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Test, test, test: COVID-19 and HIV testing updates



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Impact of COVID-19 on HIV Testing Trends in Singapore

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Brief Background on HIV Testing in Singapore

- HIV testing in Singapore requires names of all patients with a positive result to be reported to the government.
- Asymptomatic HIV screening is carried out by many primary health care providers.
 - The largest numbers are done by the Department of STI Control (DSC) Clinic, tasked with carrying out the National STI control programme.
- However, 10 sites in Singapore are exempted from the above rule, and can carry out anonymous testing
 - Largest operator would be Action for AIDS Singapore via our Anonymous Test Site (ATS) and Mobile Test Sites (MTS)



DORSCON Orange 7 Feb 2020 -

- 2nd highest alert level (Disease outbreak response system condition)
- Business continuity plan with team segregation implemented across institutions
- Travel restrictions, temperature screening, deferring of large scale events implements

“Circuit Breaker” 7 Apr – 1 Jun

- Only essential services allowed to be open
- Masks mandatory outside of home
- 1m distancing between people must be enforced
- All encouraged to stay home except for essential errands



Trends of HIV Test numbers at AFAATS

	2019	2020	Remarks
Jan	578	422 (↓27%)	
Feb	482	146 (↓70%)	Start of DORSCON Orange Contact numbers collected
Mar	544	283 (↓48%)	Initial decline in COVID-19 numbers.
Apr	428	127 (↓70%)	“2 nd wave” of COVID-19 Circuit breaker implemented. Reduced capacity, limit on staff numbers, pre-registration required.



Trends of HIV Test numbers at DSC Clinic

	2019	2020	Remarks
Jan	1055	831 (↓21%)	
Feb	720	541 (↓25%)	Start of DORSCON Orange
Mar	877	635 (↓28%)	Initial decline in COVID-19 numbers.
Apr	825	453 (↓45%)	Start of “Circuit Breaker” measures. Management of symptomatic STI continues. Screening of asymptomatic patients, including HIV testing, deferred



Moving Forward

- Testing services have to remain nimble to respond to various scenarios that may develop
- Engage authorities on the need to continue HIV screening in the event of protected lockdown/circuit breaker/etc.
- Ensure robust infection control measures in place for our clients and staff protection and also to reassure authorities
- Reach out to clients on changes as well as continue outreach programmes digitally



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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