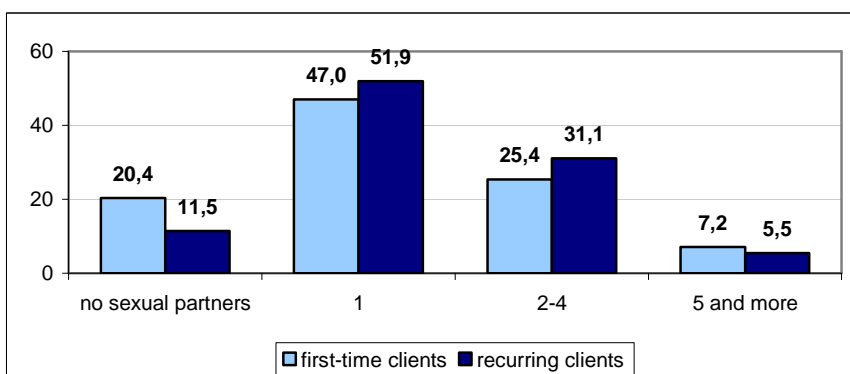


Figure 44: Number of sexual partners in the last four weeks (%)

As regards genders, there are differences in the case of first-time clients. Among men the share of those who have not had sexual intercourse in preceding four weeks is larger than among women – the percentages being 22% and 14% respectively. Among women there are more respondents with a single sexual partner – the percentages being 53% and 45.5% respectively.

Age-based analysis of the data collected reveals differences in the case of both client groups. The amount of first-time visitors who have not had any sexual partners within the preceding month is the smallest among 20-24 year olds (less than one-fifth). The difference is significant compared to both the younger and the older age group. Among 20-24 year old respondents the share of first-time clients who had 2-4 sexual partners is the largest (more than one-fourth). This significance is statistically important when compared to the 19 years old or younger clients (see Figure 45).

As compared to recurring clients who are 25 years old or older there were less 20-24 year old respondents who had not had sexual intercourse (less than one-tenth) and more respondents who had 2-4 sexual partners (more than one-third). There are no differences in comparison with the age group '19 years old and younger' (see Figure 46).

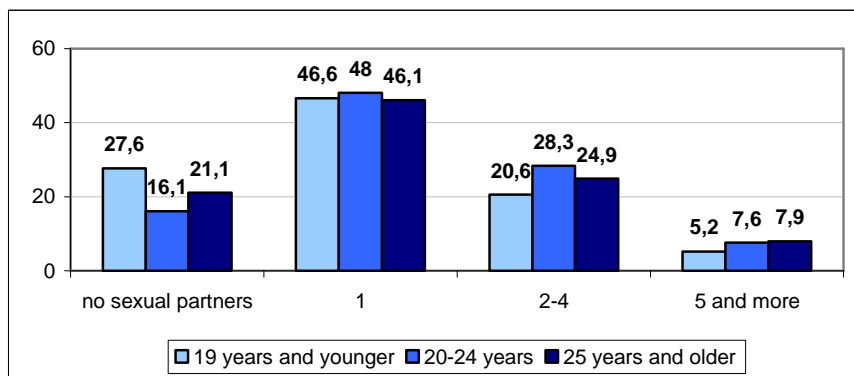


Figure 45: Number of sexual partners among first-time clients in the last four weeks, by age group (%)

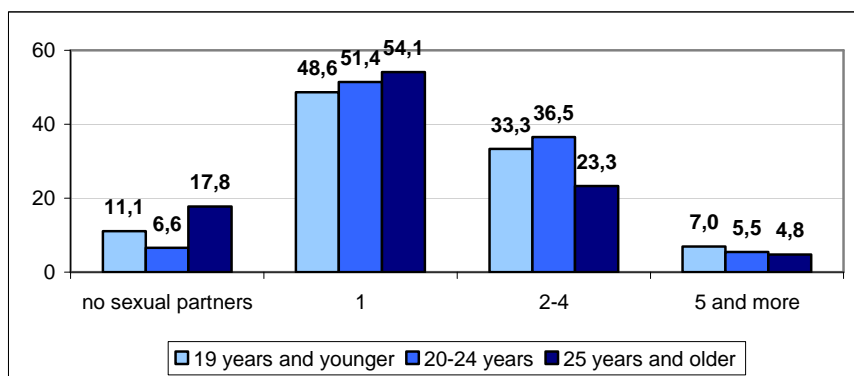


Figure 46: Number of sexual partners among recurring clients in the last four weeks, by age group (%)

Regional differences can be seen in the case of first-time NES visitors. In comparison with the Ida-Viru County, in Tallinn the share of respondents who had not had sexual intercourse is larger (respective percentages being 17% and 30%) and the share of respondents who had had sex with 2-4 different partners in the last month is smaller (28% and 18%, respectively).

Sexual Intercourse for Pay

In all 6% of recurring NES clients had received money or other remuneration (e.g. drugs) for sexual intercourse in the four weeks preceding the survey (see Figure 47). The data of 2006 does not differ significantly from the previous survey years.

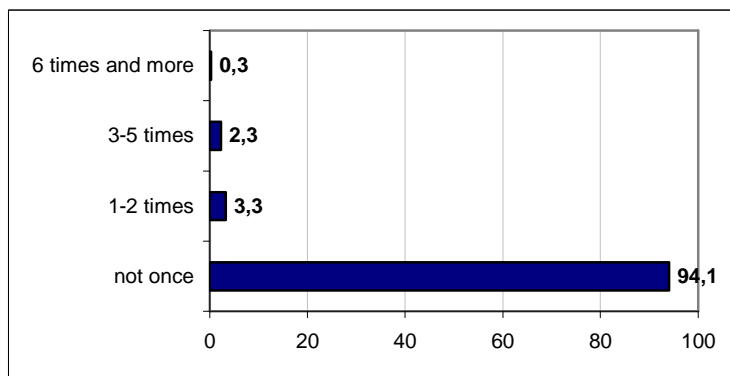


Figure 47: Frequency of receiving money or other remuneration for sexual intercourse within the last four weeks, recurring clients (%)

As compared to men women were much more often engaged in sexual intercourse for money or other remuneration – the respective shares being 3% and 18%. In more detail:

- 10% of women and 2% of men had sexual intercourse for pay 1-2 times;
- 3-5 times: 7% of women and 1% of men;
- 6 times and more: 1 % of women and no such answers among men.

Condom Use

Risk behaviour related to sexual relationships among IDUs visiting needle exchange has been assessed with the help of two indicators:

- Percentage of NES visitors who used a condom during every sexual intercourse in the last four weeks;
- Percentage of NES visitors who used a condom during last sexual intercourse.

The higher is the value of these indicators, the lower is the level of risk behaviour.

IDUs that always used a condom constituted the largest share of the respondents. As compared to the first-time clients, the respective figure is 11% larger in the case of recurring NES visitors and the share of respondents who had never used a condom has decreased by 8% (see Figure 48).

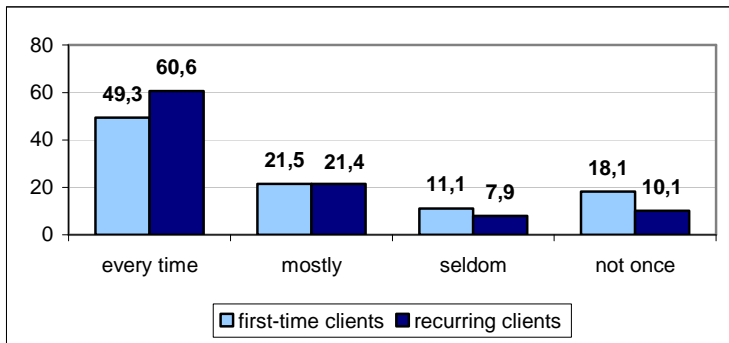


Figure 48: Frequency of condom use in the last four weeks (% of those who had sexual intercourse)

While in 2003 the data of the two client groups did not differ significantly, in the next three years the share of recurring visitors who always used a condom significantly exceeded that of the first-time NES clients. The magnitude of positive changes has remained the same over the three years – about one-tenth (see Figure 49).

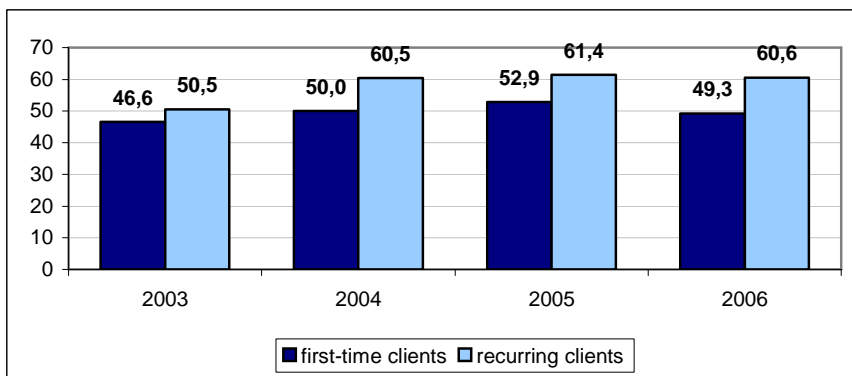


Figure 49: Clients who always used a condom within the last four weeks, 2003-2006 (% of those who had sexual intercourse)

The percentage of respondents who used a condom during their latest sexual intercourse exceeds the percentage of respondents who always used a condom in the previous month by approx. one-fifth. Among recurring clients the share of respondents behaving themselves safely is 11% larger than among first-time clients. The respective share of recurring visitors also exceeded that of the first-time clients in 2004 – by 15% (see Figure 50).

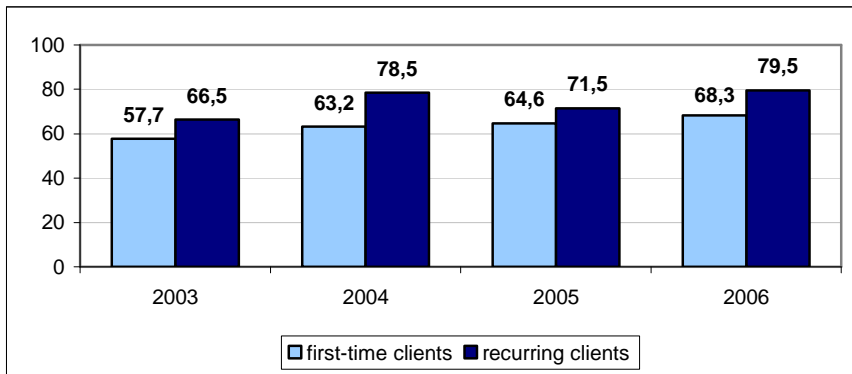


Figure 50: Clients who used a condom during the last sexual intercourse, 2003-2006 (% of those who have had sexual intercourse)

As regards age, first-time clients differ by their condom use habits. Among 20-24 year olds the share of new NES clients who always used a condom is 9% larger than among 25 years old or older clients (see Figure 51). As concerns the latest sexual intercourse, 20-24 year olds differ from both younger (by 12%) and older (by 10%) clients by their lower risk behaviour level (see Figure 52).

Comparison of first-time and recurring client data within age groups proves that a positive change has taken place in the two older groups as concerns constant use of condoms and in all of the groups as concerns the latest intercourse.

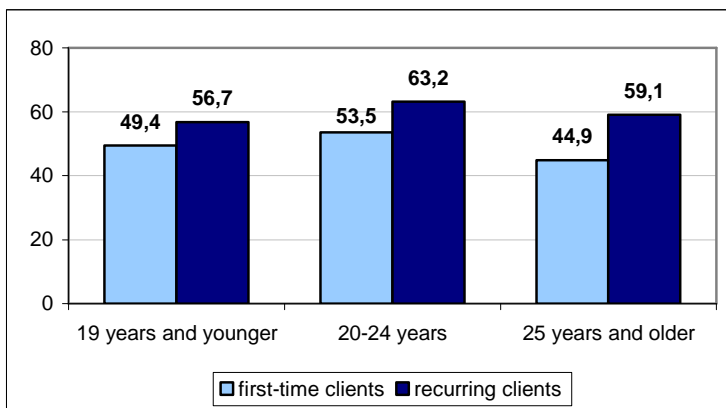


Figure 51: Clients who always used a condom within the last four weeks, by age group (% of those who have had sexual intercourse)

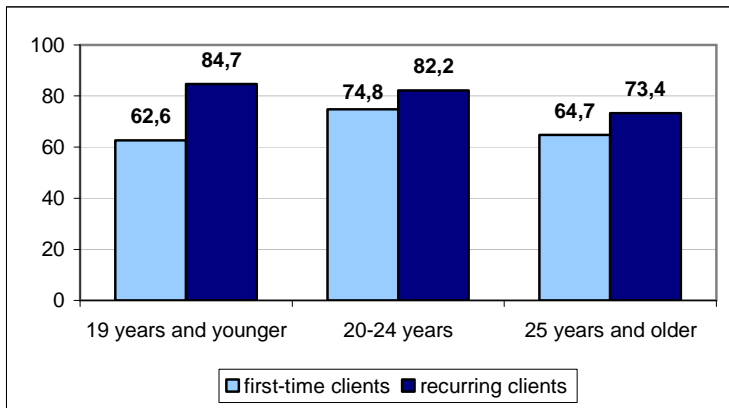


Figure 52: Clients who used a condom upon their latest sexual intercourse, by age group (% of those who have had sexual intercourse)

The level of condom use among NES visitors from Tallinn is lower than that of the Ida-Viru County. This difference can be seen in the case of data concerning the last month and the latest intercourse. In the Ida-Viru County the level of condom use has increased by 14% in the NES visiting period. There have been no such changes among clients from Tallinn (see Figures 53 and 54).

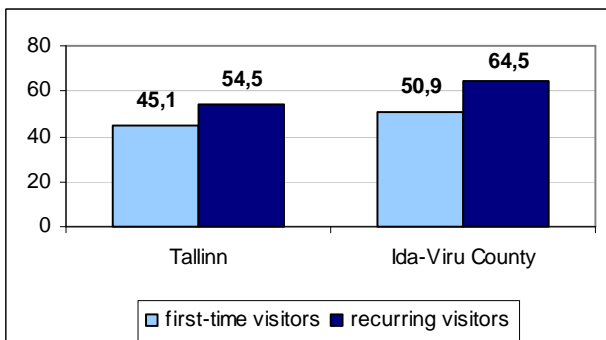


Figure 53: Clients who always used a condom within the last four weeks by region (% of those who have had sexual intercourse)

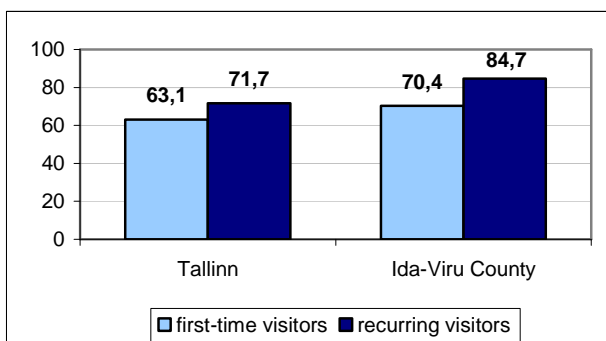


Figure 54: Clients who used a condom upon their latest sexual intercourse, by region (% of those who have had sexual intercourse)

8. TAKING HIV TEST

In the previous three survey years the amount of first-time visitors who had taken HIV test during last 12 months increased constantly. In the case of recurring clients this indicator was larger in 2005 than in the previous two survey years. In 2006 the share of respondents who had been tested for HIV decreased significantly among both first-time and recurring clients – by 9% and 18% as compared to 2005 respectively. In 2006 approximately 50% of the respondents from both client groups had taken HIV test in the year preceding the survey. There are no significant differences between the two client groups. In all of the previous years, a larger share of recurring clients had taken the HIV test (see Figure 55).

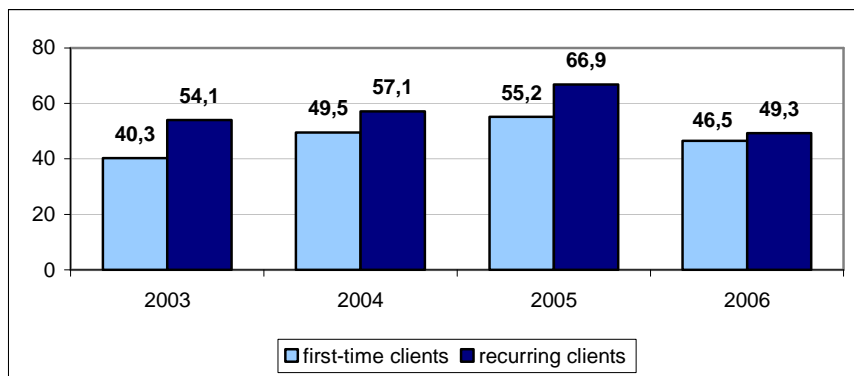


Figure 55: Clients tested for HIV in the last 12 months, 2003-2006 (%)

Age and region-based differences can be seen only among first-time visitors. As concerns the age groups up to 19 years old first-time visitors have taken the test less actively than their 20-24 year old counterparts – the respective percentages being 39% and 51%. Among 25 years old and older respondents the figure is 46%. As compared to the Ida-Viru County, the share of first-time clients who had been tested for HIV is larger in Tallinn – the respective shares being 41% and 60%.

9. RISK GROUPS

The last chapter of the Report provides an overview of the overall risk behaviour level of the clients, as concerns both syringe sharing and condom use. For this purpose a behaviour-characterising score was calculated on the basis of following components:

- syringe sharing for injecting drugs in the last four weeks
(0 – never used a common syringe; 1 – used a common syringe);
- frequency of condom use in the last four weeks
(0 – used a condom every time; 1 – did not use a condom every time);
- use of condom during the last sexual intercourse
(0 – used a condom; 1 – did not use a condom).

Adding of the aforementioned components results in the risk behaviour score from 0 to 3. The larger the score, the more risk behaviour components it includes. Based on the score NES clients were divided into three groups:

- 1) low risk level group – risk behaviour score 0;
- 2) mean risk level group – risk behaviour score from 1 to 2;
- 3) high risk level group – risk behaviour score 3.

Similarly to the previous years the largest group (approx. 50%) among the first-time clients are in the mean risk level group. Among recurring clients the low risk level group is prevailing. As compared to first-time NES visitors, among recurring visitors there are 17% more low risk behaviour, 12% less mean risk group members and 5% less IDUs with high risk behaviour (see Figure 56).

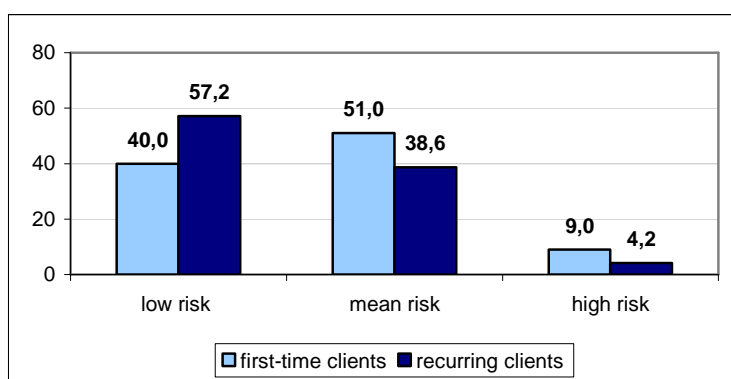


Figure 56: Distribution of clients between risk groups (%)

As compared to the two preceding survey years, it can be seen that in 2005 and 2006 there are more IDUs characterised by low risk behaviour and less IDUs characterised by maximum risk behaviour among the first-time clients. Decrease of risk behaviour in comparison with the years 2003 and 2004 can also be seen in the case of recurring clients. In comparison with the data of 2005 no significant changes have taken place in 2006 (see Figures 57 and 58).

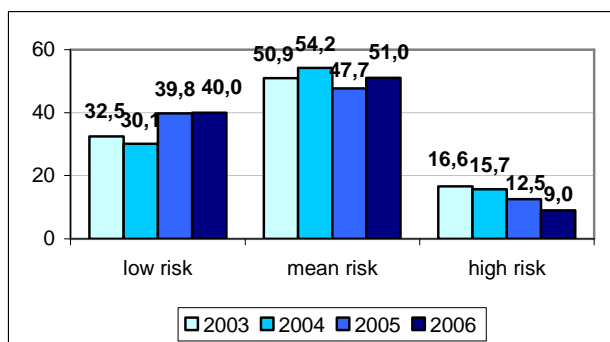


Figure 57: Risk group distribution of first-time clients 2003-2006 (%)

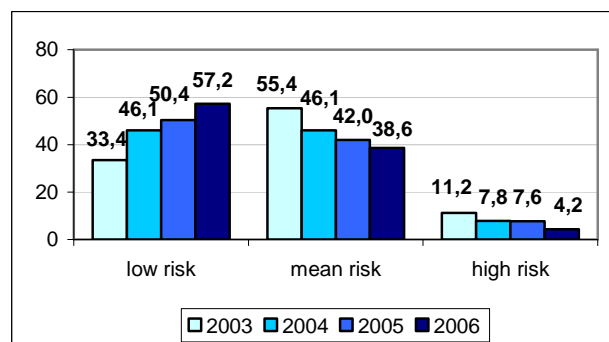


Figure 58: Risk group distribution of recurring clients 2003-2006 (%)

Age and region-based differences can be seen among the first-time clients. The share of first-time visitors characterised by low risk behaviour is the largest among 20-24 year olds – 44%. In

this regard, there is a significant difference between them and clients that are 25 years old or older, 35% of whom belong to this risk group. The share of mean risk level IDUs is the highest among 25 years old or older respondents – 55%. However, both of the groups differ significantly from the youngest group. The share of mean risk IDUs amounts to 46% in the age group '19 years and younger' and to 49% in the age group '20-24 years'.

In Tallinn risk behaviour is more widespread among new NES visitors. The share of low risk level IDUs amounts to 44% in the Ida-Viru County and to 30% in Tallinn – the difference is significant. In Tallinn the shares of mean and high risk level first-time clients are larger – the respective percentages being 58% and 12%. In the Ida-Viru County 48% and 9% of the respondents belong to these groups respectively.

In the NES visiting period the risk levels in subgroups have changed as follows:

- Risk behaviour has decreased both in the case of men and women – this means that the share of IDUs belonging to the low risk group has increased and the share of IDUs belonging to the mean risk group decreased. In the case of men the amount of maximum risk behaviour IDUs has also decreased (see Table 8).
- In the age group '19 years and younger' the percentage of high risk behaviour IDUs has decreased among recurring visitors as compared to new clients. Among 20-24 year olds the share of low-risk behaviour IDUs has increased and the shares of high and mean risk level groups decreased. In the case of 25 years old or older respondents the amount of low risk group IDUs has increased and the share of mean risk group IDUs decreased (see Table 9).
- As concerns nationality groups, changes are most evident among non-Estonians. In their case the share of low-risk IDUs has increased and the percentage of mean risk and high risk IDUs decreased among recurring clients (see Table 10).
- Risk behaviour among recurring clients from both Tallinn and the Ida-Viru County has decreased in comparison with first-time visitors. In both regions the low risk behaviour group has grown and the share of IDUs characterised by the two higher risk levels decreased (see Table 11).

Table 8: Distribution of clients between risk groups, by gender (%)

| <i>Client type</i> | <i>male</i> | | | <i>female</i> | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| | <i>low risk</i> | <i>mean risk</i> | <i>high risk</i> | <i>low risk</i> | <i>mean risk</i> | <i>high risk</i> |
| first-time clients | 40.9 | 50.4 | 8.7 | 37.4 | 53.2 | 9.4 |
| recurring clients | 55.4 | 41.1 | 3.5 | 64.0 | 29.3 | 6.7 |
| change | 14.5* | -9.3 | -5.2 | 26.6 | -23.9 | -2.7 |

* Grey background marks statistically significant changes.

Table 9: Distribution of clients between risk groups, by age group (%)

| <i>Client type</i> | <i>19 years and younger</i> | | | <i>20-24 years</i> | | | <i>25 years and older</i> | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | <i>low risk</i> | <i>mean risk</i> | <i>high risk</i> | <i>low risk</i> | <i>mean risk</i> | <i>high risk</i> | <i>low risk</i> | <i>mean risk</i> | <i>high risk</i> |
| first-time clients | 42.3 | 45.8 | 11.9 | 44.0 | 48.9 | 7.1 | 35.3 | 55.4 | 9.3 |
| recurring clients | 53.7 | 44.8 | 1.5 | 58.4 | 38.6 | 3.0 | 57.5 | 35.4 | 7.1 |
| change | 11.4 | -1.0 | -10.4* | 14.4 | -10.3 | -4.1 | 22.2 | -20.0 | -2.2 |

* Grey background marks statistically significant changes.

Table 10: Distribution of clients between risk groups, by nationality (%)

| <i>Client type</i> | <i>Estonians</i> | | | <i>non-Estonians</i> | | |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | <i>low risk</i> | <i>mean risk</i> | <i>high risk</i> | <i>low risk</i> | <i>mean risk</i> | <i>high risk</i> |
| first-time clients | 38.8 | 51.0 | 10.2 | 39.9 | 51.3 | 8.8 |
| recurring clients | 52.1 | 43.7 | 4.2 | 58.0 | 38.1 | 3.9 |
| change | 13.3 | -7.3 | -6.0 | 18.1* | -13.2 | -4.9 |

* Grey background marks statistically significant changes.

Table 11: Distribution of clients between risk groups, by region (%)

| <i>Client type</i> | <i>Tallinn</i> | | | <i>Ida-Viru County</i> | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | <i>low risk</i> | <i>mean risk</i> | <i>high risk</i> | <i>low risk</i> | <i>mean risk</i> | <i>high risk</i> |
| first-time clients | 29.8 | 58.3 | 11.9 | 44.0 | 48.2 | 7.8 |
| recurring clients | 50.7 | 43.7 | 5.6 | 61.5 | 35.3 | 3.2 |
| change | 20.9* | -14.6 | -6.3 | 17.5 | -12.9 | -4.6 |

* Grey background marks statistically significant changes.

Knowledge on HIV Transmission among Risk Groups

In general it may be said that the better is the level of knowledge among NES visitors, the less risk behaviour upon injecting and sexual relations there is. This is especially evident in the case of first-time clients, where higher risk levels are associated with approx. 10 % lower knowledge level. In the case of recurring clients a 9% difference in knowledge can be noticed when comparing IDUs of low and mean risk levels. A comparison with the high risk level group is not representative since it consists of only 15 people. Recurring clients do not differ from first-time clients in any of the risk groups (see Figure 59).

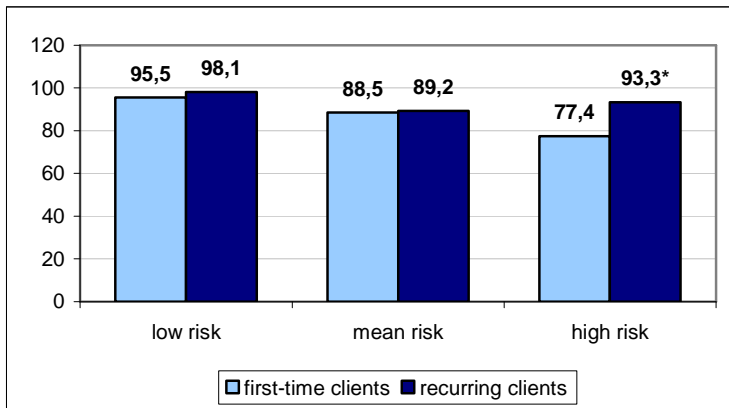


Figure 59: Clients having correct knowledge of the ways of HIV infection propagation, by risk groups (%) * n=15

Taking HIV Test in Risk Groups

As concerns testing for HIV in the last 12 months a difference between risk groups can be noticed among first-time clients. In comparison with the two higher risk levels there are more respondents who have been tested for HIV among the low-risk IDUs – the difference with the mean risk level is 15% and the high risk level 21%. Recurring clients do not differ from first-time clients in any of the risk level groups (see Figure 60).

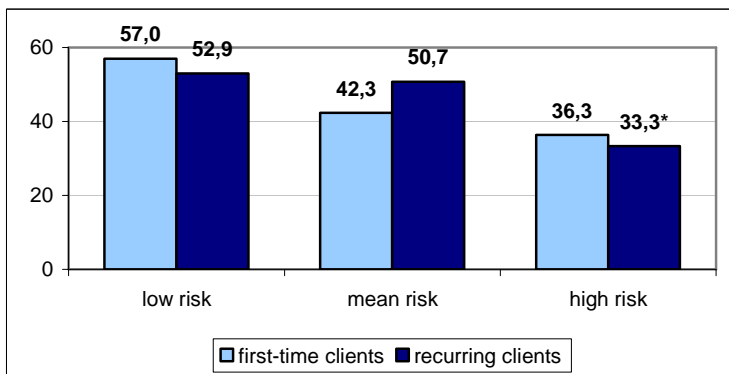


Figure 60: Clients who had taken HIV test in the last 12 months in risk groups (%) * n=15

SUMMARY

In 2006 the comparative analysis of first-time and recurring needle exchange visitors took place for the fourth time. The data collection period was from January to September 2006. The Report covers the data of 1,665 first-time and 401 recurring NES clients.

An average NES client is a little over 24 years old. Men constitute the majority of needle exchange service users; the share of female respondents amounts to approximately one-fifth. Russians form the largest client group, followed by Estonians (approx. 10%) and representatives of other nationalities (5%). Approximately half of the drug addicts visiting NES neither work nor study.

In the case of first-time visitors, the share of IDUs who have been using drugs intravenously for 2-4 years is prevailing – significantly over one-third of the respondents. Approximately one quarter of the respondents have used drugs intravenously for 5-10 years. More than half of the recurring clients had injected drugs in the preceding four weeks at least once a day. The most common drug among NES clients is amphetamine, followed by heroin and poppy liquid. On average 1.5 different substances had been injected during the four preceding weeks.

For the first-time visitors the most important channel of needle exchange-related information is friends and acquaintances. One-half of recurring clients had visited NES for more than one year, one-fourth for 6-12 months and the rest for less than 6 months. In the preceding month, approximately two-thirds of the recurring clients had visited NES at least once a week and many of them had been there several times a week.

Less than one-half of recurring needle exchange point clients were issued more than 10 syringes per visit and approximately a quarter received 6-10 syringes. Three-quarters of recurring clients had also taken syringes for their acquaintances. Half of the recurring clients had returned used syringes during each visit to a NES and more than one-third had done it in most cases.

More than one-third of recurring clients had been issued from two to five condoms and a quarter 6-10 condoms per visit. More than one tenth of the respondents claimed that they had no need for a condom in the preceding four weeks.

More than half of the recurring NES visitors were informed by the personnel about correct use of disinfection means and more than three-quarters about condom use, HIV/AIDS and harm associated with syringe sharing. 89% of the first-time clients and 93% of recurring clients answered correctly to both questions on HIV transmission and a 4% positive change has taken place in this regard.

75% of the first-time visitors and 89% of recurring clients had not shared syringes with other IDUs in the last four weeks – this means an improvement to the extent of 14%. As compared to first-time NES visitors, the share of recurring clients who cleaned their syringes during the month preceding the survey was approx. 10 % smaller.

The majority of needle exchange clients had had sexual intercourse with a single partner in the preceding month. 6% of the recurring clients had had sexual intercourse for pay within the last four weeks. 49% of the first-time NES visitors and 60% of recurring clients used a condom each time they had sex during last month. Consequently, this indicator has improved by 11% among recurring NES clients. The percentage of respondents who used a condom during their last sexual intercourse exceeds the percentage of respondents who always used a condom in the previous month by one-fifth. As compared to first-time visitors the share of recurring clients behaving safely during the last intercourse is also larger by 11% – the respective values being 68% and 80%.

47% of first-time and 49% of recurring visitors had been tested for HIV in the year preceding the survey. There are no significant differences between the two client groups.

In order to acquire an overview of the general risk behaviour level among NES clients, syringe sharing and condom use were analysed simultaneously. This resulted in formation of three risk behaviour groups – low, mean and high risk group. As compared to first-time NES visitors, among recurring visitors there are 17% more IDUs characterised by low risk behaviour (the respective shares being 57% and 40%) and less mean-risk and high-risk IDUs. The better is the knowledge on HIV transmission among NES visitors, the less risk behaviour upon injecting and sexual relations there is.

Most significant differences by gender and age group:

- Male NES clients tend to have a longer intravenous drug use record as compared to female clients. As compared to men more women have had sexual intercourse for pay within the month preceding the survey.
- The older the age group, the larger is the share of IDUs who have been injecting drugs for a long time. 19 year old and younger IDUs inject drugs less often than IDUs in older age groups. Amphetamine is the most common narcotic substance among 19 years olds or younger. As compared to the two older groups heroin is used less often. In the age group 'from 20 to 24 years old' the use of poppy liquid is more common than among 25 years old and older IDUs.
- Older clients have visited NES for a longer period and have been issued somewhat more syringes per visit than younger clients.
- In the NES visiting period the level of correct knowledge has improved only among clients up to 19 years old.
- The share of respondents who had sexual intercourse in the last month and had always used a condom has increased among older (20-24, 25 and more) first-time and recurring NES clients. As concerns the condom use during the last intercourse, a positive change has taken place in all age groups.

Most significant differences by nationality and region:

- NES clients of other nationalities have been injecting drugs for a longer time than Estonians and Estonians have injected more amphetamine and less poppy liquid.
- During the NES visiting period, a positive change in the level of knowledge has taken place among Estonians. The respective figure of non-Estonians has not changed. Analysis of risk levels indicates that upon comparison between first-time and recurring clients the overall level of risk behaviour has decreased among non-Estonians.
- Clients from Tallinn have used drugs intravenously for a longer time than IDUs in Ida-Viru County, but they do it less often. Tallinn's respondents use amphetamine and heroin more often and in the Ida-Viru County poppy liquid and morphine are more common.
- As compared to IDUs from Tallinn, clients from the Ida-Viru County have visited NES for a longer period. Respondents from Ida-Viru County visited needle exchange sites less often than clients from Tallinn in the last month, but in Ida-Viru County clients are issued more syringes and condoms per visit. In Tallinn there are more clients who also take syringes for their acquaintances and return used syringes to NES than Ida-Viru County.
- As compared to Tallinn, HIV/AIDS prevention-related subjects have been discussed with the visitors of NES in the Ida-Viru County more often. The knowledge level of IDUs from the Ida-Viru County is higher in the case of both first-time and recurring clients, and the

knowledge level has improved in the NES visiting period only among clients from the Ida-Viru County.

- The percentage of IDUs who did not share their syringes was larger in Ida-Viru County in the case of both first-time and recurring clients. In this regard, positive changes have taken place in the NES visiting period in both of the regions. In the NES visiting period, the level of condom use has increased in the Ida-Viru County only.

Most significant differences by survey year:

- The percentage of employed NES clients has increased and the share of IDUs who neither work nor study decreased through the survey years.
- In comparison with the year 2005, the share of amphetamine users among NES clients has increased.
- In 2006 the share of needle exchange clients who also take syringes for their acquaintances has increased when compared to 2005.
- As compared to the previous survey year, in 2006 NES personnel discussed HIV/AIDS prevention-related subjects less often with their clients.
- So far the knowledge level among both first-time and recurring clients had improved year by year. The data from 2006 cannot be compared to the results of the previous years, since the wording of one knowledge question was somewhat changed.
- In the case of first-time clients the amount of IDUs who had never shared their syringes with others in last four weeks has constantly increased since 2004, i.e. even before visiting a needle exchange point the drug addicts behave in a less risk-taking manner than in the years before.
- As compared to the year 2005, in 2006 the share of IDUs who had been tested for HIV in the last 12 months has decreased among both first-time and recurring clients.